
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTING STYLES AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA

*¹Annie K. Muindi & ²Prof. Susan K. Muriungi

¹School of Psychology, Daystar University

²School of Psychology, Daystar University

anniemuindi240278@daystar.ac.ke, smuriungi@daystar.ac.ke

Publication Date: April 2026

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: This study examined the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem among adolescents aged 9-17 years in a rural Kenyan setting and assessed the influence of selected sociodemographic factors.

Problem Statement: Low self-esteem among adolescents is linked to poor academic performance, social withdrawal, and a higher risk of psychosocial issues. Although existing research shows that parenting styles greatly influence self-esteem, most studies focus on urban populations, with limited evidence from rural areas where family dynamics and environmental factors may differ.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional correlational design was employed. Data were collected from 677 adolescents aged 9-17 years using modified versions of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Statistical analysis included descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analysis to examine relationships and predictive effects.

Results of the Study: Authoritative parenting was the most common style (42.1%), while neglectful parenting was the least frequent (12.1%). Most adolescents reported moderate self-esteem, with 14.5% exhibiting low self-esteem. There was a strong positive correlation between authoritative parenting and self-esteem ($r = .542, p < .001$), whereas neglectful ($r = -.518, p < .001$), authoritarian ($r = -.385, p < .001$), and permissive ($r = -.276, p < .001$) parenting styles were significantly negatively associated. Regression analysis identified authoritative parenting as the strongest positive predictor of self-esteem, while neglectful and authoritarian parenting were significant predictors of lower self-esteem. The most prevalent factors affecting adolescent self-esteem included family structure, parental education, and age.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendation: Parenting styles have a significant impact on adolescent self-esteem in rural Kenyan communities. The findings highlight the importance of promoting authoritative parenting through targeted parental education programs.

Keywords: *Parenting styles, Self-esteem, Adolescents, Rural communities, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is recognized as a crucial developmental stage marked by rapid cognitive, emotional, and social changes that shape an individual's identity and self-worth. During this period, young people are especially sensitive to environmental influences, which increase their vulnerability to psychosocial challenges (Sawyer et al., 2018). A key psychological concept during this stage is self-esteem, defined as a person's overall assessment of their worth and abilities (Zeigler-Hill, 2013). Self-esteem plays a vital role in adolescent adjustment, affecting resilience, academic engagement, and relationships. Higher self-esteem is associated with positive developmental outcomes, while lower self-esteem is linked to anxiety, withdrawal, and poor social functioning (Orth & Robins, 2014).

Parenting styles are among the most influential environmental factors shaping adolescent self-esteem. Originally conceptualized by Baumrind (1971) and later expanded by Darling and Steinberg (1993), parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, reflect different levels of responsiveness and behavioral control. Evidence consistently shows that supportive and responsive parenting, especially authoritative parenting, is linked to higher self-esteem and better psychosocial outcomes. Conversely, harsh or neglectful parenting is associated with poorer adjustment (Orth & Robins, 2014; Rohner, 2016). Cross-cultural studies further confirm that parental warmth and acceptance are universally related to positive adolescent development (Martínez et al., 2020).

However, parenting does not operate in isolation but within a broader ecological and sociocultural context. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory highlights that adolescent development is influenced by multiple interacting systems, such as family, school, and society. In the African context, socioeconomic conditions, cultural expectations, and family structures significantly impact parenting practices and their outcomes (Kinga & Muriithi, 2014). Research in sub-Saharan Africa indicates that economic hardship and stressors often influence parenting behaviors, with authoritative parenting linked to better self-esteem outcomes. In resource-limited settings, authoritarian and neglectful styles tend to be more common and are associated with poorer psychosocial adjustment (Roman et al., 2016). Similarly, studies in East Africa show that low

parental warmth and high control negatively affect adolescents' emotional well-being and school participation (Mwakanyamale & Ndomondo, 2019; Muzaki, 2018).

Despite growing evidence both globally and regionally, a notable gap remains in the Kenyan context, especially in rural areas. Most existing research has focused on urban populations, limiting understanding of how parenting styles influence adolescent self-esteem in rural settings where poverty, parental migration, and alternative caregiving are prevalent. Local studies have established links between parenting practices and adolescent self-esteem (Ngige et al., 2020; Wambua & K'Okul, 2024), but few have examined younger adolescents in primary school or considered sociodemographic factors. This study, therefore, aimed to explore the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem among adolescents in a rural Kenyan primary and junior school. It provides context-specific evidence to guide interventions that enhance adolescent psychosocial well-being. The findings add to the existing knowledge and offer practical insights for parents, educators, and policymakers in rural communities.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Low adolescent self-esteem remains a critical concern due to its negative effects on psychosocial well-being, academic performance, and social functioning. Adolescents experiencing low self-esteem are more likely to withdraw from peers, demonstrate reduced classroom participation, and exhibit behavioral challenges such as truancy and bullying (Peng et al., 2021). These patterns not only disrupt learning but also hinder healthy identity development during a crucial stage of growth.

While existing literature has established links between parenting practices and adolescent outcomes, much of this evidence is drawn from Western and urban contexts, limiting its relevance to rural environments (Gul et al., 2024). In sub-Saharan Africa, research remains limited and largely concentrated in urban and semi-urban settings, despite the distinct structural and cultural realities of rural communities. Factors such as poverty, parental absence, kinship caregiving, and limited access to psychosocial support may significantly alter how parenting influences adolescent self-esteem, yet these dynamics are insufficiently explored.

In Kenya, available studies indicate that negative parenting approaches, particularly authoritarian and neglectful styles, are associated with lower self-esteem among school-going children

(Rukwaro, 2023). However, current research rarely accounts for the combined influence of sociodemographic factors such as gender, parental education, family structure, and socioeconomic status. Additionally, there is limited focus on younger adolescents within primary school settings, leaving a critical gap in understanding early developmental experiences in rural contexts.

This study addressed these gaps by examining adolescents at Matuu H.G.M. Primary and Junior School in rural Machakos County, where school-based observations revealed persistent indicators of low self-esteem, including disengagement from learning, behavioral difficulties, and reduced academic motivation. By analyzing the interaction between parenting styles and sociodemographic factors in this setting, the study generated context-specific evidence to inform targeted interventions to strengthen adolescent resilience, improve classroom engagement, and support healthy psychosocial development.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective was to assess the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem among adolescents at Matuu H.G.M Primary and Junior School in Machakos County, Kenya.

Study Objectives

- i. To identify the parenting styles employed by parents or guardians of adolescents at Matuu H.G.M Primary and Junior School.
- ii. To assess the level of self-esteem among adolescents at Matuu H.G.M Primary and Junior School.
- iii. To analyze the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' self-esteem at Matuu H.G.M Primary and Junior School.
- iv. To evaluate the relationships among sociodemographic characteristics, parenting styles, and adolescents' self-esteem at Matuu H.G.M Primary and Junior School.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws on three key theories: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, Baumrind's Parenting Styles Theory, and Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Theory. Collectively, they illustrate how parenting interacts with environmental and psychological factors to influence adolescent self-esteem. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979; 1994) depicts development as shaped by dynamic interactions across multiple systems, with parenting in the microsystem affected by larger influences such as socioeconomic status, cultural norms, and community, particularly in rural Kenyan contexts. While comprehensive, its broad scope makes isolating specific causes challenging, necessitating more targeted theories. To this end, Baumrind's Parenting Styles Theory classifies parenting into four styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, based on responsiveness and demandingness. The authoritative style, characterized by warmth and firm control, is linked to positive outcomes such as high self-esteem, whereas authoritarian and neglectful styles tend to be associated with poorer adjustment. Despite its empirical support, its Western origins may limit cultural applicability, so it is contextualized within an ecological perspective. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Theory defines self-esteem as an individual's overall self-worth, assessed via the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. It underscores the crucial role of self-esteem in behavior and emotional regulation, providing a straightforward, cross-cultural measure. However, it mainly focuses on global self-esteem and may overlook specific self-appraisals. Together, these theories form a framework where parenting (Baumrind) within broader ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner) influences adolescent self-esteem (Rosenberg), balancing detailed context with clarity.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Empirical studies across global, regional, and local contexts consistently demonstrate a significant relationship between parenting styles and adolescent self-esteem, although contextual variations exist.

Globally, research provides strong evidence supporting the positive influence of authoritative parenting on adolescent self-esteem. For instance, Milevsky et al. (2007) found that adolescents raised in authoritative households reported significantly higher self-esteem compared to those from

authoritarian or neglectful families. Similarly, cross-cultural studies by Joshanloo (2020) indicate that supportive parenting is a universal predictor of higher self-esteem, while parental rejection is associated with negative psychological outcomes. Meta-analytic findings by Rohner (2016) further reinforce the importance of parental warmth, showing consistent positive correlations with adolescent self-worth across diverse cultural settings. Despite their strengths, these studies are largely based in Western or high-income contexts, limiting their applicability to rural African environments.

In African contexts, studies reveal similar patterns but highlight the influence of socioeconomic and cultural factors. Roman et al. (2016) in South Africa found that authoritative parenting positively correlates with self-esteem, while authoritarian and neglectful styles negatively affect adolescents' psychosocial well-being. In Nigeria, Adeniyi and Omoteso (2014) reported that authoritative parenting significantly predicts higher self-esteem, whereas neglectful parenting has the strongest negative impact. These studies demonstrate that while parenting styles operate similarly across cultures, their effects are often intensified by contextual challenges such as poverty and limited institutional support.

Within East Africa, research emphasizes the role of adverse experiences in shaping self-esteem. Mwakanyamale and Yizhen (2019) found that emotional neglect and abuse are strong predictors of low self-esteem among Tanzanian adolescents. However, their focus on negative parenting practices limits understanding of the protective role of positive parenting styles. Additionally, these studies often overlook moderating variables such as family structure and socioeconomic status.

Locally, Kenyan studies provide context-specific insights but remain limited in scope. Mukola (2022) found that parenting styles significantly predict adolescent self-esteem, with authoritative parenting showing a strong positive effect. Similarly, Wambua and K'Okul (2024) identified neglectful parenting as the strongest negative predictor of self-esteem, particularly among adolescents from low-income and unstable family backgrounds. Ochieng (2019) further highlighted gender differences, showing that supportive parenting has a stronger positive impact on girls, while authoritarian parenting negatively affects boys. Despite these contributions, most

Kenyan studies focus on urban populations and older adolescents, leaving younger adolescents in rural settings underrepresented.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

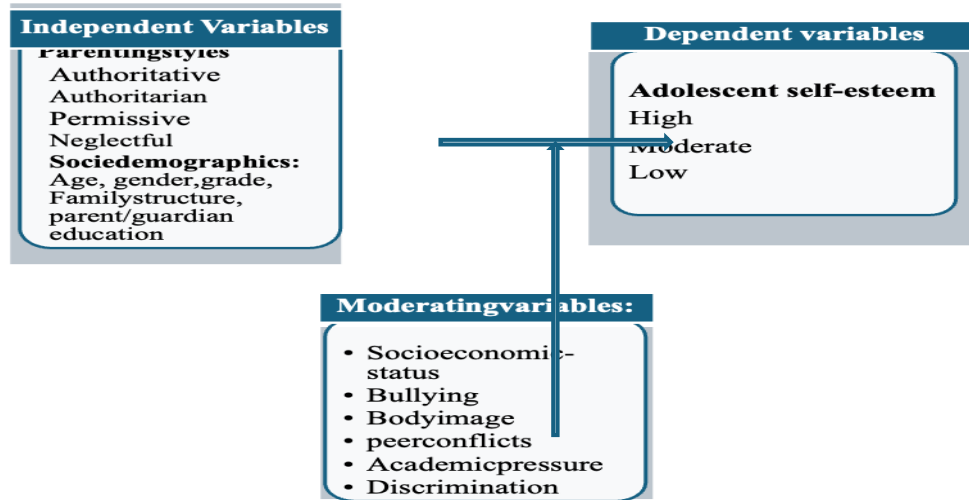


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a pragmatic research philosophy that integrates multiple methods to address complex social phenomena, employing a descriptive cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent self-esteem. This design facilitated data collection at a single point in time without manipulating variables, making it appropriate for capturing naturally occurring relationships within a rural school context. The study targeted learners aged 9-17 years (Grades 4-9) at Matuu H.G.M Primary and Junior School in Machakos County, with a total population of 748 participants, and utilized a census approach to ensure comprehensive representation and minimize sampling bias. Data were gathered through a structured, self-administered questionnaire comprising a socio-demographic instrument developed by the researcher, the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ), and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), all of which were pretested in a similar rural school to ensure clarity, cultural relevance, and suitability for the age group.

Collection was conducted in a single session within the school setting, with researcher assistance provided to enhance understanding and completeness of responses. The data were coded, cleaned, and analyzed using SPSS (Version 28), with descriptive statistics applied to summarize findings and inferential analyses, including chi-square tests and Pearson’s correlation, used to examine variable relationships. Ethical standards were rigorously upheld through institutional approvals, parental consent, participant assent, and strict confidentiality measures, ensuring voluntary participation and secure data handling. This methodological framework guaranteed validity, reliability, and ethical integrity while producing contextually relevant insights into adolescent development in rural Kenya.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic data for the 677 respondents showed that the largest age group was 13-14 years (34.0%), followed by 11-12 years (30.4%), 9-10 years (22.6%), and 15-16 years (12.4%). Only 0.6% were 17. Gender distribution was nearly equal, with 50.4% boys and 49.6% girls. Grade-wise, participants were evenly spread across six grades, with the highest in Grade 9 (18.62%). Most lived in two-parent households (57.9%), with others in various caregiving setups. Most parents/guardians had higher education; 57.6% completed university, 31.5% secondary, 8.4% primary, and 2.5% no formal schooling.

Parenting Styles Employed by Parents/Guardians of Adolescents

Table 1: Summary Distribution of the Parenting Styles Employed

Parenting Style	Mean Score Range	Frequency	Percent	Mean score	χ^2	p-value
Authoritative	2.51-3.25	285	42.1	2.71		
Authoritarian	1.76-2.50	198	29.2	2.27		
Neglectful	1.76-2.50	82	12.1	1.92		
Permissive	1.76-2.50	112	16.5	1.85		
Mean		169.3	25.0	2.19		
Total		677	100.0		133.26	<0.001

Authoritative parenting was the most common, with 42.1% of adolescents experiencing high levels of warmth, reasoning, and democratic communication. Next was authoritarian parenting, reported by 29.2% of adolescents, characterized by strict rules and limited flexibility. Permissive parenting

was observed in 16.5% of adolescents, reflecting indulgent and lenient approaches, while neglectful parenting was the least common, reported by 12.1% of adolescents, indicating low parental involvement. The chi-square test revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution of parenting styles ($\chi^2 = 133.26$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that authoritative parenting was relatively prevalent in this population, with most adolescents experiencing parenting that supports emotional and social development.

Levels of Self-Esteem among Adolescents

To assess self-esteem, the study employed the RSES, a widely validated 10-item instrument used globally to measure overall self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965; von Soest et al., 2018).

Table 2: Distribution of Self-Esteem Levels Among Adolescents

Self-Esteem Level	Score Range	Frequency	Percent (%)	χ^2	p-value
Low	10-19	98	14.5		
Moderate	20-29	412	60.9		
High	30-40	167	24.7		
Mean		225.7	33.4		
Total		677	100.0	285.42	<0.001

The results show that most respondents (412, 60.9%) reported moderate self-esteem (scores 20-29), indicating adequate but situational self-confidence. High self-esteem (scores 30-40) was reported by 167 respondents (24.7%), reflecting a confident, positive self-image and resilience. Low self-esteem (scores 10-19) was reported by 98 respondents (14.5%), suggesting feelings of inadequacy and low self-worth. The average frequency across self-esteem categories was 225.7. The chi-square goodness-of-fit test revealed a significant difference in the distribution of self-esteem levels ($\chi^2 = 285.42$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that self-esteem scores were not evenly distributed, with most falling in the moderate range. These results suggest that while most adolescents in the school maintain moderate levels of self-worth, a notable minority has low self-esteem, which could impact their psychosocial adjustment and academic performance.

Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Adolescents' Self-Esteem

Understanding the relationship was important because parenting styles during adolescence significantly influence the development of self-worth, confidence, and identity. Chi-square analysis and Pearson’s correlation coefficient were used to examine this relationship.

Table 1 Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Adolescents' Self-Esteem

Parenting Style	Low n(%)	Moderate n(%)	High n(%)	Total n(%)	Mean Score	SD	χ^2	p-value
Authoritative	18 (6.3)	159 (55.8)	108 (37.9)	285 (100.0)	28.45	5.23		
Authoritarian	35 (17.7)	138 (69.7)	25 (12.6)	198 (100.0)	24.12	4.87		
Permissive	21 (18.8)	73 (65.2)	18 (16.1)	112 (100.0)	23.78	5.34		
Neglectful	24 (29.3)	42 (51.2)	16 (19.5)	82 (100.0)	21.67	5.92		
Total	98 (14.5)	412 (60.9)	167 (24.7)	677 (100.0)	25.34	5.68	78.342	<0.001

The findings reveal clear variations in self-esteem depending on the type of parenting experienced. Adolescents raised under authoritative parenting reported the highest levels of self-esteem, with a greater proportion falling within the high self-esteem category and the highest mean score ($M = 28.45$, $SD = 5.23$). In contrast, adolescents exposed to neglectful parenting recorded the lowest self-esteem levels, with a larger proportion in the low self-esteem category and the lowest mean score ($M = 21.67$, $SD = 5.92$). Those experiencing authoritarian and permissive parenting styles predominantly reported moderate self-esteem levels, with comparatively lower mean scores ($M = 24.12$, $SD = 4.87$; $M = 23.78$, $SD = 5.34$, respectively). The results indicate a consistent pattern in which supportive and structured parenting is associated with higher self-esteem, while less supportive or inconsistent parenting is linked to lower self-worth. The chi-square test revealed that these differences were statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 78.342$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a significant relationship between parenting styles and adolescents’ self-esteem. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_{11}) was accepted.

Table 2 Correlation Between Parenting Styles and Adolescent Self-Esteem

Variables	Self-Esteem	Authoritative	Authoritarian	Permissive	Neglectful
Self-Esteem	1	.542**	-.385**	-.276**	-.518**
		.000	.000	.000	.000
	677	677	677	677	677
Authoritative	.542**	1	-.234**	-.198**	-.312**
	.000		.000	.000	.000
	677	677	677	677	677
Authoritarian	-.385**	-.234**	1	.267**	.423**
	.000	.000		.000	.000
	677	677	677	677	677
Permissive	-.276**	-.198**	.267**	1	.389**
	.000	.000	.000		.000
	677	677	677	677	677
Neglectful	-.518**	-.312**	.423**	.389**	1
	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	677	677	677	677	677

Source: Author 2026

The results show significant relationships between all parenting styles and self-esteem. Authoritative parenting exhibited a strong positive correlation with self-esteem ($r = .542, p < 0.01$), indicating that higher levels of parental warmth and structure were associated with greater adolescent self-worth. Conversely, authoritarian ($r = -.385, p < 0.01$), permissive ($r = -.276, p < 0.01$), and neglectful parenting ($r = -.518, p < 0.01$) were negatively associated with self-esteem, suggesting these styles relate to lower levels of adolescent self-worth. Among them, neglectful parenting displayed the strongest negative relationship, underscoring its particularly harmful effect on self-esteem development. Furthermore, significant correlations were found among the different parenting styles, implying some overlap in parenting behaviors. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of supportive and structured parenting in fostering positive adolescent self-esteem outcomes.

Relationship Between Sociodemographic Characteristics, Parenting Styles, and Adolescents' Self-Esteem

Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to examine whether age, gender, family structure, and parental education influenced adolescents' self-esteem across different parenting

styles. The analysis indicated that certain sociodemographic characteristics were significantly associated with variations in self-esteem among adolescents, suggesting that these factors do influence how parenting styles impact self-esteem. Gender differences were observed, with girls being more sensitive to parenting style variations in relation to self-esteem than boys. Age and parental education showed moderate links, with older adolescents and those with more-educated parents reporting higher self-esteem, especially under authoritative and permissive parenting styles. These findings rejected the null hypothesis (H_0), supporting the idea that sociodemographic factors significantly influence the relationship between parenting style and self-esteem.

Table 3: Age, Family Structure, and Parental Education Distribution by Self-Esteem Levels and Parenting Styles

Age Group	Family Structure	Parental Education	Variable	Authoritative n(%)	Authoritarian n(%)	Permissive n(%)	Neglectful n(%)	Total n(%)	Mean Frequency	χ^2	p-value		
11-12	Both Parents	Secondary	Low SE	2 (28.6)	3 (42.9)	1 (14.3)	1 (14.3)	7 (100.0)	1.75	14.234	0.027		
			Moderate SE	11 (39.3)	10 (35.7)	5 (17.9)	2 (7.1)	28 (100.0)	7.00				
			High SE	5 (50.0)	3 (30.0)	1 (10.0)	1 (10.0)	10 (100.0)	2.50				
		University	Low SE	1 (16.7)	3 (50.0)	1 (16.7)	1 (16.7)	6 (100.0)	1.50			24.567	<0.001
			Moderate SE	23 (53.5)	10 (23.3)	6 (14.0)	4 (9.3)	43 (100.0)	10.75				
			High SE	16 (59.3)	5 (18.5)	4 (14.8)	2 (7.4)	27 (100.0)	6.75				
	Mother Only	Secondary	Low SE	2 (28.6)	3 (42.9)	1 (14.3)	1 (14.3)	7 (100.0)	1.75	8.456	0.207		
			Moderate SE	4 (26.7)	6 (40.0)	3 (20.0)	2 (13.3)	15 (100.0)	3.75				
			High SE	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	0.50				
		University	Low SE	2 (40.0)	2 (40.0)	1 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (100.0)	1.25			10.234	0.115
			Moderate SE	8 (29.6)	9 (33.3)	6 (22.2)	4 (14.8)	27 (100.0)	6.75				
			High SE	3 (42.9)	2 (28.6)	1 (14.3)	1 (14.3)	7 (100.0)	1.75				
13-14	Both Parents	Secondary	Low SE	1 (20.0)	3 (60.0)	1 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (100.0)	1.25	18.678	0.005		
			Moderate SE	14 (43.8)	11 (34.4)	5 (15.6)	2 (6.3)	32 (100.0)	8.00				
			High SE	12 (70.6)	3 (17.6)	1 (5.9)	1 (5.9)	17 (100.0)	4.25				
		University	Low SE	1 (14.3)	3 (42.9)	1 (14.3)	2 (28.6)	7 (100.0)	1.75			32.456	<0.001
			Moderate SE	21 (44.7)	14 (29.8)	7 (14.9)	5 (10.6)	47 (100.0)	11.75				
			High SE	17 (56.7)	7 (23.3)	4 (13.3)	2 (6.7)	30 (100.0)	7.50				
	Mother Only	Secondary	Low SE	1 (25.0)	2 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (25.0)	4 (100.0)	1.00	6.789	0.340		
			Moderate SE	6 (35.3)	5 (29.4)	4 (23.5)	2 (11.8)	17 (100.0)	4.25				
			High SE	3 (50.0)	2 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (16.7)	6 (100.0)	1.50				
		University	Low SE	2 (40.0)	2 (40.0)	1 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (100.0)	1.25			12.345	0.090
			Moderate SE	9 (36.0)	9 (36.0)	4 (16.0)	3 (12.0)	25 (100.0)	6.25				
			High SE	5 (62.5)	1 (12.5)	2 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (100.0)	2.00				
15-16	Both Parents	Secondary	Low SE	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	0.50	12.567	0.028		
			Moderate SE	3 (21.4)	5 (35.7)	3 (21.4)	3 (21.4)	14 (100.0)	3.50				
			High SE	4 (57.1)	2 (28.6)	1 (14.3)	0 (0.0)	7 (100.0)	1.75				
		University	Low SE	0 (0.0)	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	0.50			18.234	0.006
			Moderate SE	7 (53.8)	5 (38.5)	1 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	13 (100.0)	3.25				
			High SE	7 (87.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (12.5)	8 (100.0)	2.00				
	Mother Only	Secondary	Low SE	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (100.0)	0.25	4.567	0.335		
			Moderate SE	2 (66.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)	0.75				
			High SE	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	0.50				
		University	Low SE	1 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (50.0)	2 (100.0)	0.50			8.234	0.144
			Moderate SE	3 (23.1)	6 (46.2)	2 (15.4)	2 (15.4)	13 (100.0)	3.25				
			High SE	5 (62.5)	2 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (12.5)	8 (100.0)	2.00				
Mean				7.3	5.3	2.8	1.8	17.2	4				

The results showed that the connection between parenting styles and adolescents' self-esteem is strongest in stable, higher-educated families. Authoritative parenting was the most common (45.2%), followed by authoritarian (32.8%), permissive (17.3%), and neglectful (4.7%) styles. The significant chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 145.789$, $p < 0.001$) indicates a meaningful interaction

among age, family structure, parental education, and self-esteem. In two-parent, university-educated families, adolescents living with both parents exhibited higher self-esteem when experiencing increased authoritative and decreased authoritarian parenting, especially among 11-16-year-olds. For example, among 11-12-year-olds, authoritative parenting increased from 16.7% in low self-esteem to 59.3% in high self-esteem.

Similar patterns appeared in older groups but were weaker in families with only a mother. In mother-only households, higher self-esteem was associated with more authoritative parenting, but these relationships were weaker and often not statistically significant. Other family structures showed the weakest and most inconsistent patterns, partly due to small sample sizes. Overall, adolescents' self-esteem develops most in stable, higher-educated two-parent families with authoritative parenting. Mother-only and other structures show weaker, variable links, suggesting that education alone cannot fully compensate for less stable environments.

CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights the important role that parenting styles and family context play in shaping adolescent self-esteem. The way parents interact with and guide their children significantly influences how adolescents perceive and value themselves. Authoritative parenting emerged as the most supportive approach, consistently linked to healthier self-esteem and more positive developmental outcomes. Adolescents raised in such environments tend to feel more confident, supported, and emotionally secure. In contrast, neglectful and authoritarian parenting styles were associated with poorer self-esteem outcomes, suggesting that a lack of emotional support or overly rigid control can negatively affect adolescents' sense of self-worth.

Family structure and parental education also play a meaningful role. Adolescents from stable, supportive family environments, particularly those with higher parental involvement and guidance, are more likely to develop a stronger sense of self. These findings suggest that both the emotional quality of parenting and the broader family environment work together to shape adolescent development.

The findings further show that adolescent self-esteem is shaped through the interaction of multiple factors. Protective conditions, such as supportive family structures and higher parental education, strengthen the positive influence of effective parenting, whereas the presence of

structural or contextual challenges may weaken this relationship and increase vulnerability to lower self-esteem. These patterns emphasize the complex and interconnected nature of adolescent development within this context.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends strengthening school-based counseling through structured self-esteem programs, peer support, and targeted follow-up for at-risk adolescents, particularly those exposed to authoritarian or neglectful parenting. Schools and PTAs should enhance school-parent collaboration by promoting parenting education and regular engagement to encourage supportive caregiving practices. Schools should also partner with community organizations to provide mentorship for adolescents from vulnerable family structures.

At the policy level, the Ministry of Education, Teachers Service Commission, and county education offices should improve access to trained counselors and implement routine psychosocial screening in schools. Parenting education should be integrated into school programs, while the Department of Children Services should expand support for vulnerable families. Future research should focus on longitudinal and comparative studies to assess the impact of parenting styles and the effectiveness of interventions on adolescent self-esteem.

REFERENCES

- Adeniyi, O. S., & Omoteso, B. A. (2014). Parenting styles and self-esteem among adolescents in Nigeria.
- Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology Monograph*, 4(1), 1–103.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development.
- Darling, N., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting style as context: An integrative model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113(3), 487-496.
- Gul, A., et al. (2024). Parenting styles and adolescent psychosocial outcomes: A cross-cultural analysis. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 33(2), 145-159.
- Joshanloo, M. (2020). Cultural influences on self-esteem and well-being.
- Kinga, J., & Muriithi, P. (2014). Parenting and adolescent development in African contexts.

- Martínez, I., et al. (2020). Parenting styles across cultures and adolescent outcomes.
- Milevsky, A., et al. (2007). Parenting styles in adolescents: The role of parental authority in self-esteem development.
- Mukola, (2022). Parenting styles and adolescent self-esteem in Kenya.
- Muzaki, (2018). Parenting practices and adolescent emotional well-being in East Africa.
- Mwakanyamale, A. A., & Ndomondo, M. (2019). Parenting and adolescent well-being in Tanzania.
- Mwakanyamale, A., & Yizhen, Y. (2019). Emotional neglect and adolescent self-esteem.
- Ngige, L., et al. (2020). Parenting practices and adolescent self-esteem in Kenya.
- Ochieng, (2019). Gender differences in parenting and adolescent self-esteem.
- Orth, U., & Robins, R. W. (2014). The development of self-esteem. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23(5), 381-387.
- Peng, et al. (2021). Adolescent self-esteem and behavioral outcomes.
- Rohner, R. P. (2016). Parental acceptance-rejection theory studies.
- Roman, N. V., et al. (2016). Parenting styles and adolescent psychosocial outcomes in South Africa.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton University Press.
- Rukwaro, (2023). Parenting styles and adolescent self-esteem in Kenya.
- Sawyer, S. M., et al. (2018). Adolescence: A foundation for future health. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 2(3), 223-228.
- von Soest, T., et al. (2018). Development of global self-esteem across time.
- Wambua, C., & K'Okul, F. (2024). Parenting styles and adolescent self-esteem in Kenya.
- Zeigler-Hill, V. (2013). Self-esteem. *Psychology Press*.