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A Study of Perceived Parental Styles and Self-Esteem of Adolescents

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Abstract The aim of the study was to investigate the phenomenon of parental involvement in early childhood education and the factors that impact on it. Three psychological constructs of parents' involvement: (a) 'Parents' Motivational Beliefs', (b) 'Parents' Perception of Invitations' and (c) 'Parents' Perceived Life Context' were examined. The revised model of Walker et al (2005, p.89) was used to create questionnaires which were employed in the investigation focusing primarily on what parents do to engage with their young children's home based and school based activities. Survey responses were received from parents of children participating in the ECCE centre in the community. Face-to-face interviews were also organized with parents of students who recently graduated from the institution and the teachers. Results indicated that 'Parents Motivational Beliefs' was the driving force behind parents' involvement in their children's education and that most likely improved children's school performance. However, parents' involvement in school-based activities was not actively undertaken. Parents' Perception of Invitation was important as parents became involved if they perceived that teachers desired their involvement. In the case of working parents, these parents identified a support system for their educational involvement. Finally, a variety of factors have been identified as contributing to the disproportionate under achievement of children.
Keywords: Perceived Parental Styles, Self-Esteem, Adolescents

Introduction

Adolescence is the most difficult and critical period of development for both adolescents and their parents. All parents have their own unique styles of dealing with their children. Four parenting styles can be distinguished: authoritative (high demand and high responsiveness), authoritarian (high demand and low responsiveness), permissive (low demand and high responsiveness) and indifferent or neglectful (low demand and low responsiveness).

Parenting styles can be understood as attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and create an emotional climate in which parents' behavior is expressed. Each style demonstrates a particular relationship that occurs between the parents and children at a specific point in time. Relationships initiated during childhood affect how adolescents view their parents' availability and form relationships with others.

Self-esteem is defined as an individual's attitude about him or herself, involving self- evaluation along a positive-negative dimension. Most generally self-esteem refers to an individual's overall positive evaluation to the self. It is composed of two distinct dimensions, competence (efficacy based self-esteem) and worth (worth based self-esteems).

Self-esteem is based on three essential sources: (i) messages of love, support and approval from others; (ii) specific attributes and competencies; and (iii) the way one regards these specific aspects of the self, both in comparison with others and in relation to one's ideal self. Research studies have investigated that family process resources (i.e., parent's aspirations and expectations; the amount of help, interest, and attention given; and other ongoing and dynamic resources) determines the adolescents self-esteem.

Self-esteem is also associated with depression, anxiety, motivation and general satisfaction with one's life. Given these associations, children and adolescents who lack self-esteem may be more dependent on their parents and have lower academic and vocational goals. Moreover the belief is widespread that raising an individual's self-esteem (especially that of a child or adolescent) would be beneficial for both the individual and society as a whole.

Parenting plays a crucial role in adolescents' transition to adulthood. Parenting has been recognized as a major influence in socializing the child. Researchers in the past too have uncovered convincing links between parenting styles and the effects these styles have on children. Many studies of parenting during adolescence have examined the relations between parenting characteristics (e.g., parenting style and parental involvement) and adolescent outcomes (e.g., school achievement). Research studies have revealed that there is a strong emphasis on the importance of family, especially parents, in the development of a child's well being and sense of happiness. Also, positive parenting styles are believed to produce positive qualities in children, such as higher levels of self-esteem, responsibility, motivation for goal achievement and friendliness. The purpose of this study is to associate the perceived paternal and maternal parenting styles of adolescents' to their self esteem. The study can help provide a perspective in understanding the need for a more positive involvement of both the parents in parenting tasks and its influence on adolescent outcomes.

Review of Literature

Joshi S , Srivastava R (2009) investigated the self-esteem and academic achievement of 200 urban and 200 rural adolescents, and the gender differences in self-esteem and academic achievement in Varnasi district. The boys and girls (aged 12 to14) were equally distributed among the urban and rural sample. Based on Self-esteem questionnaire and academic achievement from the school records, it was found that there were no significant differences with regard to self-esteem of rural and urban adolescents but significant differences with regard to academic achievement of rural and urban adolescents. Urban adolescents scored higher in academic achievement as compared to rural adolescents. Boys scored significantly higher on self-esteem as compared to girls and there were also significant gender differences in academic achievement.

Martinez I, Garcia JF[4] explored the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem among 1,239 11- to 15-yr.-old Brazilian adolescents (54% girls; M age = 13.4 yr., SD= 1.4). Teenagers' families were classified into 1 of 4 groups (Authoritative, Authoritarian, Indulgent, or Neglectful) based on adolescents' answers to the ESPA29 Parental Socialization Scale. Adolescents from Indulgent families scored higher than adolescents from Authoritarian and Neglectful families in four Self-esteem dimensions, Academic, Social, Family, and Physical. Adolescents from Authoritative families scored higher than adolescents from Authoritarian and Neglectful families in three Self-esteem dimensions, Academic, Social, and Family. These results suggested that Authoritative parenting is not associated with optimum self-esteem in Brazil.

Oliver JM, Paull JC examined associations among self-esteem and self-efficacy; perceived unfavorable Parental Rearing Style (perceived PRS) and unfavorable family climate in the family of origin; and depression in undergraduates still in frequent contact with their families (N = 186). Unfavorable perceived PRS and family climate were construed as "affectionless control," in which parents and family provide little affection, but excessive control. Constructs were

measured by the Self-Esteem Inventory, the Self-Efficacy Scale, the Child Report of Parental Behavior Inventory, the Family Environment Scale, and the Beck Inventory. Perceived "affectionless control" in both PRS and family climate accounted for about 13% of the variance in self-esteem, self-efficacy, and depression. Neither introversion nor depression mediated the relation between family socialization and self-esteem.

Lian TC, Yusooff F investigated the effects of parental relationship on the self-esteem of some 400 secondary school students from three different schools in Kuala Langat district that were randomly selected. The questionnaire designed measured the level of parental relationship, family cohesion, self-esteem, social isolation and resiliency of the students which included 'Children's Report of Parental Behavior Inventory', 'Family Functioning Scale', 'Self-esteem Rating Scale' and 'Resiliency Attitude Scale'. The research was based on two important theories: The Ecological theory and the Resiliency theory. The study supports the findings of both Ecological theory and the Resiliency theory. However, it shows that parental relationship is not the only contributory factor of self-esteem of the child; in fact there are other contributory factors.

Objectives Of The Study

- To assess the perceived parenting style of both mothers and fathers from adolescents
- To assess the self-esteem of adolescents
- To find the correlation between perceived parenting styles and the level of self esteem among adolescents.

Methodology

Source of data: The data will be collected during the specified period from adolescents studying in 11th and 12th Standard in CBSE /ICSE schools in Bangalore.

Method of Data Collection: Questionnaire method will be used for the study

Sampling procedure:

Schools for the study will be selected based on permission received and adolescents (both boys and girls) will be selected using stratified random sampling technique.

Sample size:

In this study the sample size will be 100 adolescents (50 boys and 50 girls) from CBSE/ ICSE schools.

Inclusion criteria

- Adolescents who are willing to participate in the study
- Adolescents who are currently residing with their biological parents and who have resided with them for atleast 16 years.

Exclusion criteria

- Adolescents residing with a single parent or with a parent who is separated/ divorced

Instruments to be used for the study:

Prior to data collection written permission will be obtained for conducting the study through proper channel, from the selected school and also from the participants with assured confidentiality.

The tool will be divided into 4 sections.

- **Section A:** Preliminary sampling will be done based on exclusion and inclusion criteria.
- **Section B:** Demographic data sheet including age, sex, religion, parent's education, career/ profession and type of family.
- **Section C:** Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale[7] to assess the level of self-esteem among adolescents. The scale may be used without explicit permission.
- **Section D:** Parental Bonding Instrument[8] by Gordon Parker, Hilary Tupling and L.B. Brown to assess the perceived maternal and paternal parenting style among adolescents**.** The PBI is not held under copyright and can be used without obtaining permission.

Ethical Considerations

1. Voluntary written informed consent will be obtained from schools and students for conducting the study.
2. A general outline of the study in terms of aims and objectives will be explained to all the participants approached for the study.
3. The participants will be assured of confidentiality of data and the data obtained during the study will be used for the purpose of this study only.
4. The participants will be informed about the freedom to withdraw from the study anytime they wish to.

Results and Conclusion

The model presented in this paper provides a systematizing structure and direction for organizing parent-involved programmes and activities on the theme of empowering parents. The goal of empowerment is not simply to 'change' people, but to provide them with tools which will enable them to manage their own lives more effectively. Research on parental involvement in their children's education covers two broad areas: the effect of parental interaction and involvement in the pre-school and the impact of parental involvement in the home. The primary question in the study focussed on the relative strength of the psychological factors underlying parents' behaviour, namely 'Parents' Motivational Belief' (comprising parents' home-based involvement, school-based involvement and parents' self-efficacy'), 'Parents' Perception of Invitation' and 'Parents' Perceived Life Context' as measures for predicting parent involvement and providing answers to the objectives of the investigation.

5. The results of this exploratory study suggest that the three psychological constructs of parents' involvement be equally important and operate together. These psychological constructs are: (a) Parents' Motivational Belief (b) Parents' Perception of Invitations and (c) Parents Perceived Life Context. Emanating from this preliminary investigation, parents' involvement in their children's education was driven firstly by the parents' belief of what is important, necessary and permissible for them to do on behalf of their children for their involvement to have a positive effect on children's education ('Parents' Motivational Belief'). Their involvement took the form of (a) talking to their children about what transpired in the pre-school during the day (b) assistance of children with their homework (c) reading to their children and (d) providing home-based support even in their absence by networking, ensuring someone was present to help children with their homework and reading. By participating in these activities parents demonstrated increased involvement in their children's education and became the catalyst for their children's literacy development. Homework assistance, reading to their children and talking to their children about the school day ('Parents' Motivational Belief') are activities which are designed to enhance parenting skills in general and improve children's home-learning environment. Parents talking to their children suggest what being a good parent all is about and how to relate to one's child in a manner that enhances cognitive and emotional development.

6. Secondly, from the onset of 'basis communication', parents establish an initial link with their children's teacher, although the teachers at the ECCE centre are responsible for this initial level of parents' involvement (parents' perception of invitation). Teachers encourage and offer opportunities for involvement which increase rates of parents' involvement. At this stage, parents have accepted responsibility for monitoring their children's progress. The joy of participating in the various activities and the communication link arrived at with the teachers are the motivating force behind parents' involvement. Also, parents'

perception of invitations is associated with parent-teacher communication which is highly motivating to parents as they feel honoured to be consulted by teachers.

Thirdly 'Parental Self-Efficacy' is also inspiring parents' involvement as parents become involved since they believe that their action would improve learning and academic performance (Deslandes and Bertrand 2005, p.165). Parents' beliefs of self-efficacy are high as parents assist and interact with students and other parents and they feel comfortable about the impact that they have on their children's education programme. Furthermore, they are also committed to accepting teacher generated information about their children as they realize that the teachers have more influence on their children's grade than they do.

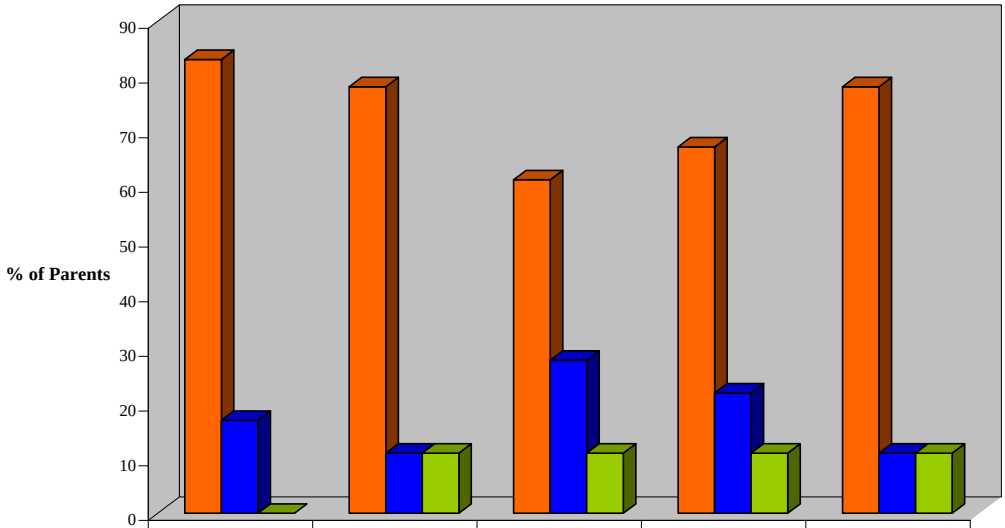
Finally, parents decided to get involved at home because they wished to listen to the student read or help to practice writing a letter of the alphabet. Parents' beliefs that their responsibility are to monitor their children's progress and to keep abreast of activities at the pre-school ('Parent Role Construction'). In light of these beliefs, parents developed practices at home to ensure that their children would progress in the pre-school ('Parents' Perceived Life Context'). These practices included the time spent watching television, playing outside or with toys to name a few. Therefore, children with parents who foster in their offspring the need to do well and who anticipate this need, are more likely to excel, because of their parents' complete investment in the education process from both within and outside the home.

Ironically, the study suggested also that full-time working parents may impose barriers to family education involvement. Nevertheless, qualitative analyses of our phenomenological sample unearthed a variety of ways in which some working mothers overcame involvement barriers posed by work and created opportunities from the work places. One strategy adopted is the support system which involved relying on friends and families, creating a culture of learning in the home and behavioural monitoring at school.

Since there are still about twenty (20) percent of parents who are not involved in any activities either at home or at school and a further eleven (11%) percent who agreed that they do not know how to help their children learn ('Parents' Self-Efficacy'), the improvement of educational outcomes for urban children continued to be a challenge facing policy makers and educators. The question that should be asked is: *'What steps are necessary to improve parents' involvement in their children's education to prevent the disproportionate under achievement of these children?*' The data suggest (1) the importance of sensitizing parents to their duties and responsibilities (2) the introduction of parent education programmes (computer literacy and mathematics) as suggested by some parents, which should enhance parents' skills and self-efficacy and for parents that are literacy-challenged, their enrolment in Adult Literacy Tutors Association (ALTA) programmes (3) sustained parent-teacher-children communication about schooling by involvement in the pre-school via attendance at PTA meetings and school events which will engender the developing of close-knit communities where parents knew each other and (4) enhanced parents' interaction with children at home. For example, a real life scenario encountered during the study at the ECCE centre, recalls a time when a child went into a tantrum as the teacher did not allow her to keep a storybook. On investigating the child's home-based activities, it was learnt that since the parent was seldom home, the child was allowed to do whatever she liked. Another noticeable obstruction to parental interaction was the labelling of children who were struggling with acquiring literacy and numeracy skills, as abnormal or as having low or no academic ability. This act

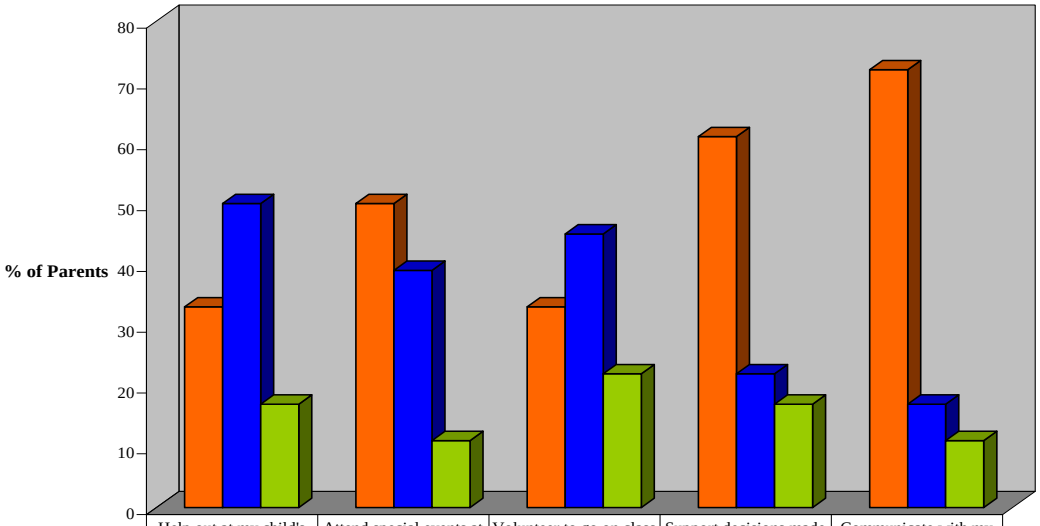
of labelling or stigmatizing children could lead to negative outcomes that would likely initiate increased probability of delinquent and criminal behaviour (Arum and Bell, 2006). Consequently, when children are hurt, abused or marginalized by parents, they learnt that they were stupid and worthless and learning became more difficult.

FIG. 1: HOME BASED INVOLVEMENT



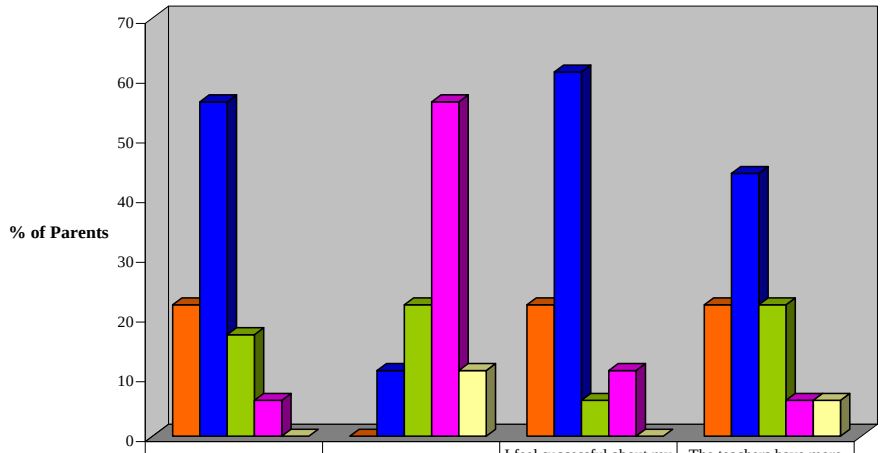
	Talk to my child about the school day	Supervise my child's homework	Practice spelling, math or other skills with my child	Read with my child	Evaluate my child's progress in centre
Strongly Agree	83	78	61	67	78
Agree	17	11	28	22	11
No Comment	0	11	11	11	11

FIG. 2: SCHOOL BASED INVOLVEMENT



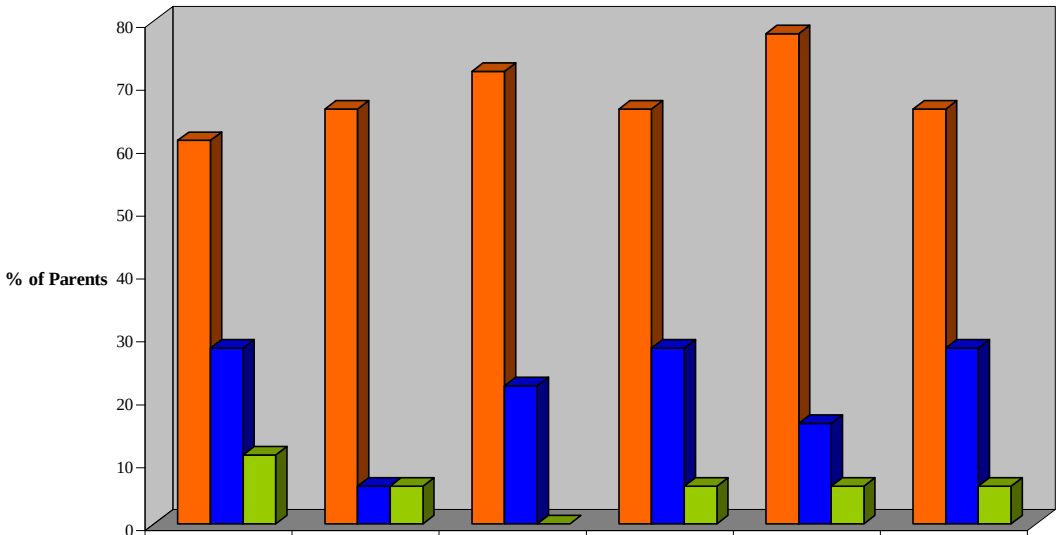
	Help out at my child's center	Attend special events at center including PTA	Volunteer to go on class-field trips	Support decisions made by the teachers	Communicate with my child's teacher regularly
Strongly Agree	33	50	33	61	72
Agree	50	39	45	22	17
No Comment	17	11	22	17	11

FIG. 3: PARENTS' SELF-EFFICACY FOR HELPING CHILDREN



	I know how to help my child do well in the center	I don't know how to help my child learn	I feel successful about my efforts to help my child learn	The teachers have more influence on my child's grades than I do
Strongly Agree	22	0	22	22
Agree	56	11	61	44
No Comment	17	22	6	22
Disagree	6	56	11	6
Strongly Disagree	0	11	0	6

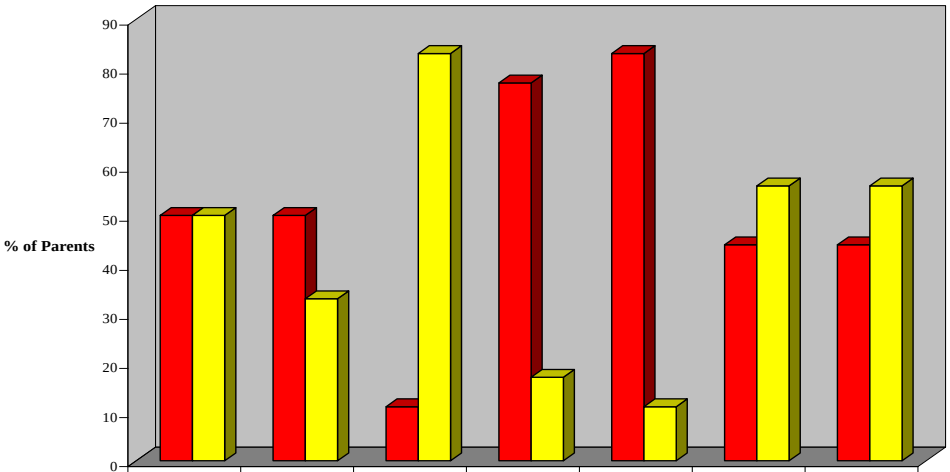
FIG. 4: PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF GENERAL INVITATIONS FOR INVOLVEMENT FROM THE SCHOOL



	Teachers at this center are interested and co-operative when they discuss my child	I feel welcome at this center	This center lets me know about meetings and special school events.	The center's staff contacts me promptly about any problems involving my child	The teachers at this center keep me informed about my child's progress in the center	I know how to communicate effectively with my child's teacher
Strongly Agree	61	66	72	66	78	66
Agree	28	6	22	28	16	28
No Comment	11	6	0	6	6	6

http://toucans.info

FIG. 5: PARENTS' PERCEIVED LIFE CONTEXT



	Watching TV	Listening to music	Playing outside	Reading	Bring read to by someone else	Playing inside with toys	Writing/Drawing
Less than 1 hour	50	50	11	77	83	44	44
1-2 hours	50	33	83	17	11	56	56

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