

## Impact of Mothering on Self Esteem and Adjustment of Adolescents

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### Abstract

The paper explores the influence of mothering mode of parenting on self esteem and adjustment of adolescents. The study attempted to find out differences among mothering variables with self esteem and adjustment. The parameters included in the study were rejection-acceptance, carelessness-protection, neglect-indulgence, utopian expectations-realism, lenient standard-moralism, freedom-discipline, faulty role expectations-realistic role expectations and marital conflict-marital adjustment mothering. Independent variables are self esteem, general adjustment with family, health, personal, social and academic adjustment. 120 adolescents within the age group of 15-18 years were selected using stratified random sampling. Statistical techniques used in this study were Correlation, ANOVA and Duncan technique. Results revealed that adolescents develop their self esteem more fast in acceptance mode of mothering and academic adjustment is more influenced with freedom mothering.

**Keywords:** Mothering; Self esteem; Adjustment.

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### Introduction

Two thirds of the humanity lives in the developing world, where 80 percent or more of the population are adolescents. Young people between the age 8 of 10-19 comprise more than half of the population of an average developing country. The child, especially adolescents whose life is embedded in storm and stress, uses his or her parents as models for adjustment to life and fundamental pattern at home cannot be eradicated completely yet modified or changed as the individual grows up.

Psychoanalysis has stressed the importance of early family experiences on the child's behavior and attitudes. It is the attitude towards the child; love, affection etc that determines how well the child will adjust i.e. being wanted, appreciated, trusted or accepted as a person outside the home.

Parenting refers to the activity of raising a child rather than the biological relationship.[1] Parental support during stressful periods of transition predicts positive adjustment.[2]

The mother child relationship is influenced to a greater extent by the kind of parenting practices adopted by the mother that will thus lead to the socialization pattern.[3] The role of mother or the style of upbringing is largely associated with congenial development of personality because the child first comes in contact with the mother and always depends on her to satisfy his basic needs. The role of mother shows better control over the children and stands for friendship with less dominance and punishment, symbol of emotional support and interpersonal sensitivity. Mother plays an important role in making a person more productive and imaginative. Whereas, patterns of inadequate maternal behavior seem to be responsible for the problem of

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children's behavior and chemical dependence. This tends to inhibit the exploration of child's personality in the environment.

The review of literature reveals that a lot of studies were conducted relating to parenting to self esteem and adjustment but the studies relating to the influence of mothering alone with self esteem and adjustment are comparatively less. Bagley and Schaefer (1960) made a research in influence maternal and paternal parenting styles in adolescents on self-esteem, depression and life-satisfaction. [4] Also Allen *et al* (1994) and Buhrmester *et al* (1987) have studied the importance of mother's relationship with their child. These studies provide a feasible awareness that mothering has a great significance with self esteem and adjustment of adolescents. [5,6]

Aim of the present study was to identify the influence of various modes of mothering on self esteem and adjustment of adolescents. It is important to note that most of the children have a definite clear cut concept of 'father' which differs markedly from their concept of 'mother'. [7] Therefore it appears to be of utmost importance to study perceptions regarding their fathering and mothering separately and mothering should be given more stressed because mothering characteristics are very important from the aspects of personality development of adolescents. The study will maintain particular significance to both parents especially mothers thus contribute to children's healthy environment as it is an important problem for most of the developing countries.

### Objective of the Study

The main objective is to gather preliminary information about mothering characteristics that will help define problems and suggest hypotheses in self esteem and adjustment of adolescents.

### Methodology

It is an exploratory study carried out on a representative sample of 120 students of Class XI and XII between the age group of 15-18 at Kannur district of Kerala State chosen by stratified random sampling method.

#### *Tools*

For the present investigation, 'Parenting Scale', 'Personal Adjustment Inventory' and 'Self Esteem Inventory' were used along with Personal Information Schedule sheet. A personal data sheet has been prepared for the purpose of collecting some background information about socio demographic variables found to be relevant for the study.

#### *Parenting Scale*

The Parenting Scale, developed by Bhardwaj *et al* (1995), used to measure perceptions of individual or one's own feeling as to how he or she is brought up by his or her parents on various modes of parenting. Eight parenting models have been included in the present scale. It includes rejection-acceptance, carelessness-protection, neglect-indulgence, utopian expectations-realism, lenient standard-moralism, freedom-discipline, faulty role expectations-realistic role expectations and marital conflict-marital adjustment which has high reliability and validity. The reliability coefficients of the 6 styles of test-retest are 0.79, 0.54, 0.64, 0.59, 0.67, 0.56, 0.74, 0.69 for different modes of parenting and the total reliability is found to be 0.72. The coefficients of validity for different modes of parenting were 0.45, 0.39, 0.42, 0.62, 0.38, 0.52, 0.57, 0.36 and the total coefficient of validity is 0.75. [8]

#### *Personal Adjustment Inventory*

The Personal Adjustment Inventory, developed by Asha (1989), consists of 100

questions which are divided under 6 categories of adjustment and it includes family , health , personal , social , academic and general adjustment. The scale had specific norms, reliability and validity. The reliability coefficients test-retest data were 0.88 and 0.91. The coefficient of validity was found to be 0.81 in boys and 0.84 in girls for a total of general adjustment.[9]

#### *Self Esteem Inventory*

Self Esteem Inventory, developed by Immanuel Thomas and Sam Sananda Raj (1981) used to assess the self esteem of individuals in correspondence with various situations. This inventory is not a test or a precise measure of self-esteem. Instead, it identifies beliefs, feelings, and behaviors that contribute to self-esteem. The 25 statements can be used to update beliefs that have limited self-esteem and the specific scale has also high reliability and validity. The split-half reliability of the test is 0.95 and retest reliability 0.90. The scale possesses content validity, as it is modeled after well-known inventories meant for measuring self esteem. Validity is also determined empirically with teacher rating as external criterion. A coefficient of 0.41 thus obtained shows that the inventory is a fairly valid one.[10]

#### *Procedure*

The main purpose of the study was to identify the effect of various parenting characteristics especially mothering on adjustment and self esteem. There are 3 questionnaires for conducting this test. These were given in the order of Adolescent Parenting Inventory, Self Esteem Inventory and Personal Adjustment Inventory. After establishing rapport, the instructions were read as given in the questionnaire and subjects were informed that there were no time limits for conducting the test and were asked to take time gaps to relax in between filling the 3 questionnaires. After completion, the scales are all collected back.

#### *Statistical Methods*

The data collected were subjected to analysis using Correlation, ANOVA and Duncan techniques were all collected back.

### **Results and Discussion**

The main objective of the study is to find out various mothering characteristics for better development of adolescents and also to identify the effect of various parenting characteristics on adjustment and self esteem. For this purpose Correlation, ANOVA and Duncan techniques were used. Correlation technique was used to find out all the possible correlations with parenting variables such as rejection-acceptance, carelessness-protection, neglect-indulgence, utopian expectations-realism, lenient standard-moralism, freedom-discipline, faulty role expectations-realistic role expectations and marital conflict-marital adjustment and with the help of mean and standard deviation the whole variables were divided into high, medium and low. ANOVA was done to find out whether there exists any significant difference in various modes of adjustment and self esteem with respect to various parenting modes and if a difference exists, further analysis is done by Post Hoc Test to find out which group significantly differs from other groups.

The one way ANOVA results presented in Table No 1 show that there were significant difference in self esteem with acceptance-rejection mothering. The F-value obtained from the analysis was 5.91 which were significant at 0.01 levels. F ratio represents the variance between the groups, divided by the variance within the group which indicates whether there are any significant mean differences among the groups on the concerned variable. This gives an idea that acceptance-rejection mode of parenting, especially mothering, influences largely to create self esteem in adolescents. To find out which group is significantly differs from other groups, post-hoc comparison was conducted and it clearly indicates self esteem is more influenced by acceptance mode of mothering.

**Table 1: Results of One Way ANOVA: Comparison of Rejection Acceptance Mothering Among Adolescents on Adjustment and Self Esteem**

Sl.No	Variables	Sum of squares		Mean square		F-ratio
		Between	Within	Between	Within	
1	Family adjustment	3.78	720.97	1.89	6.44	0.29
2	Health adjustment	25.15	524.97	12.58	4.69	2.68
3	Personal adjustment	12.16	668.88	6.08	5.97	1.02
4	Social adjustment	4.54	742.2	2.27	6.63	0.34
5	Academic adjustment	17.52	809.05	8.76	7.22	1.21
6	General adjustment	15.65	6374.61	7.82	56.92	0.14
7	Self esteem	2082.59	19712.1	1041.29	176	5.91**

**Table 2: Results of One Way ANOVA: Comparison of Carelessness Protection Mothering Among Adolescents on Adjustment and Self Esteem**

Sl.No	Variables	Sum of squares		Mean square		F-ratio
		Between	Within	Between	Within	
1	Family adjustment	3.53	721.21	1.77	6.44	0.28
2	Health adjustment	2.27	547.85	1.14	4.89	0.79
3	Personal adjustment	20.46	660.58	10.23	5.89	1.74
4	Social adjustment	1.65	745.09	0.83	6.65	0.13
5	Academic adjustment	6.43	820.14	3.22	7.32	0.44
6	General adjustment	24.24	6366.02	12.12	56.84	0.21
7	Self esteem	586.23	21208.5	293.12	189.36	1.55

**Table 3: Results of One Way ANOVA: Comparison of Neglect Indulgence Mothering Among Adolescents on Adjustment and Self Esteem**

Sl. No	Variables	Sum of squares		Mean square		F-ratio
		Between	Within	Between	Within	
1	Family adjustment	17.13	707.62	8.56	6.32	1.36
2	Health adjustment	5.35	544.77	2.68	4.86	0.55
3	Personal adjustment	2.8	678.24	1.4	6.06	0.23
4	Social adjustment	6.01	74.74	3	6.61	0.45
5	Academic adjustment	1.94	824.64	0.97	7.36	0.13
6	General adjustment	2.99	6387.27	1.5	57.03	0.02
7	Self esteem	1113.94	20680.8	556.97	184.65	3.02

**Table 4: Results of One Way ANOVA: Comparison of Lenient Standard Moralism Mothering Among Adolescents on Adjustment and Self Esteem**

Sl. No	Variables	Sum of squares		Mean square		F-ratio
		Between	Within	Between	Within	
1	Family adjustment	8.23	716.52	4.12	6.4	0.64
2	Health adjustment	8.41	541.72	4.2	4.84	0.87
3	Personal adjustment	1.36	679.68	0.68	6.07	0.11
4	Social adjustment	4.35	742.4	2.17	6.63	0.33
5	Academic adjustment	2.5	824.07	1.25	7.36	0.17
6	General adjustment	36.24	6354.1	18.12	56.73	0.32
7	Self esteem	328.24	21466.5	164.12	191.67	0.86

This means that adolescents develop their self esteem more fast in acceptance mode of mothering than in rejection mode. This denotes that proper care and response of mothers may develop good positive attitude in adolescents. Acceptance by mothers implies an attitude of love for the child. The accepting

mother puts the child in a position of importance in the home and develops a relationship of emotional warmth thus increases their self esteem. Maternal acceptance encourages the child and makes itself apparent in receptive or positive attitude towards the child's idea and judgment,

**Table 5: Results of One Way ANOVA: Comparison of Freedom Discipline Mothering among Adolescents on Adjustment and Self Esteem**

Sl. No	Variables	Sum of squares		Mean square		F-ratio
		Between	Within	Between	Within	
1	Family adjustment	25.51	699.24	12.76	6.24	2.04
2	Health adjustment	1.3	548.82	0.65	4.9	0.13
3	Personal adjustment	9.44	671.6	4.72	6	0.16
4	Social adjustment	24.14	722.61	12.07	6.45	1.87
5	Academic adjustment	51.19	775.38	25.6	6.92	3.7**
6	General adjustment	235.48	6154.78	117.74	54.95	2.14
7	Self esteem	1005.52	20789.2	502.76	185.62	0.07

worthiness and capability, love and affection and admiration along with adequate attention towards him.

The results of ANOVA tests in Table No 2 shows that F-value obtained for self esteem as well as adjustment has no significant difference among adolescents whose parents ,especially mother having the characteristics of carelessness and protection. This reveals that both carelessness and protection have no difference in forming of self esteem or in maintaining psychological adjustment. This denotes that carelessness- protection mothering as a single factor doesn't exert influence on either self esteem or adjustment. Studies by Larson *et al* (1996) found out that the sense of protection in the child makes him better and more confident thus improves his self esteem and also gives him strength and psychological support thus also influences his overall adjustment.[11] Present study provides no significant difference between carelessness-protection variable with self esteem or adjustment. Parenting on carelessness dimension manifests itself, when both or either parents do not pay adequate heed towards child's activities thus giving an impression of unwantedness even with proper and worthy behavior. On the other hand the sense of protection in the child makes him better and more confident. It is also true that over protection obstructs the independent growth of the child.

The results presented in Table No 3 shows that self esteem and adjustment has no significant difference among adolescents whose parents,especially mothers, having the characteristics neglect and indulgence especially in maternal parenting. This reveals

that neglect-indulgence parenting variable does not show any difference in forming of self esteem or in maintaining psychological adjustment. This denotes that neglect-indulgence mothering as a single factor doesn't exert influence on both self esteem and adjustment. Findings of most of the studies differ from the result of the present study. Studies by Grusec *et al* (1982) found out that there will be significant influence in mothering characteristics of neglect as well as indulgence between self esteem and adjustment but present study forms no difference in neglect-indulgence variable with self esteem or adjustment. Neglecting the children by their parents is injurious to their psychological health. It manifests itself in lack of attention and cooperation with them, willful ignoring them and their activities and avoidance of their genuine needs.[12] On the other hand over indulgence of parents with the child develops certain whims and psychological inconsistencies in the latter. It may be seen in the parents yielding to every demand of the child and failure the exercise the needed constraint even when necessary. Such a child becomes unfit for a reasonable adjustment in the social circumstances.

The results presented in Table No 4 denotes that self esteem and adjustment has no significant difference among adolescents whose parents,with focus on mother, having the characteristics lenient standard and moralism.This depicts that this parenting variable has no difference in forming of self esteem or in maintaining psychological adjustment. Studies by Bharadwaj (1997) found out that emotional intelligence as well as self esteem was found to be greater in those

**Table 6: Results of One Way ANOVA: Comparison of Faulty Role Expectation Realistic Role Expectation Mothering among Adolescents on Adjustment and Self Esteem**

Sl. No	Variables	Sum of squares		Mean square		F-ratio
		Between	Within	Between	Within	
1	Family adjustment	15.59	709.16	7.8	6.33	1.23
2	Health adjustment	6.35	543.77	3.17	4.86	0.65
3	Personal adjustment	4.58	676.46	2.29	6.04	0.38
4	Social adjustment	23.07	723.68	11.53	6.46	1.78
5	Academic adjustment	17.88	808.7	8.94	7.22	1.24
6	General adjustment	177.62	6212.64	88.12	55.47	1.6
7	Self esteem	136.79	21657.9	68.4	193.37	0.35

early adolescents whose perceived fathering associated with moralism as against lenient standards. Present study founds no difference in lenient standard-moralism variable with self esteem or adjustment. Lenient standard of parents make themselves apparent in permitting lesser restrictions from deviations from ethical and moral behavior and an attitude showing indifference against such inhibitions too restrict child's freedom and individuality.[13]

The results presented in Table No 5 show that there were significant difference in academic adjustment in freedom discipline mothering. The F-value obtained from the analysis was 3.7 which were significant at 0.01 levels. F ratio represents the variance between the groups, divided by the variance within the group which indicates whether there are any significant mean differences among the groups on the concerned variable. This explains that freedom discipline mode of mothering influences largely to an increase academic performance thus it may reflect in proper academic adjustment in adolescents. Post-Hoc comparison was conducted among group revealed academic adjustment is more influenced by freedom mode of mothering. This means that adolescents develop their academic adjustment more fast in freedom mode of mothering than discipline mode of parenting. Freedom mothering manifests itself in absence of restraints over all matters. In fact the child is a sole decision maker of his activities. There is hardly any questioning or impediments on the part of parents and this can increase in the academic performance thus increases their academic adjustment. On the other hand, parents with strict discipline simply pass on orders to their children to obey.

The results presented in Table No 6 show that self esteem and adjustment has no significant difference among adolescents whose parents mainly, mother having the characteristics of faulty role expectation-realistic role expectation. A child who fails to meet the unrealistic expectations of the parent desperate to be loved may become the target of abuse[14] which leads to poor self esteem. Present study founds no difference in faulty role expectation-realistic role expectation variable with self esteem or adjustment. In faulty role expectation parenting, the child is always confused and embarrassed because of the unpredictable expectations of his parents. Parents usually expect divergent and contradictory roles from their children. On realistic role expectation, parents present themselves as an example to be followed by the children and their behavior is thoughtful, consistent and predictable. The children know for certain what their parents are alike and what is expected from them.

### Conclusion

The study gives promising data about various maternal mode of parenting that affects self esteem and adjustment of adolescents. Adolescents develop their self esteem more fast in acceptance mode of mothering than rejection mode of parenting. Academic adjustment is influenced more in freedom mothering than discipline mothering. Present study gives a clear evidence that various mothering modes or characteristics had a significant role in developing one's self esteem as well as adjustment. Though parenting as a perception of parents of their

own attitude toward the child, happens to be a great influence in social as well as psychological aspects of mothering which brings the individual a great success in his or her life. Parental acceptance implies an attitude of love for the child. It encourages adolescents to do actively both in home atmosphere and that of outside environment and thus increases his or her self esteem. Freedom mothering manifests itself in absence of restraints over all matters to what they may pertain to this may shows a markedly increase in the academic performance thus increases their academic adjustment. Many scientists have an opinion that family is the most effective and economical child care system for fostering and sustaining child's overall development. Hence the study presented is much important in this modern era important in this modern era since mothering variables which can positively influence the adolescents self esteem and awareness were statistically specified.

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