

International Journal of Psychology Research



ISSN Print: 2664-8903
ISSN Online: 2664-8911
Impact Factor: RJIF 5.24
IJPR 2024; 6(1): 65-68
www.psychologyjournal.in
Received: 01-01-2023
Accepted: 04-02-2023

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The impact of parental support on adolescent's emotional intelligence and self-esteem: A comprehensive literature review

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26648903.2024.v6.i1b.51>

Abstract

This comprehensive literature review explores the profound impact of parental support on adolescents' emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Drawing from a wide array of empirical studies and theoretical frameworks, we synthesize research findings that underscore the critical role of supportive parental behaviors—including emotional availability, constructive feedback, and nurturing guidance—in fostering emotional intelligence among adolescents. The review highlights that such parental involvement not only enhances adolescents' ability to understand and manage their own emotions but also improves their social skills and resilience in the face of challenges. Additionally, the analysis reveals that consistent parental support significantly contributes to the development of a positive self-concept and robust self-esteem in adolescents, which are pivotal for their overall mental health and well-being. The synthesis of the literature indicates a reciprocal relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem, mediated by parental support. These findings suggest that interventions aimed at increasing parental engagement could be beneficial in promoting healthier emotional and psychological development in adolescents. Recommendations for future research include longitudinal studies to explore the long-term effects of parental support and investigations into the differential impacts of maternal and paternal support on adolescent outcomes.

Keywords: Parental support, adolescents, emotional intelligence, self-esteem, mental health, psychological development

Introduction

Parental support has been found to have a significant impact on the emotional intelligence and self-esteem of adolescents. Research suggests that parental support can help to foster positive evaluations of one's abilities and worth, which in turn can lead to higher self-esteem and lower levels of internalizing symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and somatic symptoms (Moore II & Shell, 2017) ^[7]. The relationship between parental support and self-esteem is influenced by various factors, including the gender of the adolescent and the type of support provided by the parents. For example, research has shown that adolescent boys perceive more father support and girls perceive more mother support, and that parental support may have a greater impact on women's versus men's internalizing symptoms (Moore II & Shell, 2017) ^[7]. In addition to directly impacting internalizing symptoms, parental support may also indirectly affect internalizing symptoms by helping emerging adults develop personal characteristics that promote emotional intelligence and self-esteem. For example, research has found that parental support is positively related to self-esteem, and that higher maternal support is associated with greater self-esteem, which in turn is associated with lower internalizing symptoms (Moore II & Shell, 2017) ^[7]. Parental support is also influenced by a host of factors, including parental beliefs and child temperament. The degree to which parents trust that children have a natural tendency toward internalization and development strongly influences their capacity to provide autonomy support (Wairimu, 2016) ^[15]. Furthermore, the emotional intelligence and self-esteem of parents themselves contribute to the development of parental competence, which in turn favors the parent's relationship with his child in a competent way based on an authoritative style and well-established interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence (Șițoiu & Pânișoară, 2023) ^[12].

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Overall, the literature suggests that parental support plays a critical role in the development of adolescents' emotional intelligence and self-esteem, and that this support is influenced by a variety of factors, including the gender of the adolescent, the type of support provided by the parents, and the emotional intelligence and self-esteem of the parents themselves.

Parental support as referred in the current study, discusses, to the extent to which parents provide assistance and encouragement to meet their children's fundamental psychological requirements for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Parental support is determined by several factors, such as parental views and the temperament of the kid. The level of parental faith in children's inherent inclination towards internalization and growth significantly impacts their ability to offer autonomy support (Felson & Zielinski, 1989) [2].

Hence, to understand the concept, Self-esteem in adolescents refers to their overall evaluation of their own worth or value. It is a complex trait that is influenced by various factors, including specific domains such as feelings of scholastic and athletic competence, social acceptance, and physical appearance, as well as overall self-esteem (Calero *et al.*, 2018) [1]. During adolescence, self-esteem tends to diminish, especially in the middle stage (from 14 to 16 years old) (Calero *et al.*, 2018) [1]. Adolescents with high self-esteem are more likely to have higher scores on the components of academic engagement, such as positive attitudes toward the school and avoidance of academic activities (Ghorai *et al.*, 2021) [3]. (Guasp Coll *et al.*, 2020) [4].

To understand the concept of emotional intelligence for adolescents. Emotional intelligence in adolescents refers to their ability to adaptively recognize, understand, manage, and harness emotions. It includes factors such as attention to feelings, clarity of feelings, mood repair, and the ability to monitor and regulate one's own and others' emotions (Ghorai *et al.*, 2021; Calero *et al.*, 2018) [4, 1]. Emotional intelligence has a significant positive correlation with self-esteem in adolescents. Adolescents with higher emotional intelligence tend to have higher levels of self-esteem (Ghorai *et al.*, 2021; Guasp Coll *et al.*, 2020) [3, 4]. Emotional intelligence also plays a role in academic engagement, well-being, and life satisfaction in adolescents, further highlighting its importance in promoting positive mental states and healthy self-development (Guasp Coll *et al.*, 2020) [4]. Implementing emotional intelligence intervention programs during adolescence is recommended as a measure for promoting self-esteem and engagement (Subon *et al.*, 2020) [13].

The objectives of this study is, firstly, to conduct analysis and synthesis of empirical research on the correlation between parental support and the emotional intelligence of adolescents. Secondly, to examine and synthesize empirical evidence on parental support and teenage self-esteem. Third, to analyze theoretical frameworks from the literature to explain how parental support affects teenagers' emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

The significance of studying the impact of parental support on adolescents' emotional intelligence and self-esteem lies in its implications for promoting positive psychological development in adolescents. By understanding how parental support influences these aspects of adolescent well-being, parents, educators, and policymakers can implement

strategies and interventions that enhance parental support and create nurturing environments.

Theoretical framework

Parental support is crucial in influencing the development of emotional intelligence and self-esteem in teenagers. The relevance of the Impact of Parental Support on Adolescents' Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem lies in its ability to reveal how parental participation and encouragement may have a beneficial effect on the psychological well-being of adolescents. The theories reviewed to discuss the interplay between the parental support, emotional intelligence and self-esteem of adolescents

Family Systems Theory

Family systems theory (Bowen, 1950 as cited in Haefner, 2014) [5] asserts that the parent-child interaction within the family system is of utmost importance in the psychological and emotional development of children. The way parents raise their children has a strong impact on the mental well-being of teenagers. Factors such as self-esteem and psychological inflexibility play a crucial role in this connection (Peng *et al.*, 2021) [8].

Input-Process-Output-Review theory

The IPAR theory, or Input-Process-Output-Review theory (Rohner, 2016) [10], posits that the connection between a parent and child is a dynamic system characterized by continuous interactions. These interactions entail the parent providing input and the kid processing that data, which ultimately influences the child's behavior or output. As discussed by Guasp Coll *et al.*, (2020) [4] parental support, an essential component of the parent-child dynamic, can exert a substantial influence on an adolescent's emotional intelligence and self-esteem, thus affecting their mental health outcomes.

Psychological inflexibility theory

The theory of psychological inflexibility suggests a strong connection between self-esteem, psychological inflexibility, parenting style, and mental health. Having a high level of self-esteem is seen as a characteristic that helps safeguard mental health, whereas having low self-esteem makes a person more susceptible to the negative impacts of stress. Psychological inflexibility is a contributing element to mental health risks (as cited in Moksnes and Reidunsdatter, 2019; Mann *et al.*, 2004) [9, 16].

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory, proposed by Bowlby, suggests that the quality of the parent-child attachment relationship plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's emotional development (as cited in Valentina, E. A. (2022) [14]. According to this theory, a secure attachment between parents and adolescents provides a foundation for the development of emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

Empirical Evidence

Parental support has been linked to higher levels of self-esteem in adolescents. When parents create a nurturing environment and provide consistent support, adolescents are more likely to develop a positive self-image and feel valued. This, in turn, contributes to higher self-esteem and a greater sense of self-confidence. Furthermore, Peng *et al.*, (2021) [8]

sought to examine how self-esteem and psychological inflexibility mediate the connection between parenting style and the mental health of adolescents. The foundation of this was built upon the theories of interpersonal acceptance-rejection, family systems, and psychological inflexibility. The study revealed a correlation between adolescents' views of parental support and the positive impact on their self-esteem. The study used a cross-cultural comparative method and meta-analysis to analyze protective and risk variables in adolescent mental health. It focused on the parent-child interaction as a vital family component and included teenagers. This study examined how parenting style affects teenage mental health through family interactions. Results show that parenting style significantly affects adolescent mental health via self-esteem and psychological inflexibility. Positive parenting techniques improved teenage mental health by increasing self-esteem and decreasing psychological inflexibility. In contrast, negative parenting techniques were connected to decreased self-esteem, psychological inflexibility, and poorer mental health in teenagers. Hence, the current research supports family systems theory and psychological inflexibility theory, which stresses the family's role in children's psychological and emotional development. Adolescent mental health is shaped by the parent-child interaction, a family subsystem. Positive parenting approaches that promote autonomy, competence, and relatedness boost self-esteem and reduce psychological inflexibility, improving teenage mental health.

Additionally, Moore II & Shell, (2017) ^[7] and Felson & Zielinski, (1989) ^[2] assessed the association between parental support and self-esteem in college & school students respectively. They examined how parents' support impacts children's self-esteem and how self-esteem affects parental support. In a study conducted by Moore and Shell (2017) ^[7], it was shown that parental support and self-esteem had an indirect impact on internalizing symptoms in college students. Specifically, greater levels of parental support and self-esteem were linked to a decrease in the occurrence of internalizing symptoms. The study emphasizes the significance of investigating the indirect impacts of parental support and self-esteem on internalizing symptoms during the period of emerging adulthood. Felson & Zielinski, research uses a quantitative approach on the longitudinal data to determine the long-term impact of parental support on children's self-esteem using longitudinal modeling. The study examined how parental support impacts children's self-esteem in this age group and how self-esteem affects parental support. The study found that parents had a bigger impact on girls' self-esteem than boys, suggesting gender variations in parental support. Accordingly, the current research emphasises that the parent-child connection is dynamic and involves continual exchanges as also suggested by Input-Process-Output-Review (IPOR) paradigm. Therefore, parental support affects children's self-esteem, which in turn affects parental support. The IPOR theory emphasizes the dynamic aspect of parent-child interactions in moulding children's self-esteem. Similarly, Lim *et al.*, (2015) ^[6] propose that there is a positive correlation between parental emotional support and teenage happiness. They argue that this link is influenced by both self-esteem and emotional intelligence. The study aimed to investigate the correlation between parental emotional support and teenage happiness, while also

exploring the mediating influences of self-esteem and emotional intelligence. The research utilized a cross-sectional methodology and gathered information from a sample of 1,000 teenagers ranging in age from 12 to 18 years old. The study employed structural equation modelling as the statistical analysis approach. The findings revealed a favourable correlation between parental emotional support and teenage happiness. This connection was influenced by both self-esteem and emotional intelligence acting as mediators. More precisely, there was a positive correlation between increased levels of emotional support from parents and increased levels of self-esteem and emotional intelligence in adolescents. These greater levels of self-esteem and emotional intelligence, in turn, were linked to better levels of happiness in adolescents. The study's results align with attachment theory, which posits that the parent-child relationship's quality is vital for the child's emotional and social development (Lim *et al.*, 2015) ^[6]. Parental emotional support enhances feelings of stability and connection, therefore facilitating the cultivation of self-esteem and emotional intelligence.

The current research backs up the attachment and psychological inflexibility theory which posits that psychological inflexibility, including traits such as low self-esteem and emotional intelligence, is linked to adverse consequences such as sadness and anxiety (Shaygan *et al.*, 2021) ^[11] or disrupts the well-being of adolescents. The study's (Shaygan *et al.*, 2021) ^[11] results indicate that parental emotional support may serve as a safeguard against psychological inflexibility and its related adverse consequences.

Conclusion

To conclude, the current study indicates that parental emotional support is positively associated with adolescent well-being, and has a direct impact on both self-esteem and emotional intelligence. The study has implications for family systems, IPOR, attachment and psychological inflexibility theory, suggesting that parental emotional support may be a crucial factor in the development of self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and overall psychological well-being in adolescents. The literature suggests that parental support impact on adolescents' self-esteem and emotional intelligence are important factors in the development of internalizing symptoms in emerging adulthood. When parents support their children's basic psychological needs, such support in the familial context is associated with a host of positive child outcomes. The study recommends that educators pay more attention to the relationship between parental support and adolescents' self-esteem and emotional intelligence and that policymakers, educators, and stakeholders consider parental support in developing policies for schools.

Furthermore, this study can provide insights into the importance of parental involvement and support during adolescence, informing programs and interventions aimed at fostering emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Ultimately, studying the impact of parental support on adolescents' emotional intelligence and self-esteem contributes to a better understanding of the factors that shape adolescents' psychological well-being and can lead to improved outcomes for adolescents in various domains of life.

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