

Parenting Styles and Marriage Decision Self-Confidence: A Review and Empirical Analysis within the Indian Context

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Abstract: Parenting style is a critical determinant of an individual's emotional growth, autonomy, and decision-making abilities. In the Indian socio-cultural environment, where marriage is often a collective family decision, understanding the factors that influence marital decision confidence is essential. This paper reviews current literature on parenting typologies and presents empirical findings from a study of 104 unmarried Indian adults. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between authoritative ($r = .276, p = .005$) and permissive ($r = .306, p = .002$) parenting styles with marriage decision self-confidence. Conversely, authoritarian parenting demonstrated a non-significant negative trend. These findings highlight the enduring impact of early family environments on significant adult life choices.

Keywords: Authoritative Parenting, Decision Self-Esteem, Emerging Adulthood, Indian Marriage Dynamics, Parenting Styles.

1. Introduction

Marriage is a primary social institution that serves as a crucial turning point in adulthood. In India, unlike many Western individualistic cultures, marriage is frequently viewed as a communal event involving extensive parental participation and kinship alignment. Emerging adulthood—the period from late adolescence to the late twenties—is a stage defined by identity exploration and significant life commitments. During this phase, an individual's confidence in making marriage-related decisions becomes a vital psychological construct, determining their ability to navigate familial pressures and assess compatibility.

2. Theoretical Framework: Parenting Typologies

Parenting style refers to the emotional climate and behavioral strategies parents use to raise their children.

A. The Baumrind Model

Based on the work of Baumrind (1966), parenting is generally categorized into three primary styles:

- **Authoritative:** High warmth and high control, promoting independence and social skills.
- **Authoritarian:** High control and low warmth,

emphasizing obedience and often leading to emotional repression.

- **Permissive:** High warmth but low behavioral control, which can lead to a lack of self-discipline in children.

3. Review of Literature: Decision-Making and Self-Confidence

Prior research indicates that self-confidence and self-efficacy are strong predictors of successful decision-making across life domains.

A. Predictors of Rational Choice

Higher self-esteem is positively connected with rational decision-making styles and negatively correlated with avoidant or dependent types. For instance, individuals with high self-confidence are less likely to fall into the "compromise effect," as they are more certain of their choices rather than settling for middle-ground options.

B. Parenting Styles and Self-Concept

Empirical evidence suggests that authoritative parenting is linked to higher self-efficacy and achievement motivation. Conversely, authoritarian parenting has been associated with hypervigilance and procrastination in decision-making. Interestingly, some research suggests that in collectivist cultures like India, parental control may be perceived as care rather than constraint, potentially mitigating some negative effects of authoritarianism.

4. Empirical Synthesis: The Current Study

To bridge the gap in literature regarding the Indian marital context, a correlational study was conducted using the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and an adapted Melbourne Decision Making Questionnaire (MDMQ).

A. Descriptive and Correlation Results

The study analyzed 104 valid responses from unmarried adults.

- **Authoritative Style:** Mean score of 31.46 ($SSD = 8.14$), showing a significant positive correlation with

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marriage decision confidence.

- *Permissive Style*: Mean score of 26.46 ($SSD = 6.74$), also significantly positively correlated with confidence.
- *Authoritarian Style*: Mean score of 29.73 ($SSD = 7.01$), showing a non-significant negative relationship.

B. Socio-Demographic Factors

The study found no statistically significant gender differences ($t = -0.180$, $p = .858$) or differences based on income or educational levels regarding marriage decision confidence. This suggests that internal family dynamics may be more influential than external demographic markers.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The positive association between authoritative parenting and decision-confidence suggests that supportive, autonomy-promoting environments allow individuals to judge relationships more effectively. The unexpected positive

correlation with permissive parenting indicates that a lack of parental restriction in the Indian context may foster a sense of early independence in making personal choices.

A. Practical Implications

- *Counseling*: Interventions for young adults facing marital anxiety should target early family attachment and self-esteem.
- *Parenting Awareness*: Families should be encouraged to use communication-rich, supportive styles to boost adult autonomy.

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