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Parental Parenting Styles on Self-Esteem and Depression in Adolescents: Intervention Therapy Reality Module

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ABSTRACT

Parents are the first teachers of children at home, and children learn various things whether good or bad through the early education received at home. According to Norhasima (2023), the role of parents is the main pillar in the formation of human personality including early adulthood. In this study, the researcher wants to look at two study objectives, namely identifying parental parenting styles that affect adolescent self-esteem and identifying parental parenting styles that affect adolescent depression. This study uses a quantitative approach, and data will be analyzed with IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data can be shown through the mean value and standard deviation, namely for self-esteem (pre-test) the mean value is 14.0 and the standard deviation (pre-test) is 1.67. While for the post-test, the mean value and standard deviation represent 23.5, 4.37 respectively. The mean and standard deviation for depression levels were 25.6 (pre-test), 6.7 (pre-test). This value then decreased to 13.6 for the post-test and 4.1 for the post-test depression level. In this study, an intervention was carried out by the researcher using the Reality Therapy Module, which contains six counseling sessions with used a sample three person (N=3). The results of this study had an impact on the respondents with a decrease in depression levels and an increase in self-esteem levels after going through six counseling sessions conducted by the researcher. This study will also benefit the Nurul Iman Tabiah Center and the An Nur Tahfiz Center regarding the issue of depression and self-esteem that needs to be addressed if it has a direct impact on students.

Keywords:

Parenting style; self-esteem; depression; adolescents

1. Introduction

Humans are unique with various types of personalities and personalities. The factors that influence the formation of personality in humans are complex. The My Health Portal of the Ministry of Health Malaysia in 2017 concluded that the formation of human personality and behavior is closely related to family issues. Therefore, parental behavior is very important in the psychological development of early adulthood. Parents are the first 'teachers' to children at home, and children learn various things whether good or bad through the early education received at home. According

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to Zamani *et al*., [1] the role of parents is the main pillar in the formation of human personality including early adulthood. It is clear here that parenting style is a matter that is highly emphasized in educating children throughout their development process. This is because parents are the earliest and closest socialization agents to children [2].

In general, there are four main parenting styles that are often discussed. First, the authoritative style, which combines strict discipline and high emotional support, tends to produce children with high self-esteem, good social skills, and responsible behavior [3]. Second, the authoritarian style, which is harsh and less friendly, often causes children to experience feelings of inferiority, lack of confidence, and have social skills problems [4]. Next, the permissive style, where parents are very soft and do not insist on rules, usually produces children who are less disciplined and responsible [5]. Finally, the neglectful style, where parents are not involved or pay little attention, which can cause children to experience serious emotional problems and low self-esteem [6].

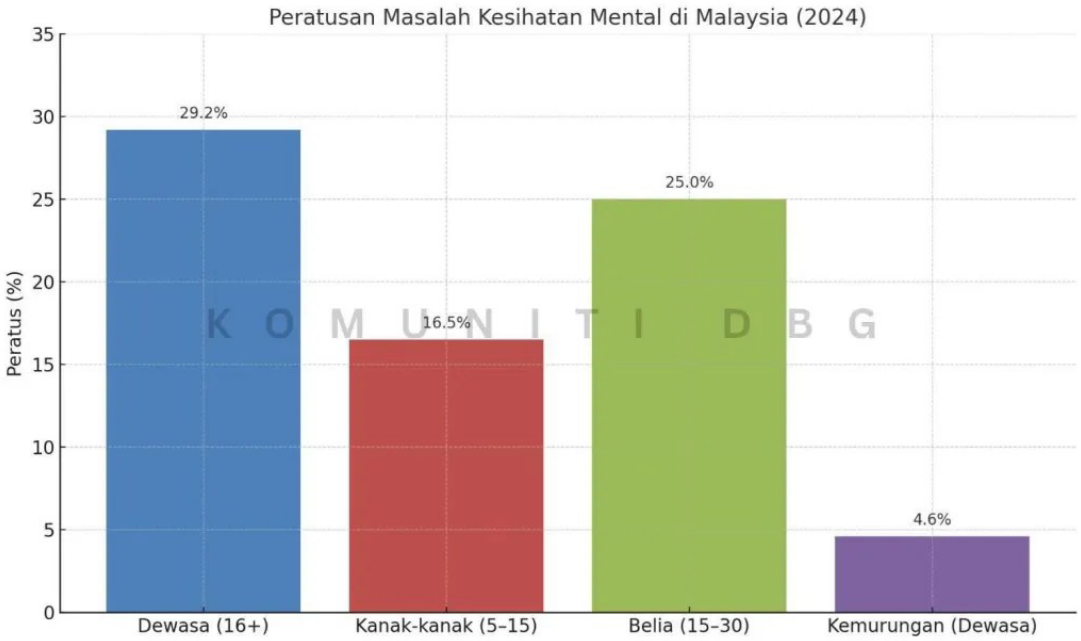
Early adult personality development refers to the process by which individuals form and strengthen their personality traits as they enter early adulthood, usually between the ages of 10 and 19 according Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO)[7,8]. During this phase, individuals begin to face a variety of significant life experiences such as starting a career, entering more serious romantic relationships, and developing a more established identity. In this context, it is important for parents to understand the impact of their parenting style on their children's development. Comprehensive parenting education and community support also play a role in helping parents adopt more effective parenting styles. Through a deeper understanding of their role, parents can guide their children towards positive and mature personality development.

Baumrind's theory also emphasizes the relationship between parenting style and child behavior. This explanation is supported by the results of a study conducted by Nawi *et al*., [9], which showed that conflict in the family can be a factor in causing emotional instability which further pushes adolescents to deviant and delinquent behavior. Previous studies have largely used quantitative approaches [5] which do not reveal in depth the experiences and perceptions of individuals about parenting styles. Furthermore, Hassan *et al*., [10] emphasized that in the last two decades, most studies on parenting in Malaysia have been quantitative in nature.

Study Hassan *et al*., [10] found that 91.07% of studies used a quantitative approach, while only 7.14% were qualitative studies and 1.79% used a mixed-method approach. This indicates that there is a gap that needs to be filled with qualitative studies to provide a deeper understanding of parenting aspects in Malaysia [10]. The selection of the early adulthood category in this study is based on the fact that previous studies have not explored this group, although early adulthood is a suitable category to explore experience because of the appropriate and more mature level of thinking. Statistics show that 60 percent of studies on personality development in Malaysia are more focused on children and adolescents, while only 15% focus on early adulthood Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2018.

In addition, differences in study findings regarding the effects of parenting styles on children's psychological development were also obtained in previous studies. Study Shahlal *et al*., [11], emphasized that parenting styles play an important role in addressing student discipline problems in school. This finding is also supported by the findings of study Sanvictores *et al*., [12], which found that parenting styles significantly influence children's personality development. On the other hand, the results of study Tarmizi *et al*., [5] showed that there was no significant relationship between parenting styles and children's negative behavior. A report by the Department of Education of Malaysia in 2019 that emphasized the importance of understanding family dynamics and parenting in the context of education in more depth.

The following are the latest statistics related to mental health in Malaysia until 2024, based on data from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023 and other official sources.



Mental Health Problem Prevalence Statistics (2024)
Source: National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023

The figure above shows the prevalence of mental health problems among adults (16 years and above): Approximately 29.2% or 4.2 million adults in Malaysia experience mental health problems. Children (5–15 years): Prevalence increased from 7.9% in 2019 to 16.5% in 2023, equivalent to one in six children. Youth (15–30 years): The Malaysian Youth Mental Health Index 2023 (MyMHI'23) study showed an increase in depression rates among youth, with one in four teenagers experiencing depression in 2022. In addition, depression and suicidal thoughts more than 1 million Malaysians (4.6% of the adult population) experienced depression. About half of respondents in the NHMS 2023 reported having thought about harming themselves or feeling better if they died.

A report from the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) has 385 psychiatrists serving in 68 government hospitals, as well as providing mental health services in 1,088 health clinics nationwide. The use of the Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) Helpline increased fivefold in 2022 compared to 2020, indicating an increase in demand for psychosocial support. High self-esteem plays an important role in a person's life. Self-esteem means a person's confidence in their own abilities and capabilities [13,14]. Bandura [15] also argues that self-esteem is an important aspect for an individual in the process of forming themselves, especially in terms of beliefs, motivation, affective levels and their actions based on what is believed objectively and realistically. High self-esteem will help adolescents increase their self-motivation and believe in themselves [16].

In order to develop high self-esteem in adolescents, the role of parents is an important factor. According to Patnaik *et al*., [17], the parenting style of adolescents and family support are important in the process of their social and intellectual development. Therefore, parents need to provide a conducive family environment to help smooth the transition process from adolescence to adulthood, and it will be smoother when adolescents receive care, guidance, support and guidance from parents in a harmonious family environment [18]. Many previous studies have proven that parenting styles and parenting practices can influence children's self-control [19], the ability to control stress and handle problems [20], and have social competence and good interpersonal relationships [21].

Therefore, it is very important for parents to practice effective parenting styles for their children so that the process of forming adolescent self-esteem occurs perfectly. Unfortunately, many adolescents have low self-esteem because they do not receive proper parental care and come from troubled families [22]. When adolescents have low levels of career self-esteem, it creates other problems such as depression, anxiety and a feeling of not being happy in facing life [23]. In this study, there are two research questions used, namely whether the level of adolescent self-esteem affects parental care styles and whether the level of adolescent depression affects parental care styles.

The explanation of the problems that occur in adolescents in terms of changes in self-esteem and depression explains that the negative attitudes that exist in adolescents are a result of the parenting style of parents. In Malaysia, there are many studies on parenting styles but little focus on self-esteem and depression. Teenagers who have problems in terms of depression and low self-esteem are at risk of negative behavior and isolating themselves from other friends. Based on the current situation, parents need to play an important role in educating children to form good behavior and an intervention should be carried out to help solve the problem.

The phenomenon of deviant behavior among adolescents has long been discussed in Malaysian society, raising various questions. Various views and studies have been conducted to more accurately see the factors and variables that contribute to the increase in deviant behavior among adolescents. A report issued by the Human Development Sector, Student Affairs Unit, Ministry of Education Malaysia in 2013 stated that ten types of criminal behavior among secondary and primary school students are criminal, obscene, untidiness, disregard for time, disrespect, destructive behavior, truancy, delinquency, bullying and smoking. This will lead to negative attitudes in early adolescence. This phenomenon provides an indication of the need to look deeper into resolving this crisis. Teenagers always need guidance, guidance and good education starting at home and in the environment.

Adults need to set a good example. Adolescence is a critical stage in human life where at this stage a person will begin to respond to emotional demands to find their own identity and appearance. Psychologists term adolescence as an 'emotional age' because at the stage of finding identity, they often face self-conflict where there are two clashes, namely between childlike nature and the desire and anxiety to experience adulthood. According to Mohamed *et al*., [24], deviant behavior among adolescents is caused by conflict and psychological stress where they fail to see the family as a healthy environment that can provide them with a sense of fun. Parenting style is a factor that affects adolescent deviant behavior. A study by Bandura *et al*., [25] found that delinquent and aggressive teenagers came from families that practiced overly strict disciplinary patterns.

In conclusion, parents play a role in determining children's behavioral patterns that have an impact on the formation of their personality, motivation and academic achievement. However, one of the factors that contributes to children's or students' misbehavior is the fading and fragile family values in our society today. These family values are very important for the growth and emotional development of children. Changes in today's lifestyle have caused parents to let their children grow up in the hands of others without proper attention. Therefore, this qualitative study was conducted to explore the basic experiences of early adults regarding the parenting style of their parents and how children accept and interpret this parenting style. In addition, it is hoped that this study can contribute to the field of educational psychology and parenting, as well as provide basic information to parents, educators and policy makers in their efforts to support the development of a healthy and balanced personality in early adults.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study involves a quantitative approach to see the level of self-esteem and depression of the respondent's victims based on the parenting style taught by the family. This study focuses more on case studies, which are research conducted by researchers on a social group such as an individual, a family, a village, a school or a club. This means that researchers examine a social unit in detail [26]. According to Ruhizan and Maizam [27] quantitative research emphasizes objectivity in data collection based on the assumption that every phenomenon in life. Measurement will provide quantitative data which will then be given meaning through analysis and finally generalized to the entire population. Quantitative research can be experimental or non-experimental such as survey studies, correlation, and causal comparison. Since the question and objective of the study is to identify the level, the quantitative approach is very suitable to answer the question. According to Ruhizan and Maizam [27], quantitative research can be in the form of survey studies, correlation studies, and causal comparison studies. Another rationale for choosing this quantitative approach is also based on the statement Creswell [28] and Sapiee *et al*., [29], that quantitative research in the form of a survey is appropriate because researchers can generalize the data generated from the sample to the entire population. The selection of a quantitative approach was made because the researcher only looked at the level of self-esteem and depression in adolescents and the selection of 3 respondents was made because according to Creswell 2010, the selection of 10 or less respondents for the intervention approach was sufficient to obtain data saturation for analysis. Therefore, the researcher selected 3 respondents by distributing questionnaires first to look at the level of self-esteem and depression before conducting a counseling session to reduce the problems faced by the respondents. [30]

3. Results

3.2 Mean and Standard Deviation for Adolescent Self-Esteem Levels

The results of quantitative and descriptive study data analysis covering the level of self-esteem and depression using the Beck Depression Inventory [30], (BDI) and Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale 2002 (RSES). Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. Does the level of adolescent self-esteem influence parental parenting style and this section displays descriptive data about the level of adolescent self-esteem using the RSES self-esteem instrument. The study respondents consisted of three adolescents who had problems with self-esteem and depression. The results of the questionnaire analysis were to answer the third and fourth questions as shown in Table 1 and Table 2 with the total self-esteem score of the subjects divided into three categories, namely between a score of 0 to 10 representing low self-esteem, a score of 11 to 20 representing high self-esteem.

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation for the level of self-esteem of adolescents. There are two tests used, namely the pre-test and the post-test. The mean and standard deviation values for the pre-test are 14.0 and 1.67 and after going through the counseling session that was conducted, there was a change in the level of self-esteem, which was increasing with a mean of 23.5 and a standard deviation of 4.37.

Table 1
Mean and standard deviation for adolescent self-esteem levels

	Mean	Standard deviation
Adolescent self-esteem (Pre-test)	14.0	1.67
Adolescent self-esteem (Post-Test)	23.5	4.37

3.2 Adolescent Self-Esteem Level using RSES for Pre-test

Table 2 shows the results of the study of respondents one to three N=3 using the RSES instrument through a pre-test. The results of the study show that respondents one to three have a moderate level of self-esteem, which is a total score of (16,14 and 14) before conducting the counseling session.

Table 2
Adolescent self-esteem Levels using RSES for pre-test

Respondent	Pre-Test (score)	Level
1	16	Medium
2	14	Medium
3	14	Medium

N=3

3.3 Level of Adolescent Self-Esteem using the RSES Instrument

Table 3 shows the results of the study of the first and third (N=3) respondents after undergoing a counseling session and there was a change in the adolescent's self-esteem score, which changed from a moderate level to a high level, namely (31,23,25).

Table 3
Level of self-esteem of adolescents using the RSES Instrument

Respondent	Post-Test (score)	Level
1	31	High
2	23	High
3	25	High

N=3

3.4 Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test for Adolescents' Self-Esteem Levels

Table 4 shows a comparison between the pre-test and post-test for the level of self-esteem of adolescents. After going through a counseling session through the Reality Therapy Module approach, adolescents began to show a high level of self-esteem. In this module, the researcher provided an intervention by conducting six counseling sessions as in the Reality Therapy Module. This shows that the intervention was successful in helping adolescents increase their self-esteem.

Table 4
Comparison of pre-test and post-test for adolescents' self-esteem levels

Respondent	Pre-test	Post-test
1	Medium	High
2	Medium	High
3	Medium	High

N=3

3.5 Mean and Standard Deviation for Adolescent Depression Levels

Table 5 shows the mean score and standard deviation for the level of adolescent depression through the pre-test and post-test. The mean for the pre-test was 25.6 at a moderate level and the standard deviation was 6.7. while the mean for the post-test was 13.6 at a mild level and the standard deviation was 4.1. The mean for the pre-test and post-test decreased by 12. This decrease indicates that the level of adolescent depression decreased.

Table 5
Mean and standard deviation for adolescent depression levels

	Mean	Standard deviation
Adolescent depression (Pre-test)	25.6	6.7
Adolescent depression (Post-Test)	13.6	4.1

3.6 Level of Adolescent Depression using the BDI Instrument for pre-test

Table 6 shows the level of adolescent depression using the BDI instrument which was administered to three respondents who had depression problems. The results of the study showed that the first respondent showed a critical level of depression with a total score of (35) and the second and third respondents showed a moderate level of depression.

Table 6
Level of adolescent depression using the BDI Instrument for pre-test

Respondent	Pre-test (score)	Level
1	35	Critical
2	24	Medium
3	23	Medium

3.7 Level of Depression in Bullying Victims using the BDI Instrument for Post-Test

Table 7 shows the level of adolescent depression using the BDI instrument for the post-test that was administered to three respondents who had depression problems. All respondents in the study experienced a change in total score after undergoing the counseling session. The first respondent showed a score change of (22) which decreased from a critical level to a moderate level. While the second and third respondents also showed a score change which decreased to a minimum level with a total of (13 and 7). Table 3.7.4 shows the comparative level of adolescent depression levels for the pre-test and post-test. In conclusion, the total score of respondents for the pre-test and post-test for the BDI instrument experienced a decrease after undergoing the counseling session and can be explained through Table 8.

Table 7
Level of depression of bullying victims using the BDI Instrument for post-test

Respondent	Post-test (score)	Level
1	22	Medium
2	13	Medium
3	7	Minimum

N=3

3.8 Comparison of Adolescent Depression Levels for Pre-Test and Post-Test

Table 8
Comparison of adolescent depression levels for pre-test and post-test

Respondent	Pre-test (level)	Post-Test (level)
1	Critical	Medium
2	Medium	Medium
3	Medium	Minimum

N=3

Table 8 shows a comparison between the pre-test and post-test for the level of adolescent depression. After going through a counseling session through the Reality Therapy Module approach, adolescents began to show low levels of depression. In this module, the researcher provided an intervention by conducting six counseling sessions as in the Reality Therapy Module. This shows that the intervention was successful in helping adolescents reduce their level of depression.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that parenting styles play a significant role in influencing adolescents' psychological well-being, particularly in relation to self-esteem and depression. The results indicate that respondents experienced a notable increase in self-esteem levels and a reduction in depression scores following the counselling intervention, suggesting that positive parental support and appropriate psychosocial intervention contribute to healthier emotional and behavioural development among adolescents.

The improvement in self-esteem observed among the participants highlights the importance of a supportive family environment in fostering confidence, resilience, and positive self-perceptions. At the same time, the reduction in depressive symptoms suggests that Reality Therapy counselling can serve as an effective intervention in promoting emotional regulation and psychological adjustment among adolescents experiencing emotional difficulties. These findings are consistent with the view that parenting practices and family relationships constitute fundamental determinants of adolescent mental health and developmental outcomes.

In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence that effective parenting and targeted counselling interventions can positively influence adolescents' self-esteem while reducing depression levels. The findings underscore the need for parents, educators, counsellors, and policymakers to strengthen family support systems and implement preventive mental health programmes that promote adolescents' psychological well-being. Ultimately, nurturing positive parenting practices and providing timely psychosocial interventions are essential strategies for developing resilient, emotionally healthy, and socially competent young individuals.

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