

Self-Confidence and Its Relationship with Parenting Styles among a Sample of High School Students in the Libyan Society: A Field Study

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Abstract---The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between self-confidence and parenting styles among a sample of high school students within Libyan society. The sample comprised (111) participants, including (58) male and (53) female students. The descriptive approach was employed for the study. The Al-Sharifain (2008) Scale for Parenting Styles was utilized, alongside the Self-Confidence Scale developed by Sidney Shrauger (1980) and translated and standardized by Mohammed Adel Abdullah. Both instruments demonstrated adequate validity and reliability. To achieve the study's objectives, several statistical techniques were employed, including the paired sample t-test, Kruskal-Wallis test, Mann-Whitney test, Pearson correlation coefficient, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, as well as percentages, frequencies, and various measures of central tendency and dispersion. The results revealed a positive correlation at the (0.01) significance level between both paternal and maternal parenting styles and self-confidence. Furthermore, statistically significant differences were observed at the (0.000) level between the arithmetic means of the overall parenting styles scale and the self-confidence scale and their hypothetical means, in favor of the arithmetic means. However, no statistically significant differences were found at the (0.05) level between respondents' scores on both scales based on educational or family background variables. In light of these findings, several recommendations and suggestions were proposed.

Keywords---Parenting styles, self-confidence, father's treatment, mother's treatment.

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Introduction

Parenting styles and their relationship with self-confidence constitute one of the most significant topics warranting in-depth investigation due to their critical role in shaping personality development. In contemporary times, attention to adolescence has become a key indicator of societal progress and development, as caring for and protecting adolescents essentially reflects an investment in the future and its advancement. The social environment surrounding the adolescent plays an essential role in preparing the child by instilling the values and norms of society. This environment reflects the approaches and styles adopted in child-rearing, whether strict or lenient, which can exert either positive or negative influences on personality formation.

In early childhood, children begin constructing their self-concepts through interactions with their parents. Parents play a direct role in creating an environment that either supports or undermines the development of self-confidence. Research has demonstrated that parenting styles grounded in positive guidance and appreciation are most effective in fostering self-confidence, whereas negative practices such as excessive harshness or indulgence often lead to diminished self-confidence (Ali, 2018, p.45).

Accordingly, parental styles play a decisive role in child-rearing and consequently in shaping the adolescent's future, influencing their abilities, potentials, and level of self-confidence. Adolescence represents one of the most sensitive periods in human life, during which individuals undergo profound physical, psychological, and emotional transformations. Self-confidence constitutes a fundamental aspect influencing adolescents' behavior and orientation toward various life domains, including education and social relationships. Given the significance of this stage, parenting styles emerge as a pivotal factor in the development or erosion of self-confidence. Whether authoritative, permissive, or balanced, these styles can deeply affect adolescents' personality growth and self-esteem (Al-Ahmad, 2020, p.112).

Parenting styles also play a crucial role in helping adolescents confront deviant behaviors exhibited by their peers. This process represents a form of social interaction through which individuals acquire and construct their personalities, facilitating growth, integration, and harmony with both self and society. The family, as the primary educational environment where the child's personality is shaped, must be characterized by affection, understanding, mutual respect, and a balanced approach between control and freedom in order to foster a confident, mature, and well-adjusted personality (Abu Rizq, 2000, p.8). Several studies conducted among high school students have indicated that self-confidence is closely linked to parental treatment in various circumstances. These studies confirm that well-guided parenting styles enable students to overcome the social and psychological challenges encountered during this critical stage of life (Samir, 2019, p.78).

Self-confidence represents a state of harmony and equilibrium among the dimensions of personality. It largely depends on how individuals perceive and evaluate themselves. When individuals underestimate their abilities and fail to acknowledge their strengths, they are likely to experience feelings of inferiority accompanied by shyness, anxiety, emotional vulnerability, and excessive submission to others. Self-confidence, therefore, occupies a balanced position between the extremes of arrogance and inferiority (Ragheb, 2013, p.3).

Various parenting styles may thus play a primary role in shaping self-confidence among high school students—a stage regarded as crucial for personality development. Hence, examining the relationship between parenting styles and self-confidence holds particular importance, especially among high school students who face complex psychological and social challenges during this formative phase of life (Samir, 2019, p.78).

Defining the Research Problem:

A child's personality is fundamentally shaped by the nature of parental treatment within the family environment. Harsh treatment causes the child to feel inferior and rejected, while assigning tasks beyond his capacity leads to both physical and psychological exhaustion. Constant criticism and persistent reminders of faults suppress initiative and foster hesitation, whereas excessive indulgence nurtures dependency, passivity, and self-centeredness, preventing the child from developing the resilience necessary to confront life's challenges. Conversely, directing the child toward attainable goals, helping him define his objectives, holding him accountable for his actions, and recognizing his efforts and abilities foster a sense of confidence and capability to face difficulties, enabling him to approach life without fear or hesitation.

A high school student, in particular, requires parental guidance and care that are appropriate to his age and personal characteristics to grow strong, balanced, and well-adjusted within himself and his surroundings—confident, energetic, and capable of engaging with life positively and with hope.

Accordingly, the research problem was formulated through the following main question:

What is the nature of the relationship between parenting styles and self-confidence among high school students in the municipality of Al-Khums?

From this main question, the following sub-questions were derived:

1. Is the arithmetic mean of the overall scores on the parenting style scale higher than its hypothetical mean?
2. Is the arithmetic mean of the self-confidence scale scores higher than its hypothetical mean?
3. Are there statistically significant differences in the rankings of respondents' scores on the parenting style and self-confidence scales, according to certain background variables, as determined by the Mann–Whitney and Kruskal–Wallis tests?
4. Is there a statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 level between parenting styles and self-confidence among high school students in the study sample?

Research Objectives:

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine whether the arithmetic mean of the overall scores on the parenting style scale exceeds its hypothetical mean.
2. To determine whether the arithmetic mean of the self-confidence scale scores exceeds its hypothetical mean.
3. To identify whether statistically significant differences exist in the rankings of respondents' scores on the parenting style and self-confidence scales according to certain background variables, as measured by the Mann–Whitney and Kruskal–Wallis tests.
4. To identify whether a statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 level exists between parenting styles and self-confidence among high school students in the study.

Research Significance:

The importance of this study lies in identifying the relationship between parenting styles and self-confidence within the context of the present research, as reflected in the following points:

1. The significance of the topic itself, considering the considerable impact of parenting styles on the development of self-confidence.
2. The research topic carries both educational and psychological value for parents and teachers.
3. Enhancing self-confidence among high school students contributes to improving their academic and social performance.

Understanding the influence of parenting styles can help educators and parents take constructive steps toward creating a family environment that fosters the development of self-confidence in children.

Research Boundaries:

The boundaries of this study are defined as follows:

- **Subject Boundaries:** The present study is limited to examining the topic of parenting styles and their relationship with self-confidence among high school students.
- **Human Boundaries:** This study was conducted on a random sample of students from both the scientific and literary streams enrolled in secondary education. The study sample consisted of (111) participants, including (58) male and (53) female students.
- **Spatial Boundaries:** The study was restricted to students of the Central Secondary School in the city of Al-Qarabulli, Libya.
- **Temporal Boundaries:** The study was carried out on the specified sample during the academic year 2024/2025.

Concepts and Research Terminology

1. Parenting Style:

This term refers to every behavior exhibited by the father, the mother, or both, that influences the child and the development of his or her personality, whether such behavior is intended for guidance or education.

Maqhout defined it as the consistent use of a particular style or set of methods in raising and educating the child, which significantly affects the shaping of his personality. These are divided into two categories: positive styles, such as democratic parenting and fostering psychological security, and negative styles, such as overprotection and neglect (Maqhout, 2014, p.19).

2. Self-Confidence:

Shrauger defined self-confidence as “an individual’s perception of his competence, skills, and ability to deal effectively with different situations.” Dobrin (1994) described it as “a person’s belief in his ability to achieve desired goals in many situations or in a specific situation.” Preston defined it as “the ability to express oneself confidently while committing to one’s needs, desires, and values, and at the same time respecting others” (as cited in Bilal, 2014, pp. 49–50).

3. Father’s Treatment:

This term refers to the set of methods and behaviors adopted by the father in dealing with and raising his children.

4. Mother’s Treatment:

This term refers to the set of methods and behaviors adopted by the mother in dealing with and raising her children.

5. The Municipality of Al-Qarabulli:

It is a coastal Libyan city located on the Mediterranean Sea in the northwest of the country, approximately (61) kilometers from the capital, Tripoli, and (58) kilometers from the city of Al-Khums. It is bordered by Qasr Al-Akhyar to the east, Tajoura to the west, the Mediterranean coast to the north, Tarhuna to the south, and Msallata to the southeast.

6. Respondents’ Educational and Family Background:

This term refers to a set of academic and social factors that encompass the family background and cultural environment of the respondents.

7. High School Stage:

It is a preparatory phase preceding university education, lasting three years, and represents the qualification obtained by students upon completing secondary education.

First: Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

1. Parenting Styles:

The parenting styles adopted by parents in raising their children and guiding them to acquire various behaviors, values, and social norms have been influenced by the shift from simple lifestyles to modern urban societies that are open to the world and characterized by rapid technological advancement.

Parenting styles represent a set of parental attitudes, practices, and verbal and non-verbal expressions that define the nature of interactions between parents and their children across different situations. They are also regarded as parental traits that affect the effectiveness of family socialization practices and the degree to which the child accepts such practices (Mamat, 2015, p.18).

They are further defined as the set of methods employed by parents in dealing with their children, which have been classified into three dimensions: acceptance–tolerance, rejection–strictness, and consistency–instability (Mansi, 1979, p.105).

Ramadan affirmed that both parental attitudes and parenting styles used in child-rearing reflect the parents' mental orientations toward their children, referred to as parental attitudes. When these orientations are translated into practical behavior through the actions of one or both parents during direct interaction with their children, they are referred to as parenting styles (Ramadan, 1998, p.79).

Types of Parenting Styles Common in Raising Children:

• Discrimination Style:

In this style, the child perceives through his parents' treatment that siblings are not treated equally, or that favoritism is shown toward one child over another.

• Psychological Pain Induction Style:

This style involves making the child feel guilty whenever he engages in undesirable behavior, which consequently undermines his self-confidence.

• Authoritarian Family Style:

This refers to parents imposing their opinions on their children, opposing their desires, and preventing them from achieving or pursuing them, even when such desires are reasonable or valid.

• Harshness with Children:

This approach involves the use of physical or verbal punishment and threats, making such methods the primary means of dealing with children.

• Excessive Leniency and Indulgence:

Excessive tolerance from parents fosters a sense of irresponsibility and indifference in children and encourages them to persist in their mistakes (Abu Saad, 2021, p.13).

Diana Baumrind classified parenting styles into three main types:

• Democratic Style:

Through this approach, parents provide their children with a warm and supportive environment that allows autonomy within clearly defined limits. They respect their children's privacy and independence and engage them in meaningful discussions. Such parents explain rules and boundaries while offering freedom of choice and helping their children learn from their mistakes and avoid repeating them.

By encouraging achievement, democratic parents play a decisive role in fostering their children's cognitive and creative development. Families characterized by this style also provide a sense of psychological security, enabling children to act confidently and without anxiety, fear of obstacles, or distress over parental disapproval of their social behavior (Posey, 2014, p.15).

• Authoritarian Style:

This style is marked by the dominance of parental authority, distinguishing it from the democratic and permissive patterns. Parents adhering to this approach impose strict demands on their children and are generally unresponsive to their needs. Such rigid parental authority negatively affects children's creativity and cognitive development, as they are frequently subjected to threats and restrictions. As a result, they tend to develop isolation, depression, low self-esteem, stress, limited exploratory ability, and hostility toward others. Research indicates that authoritarian parents often raise children who lack independence, curiosity, and creativity (Shayesteh et al., 2014, p.52).

• **Neglectful Style:**

In this pattern, parents neither make demands of their children nor respond to their needs. They establish no boundaries and display minimal levels of warmth or control. Such parents fail to encourage appropriate behavior, and the disciplinary measures they employ may range from excessively harsh to entirely absent. Consequently, this parenting style places adolescents at the lowest levels of psychosocial development (Uji et al., 2014, p.294).

2. Factors Influencing Parenting Styles:

Several factors contribute to shaping parenting styles, each affecting how parents interact with and guide their children:

1. The Effect of Family Size:

Parenting practices are significantly influenced by family size. In larger families, parental neglect often becomes more common due to the difficulty of providing sufficient attention to each child. Conversely, in smaller families, parental care tends to be more balanced and effective, as interactions are characterized by cooperation among siblings, emotional support, and a predominance of moderate parental control.

2. The Effect of Cultural and Civilizational Factors:

Parenting styles are also shaped by the cultural and environmental contexts in which families live. Each region possesses unique traditions, customs, and social norms that influence parents' perceptions, behaviors, and methods of raising children. These factors contribute to the formation of distinct parental attitudes and child-rearing practices across societies.

3. The Effect of Educational Level:

Parents' educational attainment plays a decisive role in determining their parenting approach. Parents with lower levels of education are more likely to adopt harsh or neglectful methods, while those with higher education tend to rely on reasoning, dialogue, and understanding when dealing with their children (Abu Saad, 2021, p.15).

2. Self-Confidence:

Self-confidence is one of the essential positive traits of personality, serving as a cornerstone for effectively navigating life's challenges. It represents a constructive perception of the self and functions as the basis for motivation, optimism, creativity, and social contribution. A self-confident individual interacts positively with others, acts independently, relies on personal effort, and constantly seeks improvement and renewal in life.

Self-confidence does not develop in isolation; rather, it emerges through continuous interactions within one's environment—particularly within the family. Parenting styles play a pivotal role in fostering or undermining adolescents' self-confidence. Research indicates that parental behavior can either strengthen or diminish this quality. Authoritarian or overly permissive parenting tends to weaken self-confidence, whereas positive approaches grounded in guidance, respect, and encouragement help nurture it (Ali, 2018, p.2).

According to Mostafa and Abdel-Samie (2000), self-confidence is defined as an individual's awareness of his or her abilities, aptitudes, skills, experiences, and competence in handling various situations and challenges effectively and attentively (Abdel Aal, 2006, p.7).

Self-confidence encompasses two primary dimensions:

- **The Cognitive Dimension:** This dimension involves an individual's awareness and understanding of his or her abilities and skills, accompanied by self-acceptance and appreciation, along with the recognition that all capabilities originate from God Almighty.

- **The Behavioral Dimension:** This refers to the translation of positive self-perceptions into tangible actions, reflected in effective interactions and appropriate responses to diverse life circumstances.

The Importance of Self-Confidence:

Self-confidence reflects an individual's belief in his or her ability to achieve specific goals and aspirations. It is rooted in an awareness of personal strengths and potential. Strong self-confidence enables individuals to confront errors and limitations constructively, persevere through challenges, and

maintain focus on success. People with healthy levels of self-confidence set realistic objectives that align with their true abilities and potential.

In contrast, self-doubt fosters anxiety, impairs performance, weakens concentration, and leads to hesitation. It causes individuals to fixate on their weaknesses instead of recognizing and building upon their strengths.

1. Enhancing Psychological Well-being:

Self-confidence plays a vital role in promoting psychological stability and emotional balance. It reduces stress and anxiety while fostering feelings of satisfaction, contentment, and happiness. Individuals with strong self-confidence are more capable of managing challenges, adapting to difficulties, and maintaining resilience in the face of adversity (Al-Shanawi, 2018, p.22).

2. Achieving Personal and Professional Success:

Self-confidence is an essential factor in enhancing performance and reinforcing decision-making abilities. It encourages individuals to act decisively, pursue goals effectively, and display perseverance in achieving success. Moreover, confidence stimulates creativity and innovation in the professional environment, contributing to higher productivity and career advancement (Moussa, 2016, p.35).

3. Developing Social Relationships:

Self-confidence enhances an individual's ability to communicate effectively, fostering mutual respect and understanding in interpersonal interactions. A confident person gains the respect and trust of others, which strengthens the foundation for forming and maintaining healthy and meaningful social relationships (Al-Feki, 2010, p.60).

4. Enhancing Decision-Making Ability:

Self-confidence equips individuals to confront fear, manage uncertainty, and respond effectively to challenging situations. It is a skill that can be cultivated through continuous learning, experience, and self-reflection. Developing this trait requires overcoming negative criticism, maintaining emotional resilience, and fostering a supportive social environment that reinforces personal growth and psychological strength.

Components of Self-Confidence:

1. Physical Components:

These include maintaining good physical health and resilience, which enable individuals to face life's challenges with energy and endurance. A strong and healthy body contributes significantly to building confidence and fostering a positive self-image.

2. Cognitive Components:

This aspect encompasses mental capacities such as intelligence, memory, and imagination, all of which are essential for effective learning, sound judgment, and avoiding repeated mistakes. Cognitive strength reinforces one's ability to analyze situations and respond appropriately, thereby enhancing confidence.

3. Emotional Components:

Emotional stability represents a crucial element in building self-confidence. Being free from pathological fears, obsessive thoughts, or delusional beliefs prevents the erosion of self-assurance. Balanced emotional functioning allows individuals to maintain inner peace and trust in their abilities.

4. Social Components:

Human beings are inherently social, relying on interaction and connection with others. A sense of belonging and acceptance within the social environment is vital for developing self-confidence. From birth, the child perceives signals of acceptance or rejection from the family, which shape the individual's self-image—positively when acceptance prevails and negatively when rejection dominates.

3. Previous Studies:

A. Study by Al-Halool (2015):

This study examined the impact of parenting styles as perceived by children and their relationship to self-esteem. The sample included (710) male and female students in the third year of secondary education. Findings revealed statistically significant differences between positive and negative parenting styles in relation to neurotic narcissism, favoring students exposed to negative parenting styles.

Additionally, there were significant differences between students with high and low self-esteem in levels of neurotic narcissism, with higher levels observed among those with low self-esteem. The results also indicated that both male and female students displayed similar degrees of neurotic narcissism.

B. Study by Al-Harbi (2015):

The objective of this research was to identify parenting styles and their relationship with self-confidence among secondary school students in Al-Rass Governorate. The study sample consisted of (240) randomly selected students. Results demonstrated that participants were aware of their parents' methods of upbringing and capable of evaluating them. Parenting styles ranged between moderate and high levels, and students exhibited generally acceptable levels of self-confidence. The findings further revealed a statistically significant correlation between parenting styles and self-confidence among secondary school students. Moreover, no significant differences were found between paternal and maternal parenting styles.

C. Study by Al-Tamawi (2020):

This study sought to explore the relationship between parenting styles and psychological adjustment among secondary school students. Results indicated that positive parenting styles contribute to higher levels of self-confidence and better psychological adjustment, whereas negative parenting practices diminish these outcomes and hinder emotional and social development.

Foreign Studies:

A. Study by Baumrind, Larzelere & Owens (2010):

This study examined the effect of parenting styles on adolescents' self-efficacy and self-confidence in the United States. The findings indicated that adolescents raised in democratic family environments demonstrated higher levels of self-confidence and superior emotional regulation compared to their peers raised under other parenting styles. The study highlighted that supportive parental communication and balanced autonomy contribute significantly to fostering adolescents' self-assurance and emotional stability.

B. Study by Gupta and Mehtani (2017):

This study explored the relationship between parenting styles and their influence on students' self-confidence. The results revealed that permissive parenting, while providing emotional warmth, often lacked sufficient structure and guidance, which resulted in weaker academic achievement and limited self-reliance. Conversely, authoritarian parenting tended to produce feelings of rebellion or excessive dependence on parents, reflecting the importance of maintaining balance between authority and emotional support in effective child-rearing practices.

Commentary on Previous Studies:

Previous studies have addressed the topic of parenting styles and their relationship with self-confidence from multiple perspectives. Collectively, they sought to:

- Identify the effects of parenting styles as perceived by children and their relationship with self-esteem.
- Examine how different parenting styles influence levels of self-confidence.
- Investigate the relationship between parenting styles and psychological adjustment.
- Explore the impact of parental patterns on adolescents' self-efficacy and self-confidence.
- Determine how parenting approaches affect students' self-confidence across various educational contexts.

In terms of results, these studies produced a range of findings, with several consistent conclusions:

- Most of the studies concurred with the present research findings, affirming the existence of a positive relationship between both paternal and maternal parenting styles and students' self-confidence, as shown in studies such as () and ().
- The current research also aligns with Al-Tamawi's (2020) conclusions, which emphasized that positive parenting styles contribute to strengthening self-confidence, whereas negative parenting practices tend to undermine it.

Methodological Procedures of the Research:

First – Research Method:

The descriptive–analytical method was adopted to conduct this study, as it allows for the examination and interpretation of existing phenomena to determine the nature of the relationship between variables.

Second – Research Population:

The study population consisted of male and female students enrolled in secondary schools within the Municipality of Al-Qarabolly, Libya.

Third – Research Sample:

The research sample included (111) secondary school students from the Municipality of Al-Qarabolly, comprising (58) male and (53) female students.

Fourth – Sample Characteristics:

The research instrument included (8) variables representing demographic, social, and educational characteristics of the participants. The following sections provide graphical and tabular representations of these characteristics to illustrate the distribution of the study sample.

1. Gender Variable:

Table (1): *Distribution of Respondents According to Gender Variable*

Gender	Frequency	%	Total %
Male	58	52.3	52.3
Female	53	47.7	47.7
Total	111	100.0	100.0

The data in Table (1) indicate that 52.3% of the research sample were male students, while 47.7% were female.

2. Type of Stream Variable:

Table (2): *Distribution of Respondents According to Type of Stream*

Stream Type	Frequency	%	Total %
Scientific	98	88.3	88.3
Literary	13	11.7	11.7
Total	111	100.0	100.0

The data in Table (2) show that 88.3% of respondents were enrolled in the scientific stream, while 11.7% were in the literary stream. It is observed that most participants were in the scientific section, which may be attributed to the higher demand for scientific qualifications in the job market.

3. Academic Achievement Variable:

Table (3): *Distribution of Respondents According to Academic Achievement*

Academic Grade	Frequency	%	Total %
Acceptable	6	5.4	5.4
Good	11	9.9	9.9
Very Good	26	23.4	23.4
Excellent	68	61.3	61.3
Total	111	100.0	100.0

The data in Table (3) show that 61.3% of the respondents reported having an excellent academic grade, 23.4% had a very good grade, 9.9% had a good grade, and 5.4% had an acceptable grade. It is noted that most respondents achieved excellent or very good grades, indicating high academic performance.

4. Year Repetition Variable:

Table (4): *Distribution of Respondents According to Year Repetition*

Year Repetition	Frequency	%	Total %
Did not repeat	110	99.1	99.1
Repeated	1	0.9	0.9
Total	111	100.0	100.0

The data in Table (4) indicate that 99.1% of the respondents had never repeated an academic year, while 0.9% had repeated a year. It is evident that the vast majority of respondents had never repeated a school year, reflecting their academic excellence.

5. Father's Education Variable:

Table (5): *Distribution of Respondents According to Father's Educational Level*

Father's Education	Frequency	%	Total %
Primary or below	9	8.1	8.1
Preparatory	3	2.7	2.7
Secondary	25	22.5	22.5
University	32	28.8	28.8
Postgraduate	42	37.8	37.8
Total	111	100.0	100.0

The data in Table (5) show that 37.8% of the fathers had postgraduate education, 28.8% had university education, 22.5% had secondary education, and 10.8% had preparatory education.

6. Mother's Education Variable:

Table (6): *Distribution of Respondents According to Mother's Educational Level*

Mother's Education	Frequency	%	Total %
Primary or below	9	8.1	8.1
Preparatory	7	6.3	6.3
Secondary	18	16.2	16.2
University	43	38.7	38.7
Postgraduate	34	30.6	30.6
Total	111	100.0	100.0

The data in Table (6) indicate that 30.6% of the respondents' mothers had postgraduate education, 38.7% had university education, 16.2% had secondary education, and 14.4% had preparatory education or below.

Variable 7: Father's Occupation

Table (7): *Distribution of respondents according to the variable of father's occupation*

Father's Occupation	Frequency (K)	%	Total %
Employee	47	42.3	42.3
Self-employed	18	16.2	16.2
Teacher	18	16.2	16.2
Doctor	5	4.5	4.5
Engineer	7	6.3	6.3

Lawyer	4	3.6	3.6
Other Professions	12	10.8	10.8
Total	111	100.0	100.0

The data in Table (7) indicate that 42.3% of the respondents' fathers are employees, 16.2% are self-employed, and 16.2% are teachers. A smaller percentage of fathers practice professions such as medicine, engineering, law, or other unspecified occupations.

Variable 8: Mother's Occupation

Table (8): *Distribution of respondents according to the variable of mother's occupation*

Mother's Occupation	Frequency (K)	%	Total %
Employee	23	20.7	20.7
Self-employed	5	4.5	4.5
Teacher	52	46.8	46.8
Doctor	16	14.4	14.4
Other Professions	15	13.5	13.5
Total	111	100.0	100.0

The data in Table (8) reveal that 20.7% of the respondents' mothers are employees, 4.5% are self-employed, 46.8% are teachers, 14.4% are doctors, and 13.5% are engaged in other professions. It is evident that the majority of the respondents' mothers are teachers, which may be attributed to the profession's relative comfort for women, its educational nature, and its capacity to limit interactions with men compared to other occupations.

Fifth: Research Instruments

The questionnaire was used as the main tool for data collection, and it included the following domains:

1. **First Domain:** This domain included demographic, family, and academic variables related to the respondents. These are nominal variables, totaling eight in number.
2. **Second Domain:** This domain included the *Parental Treatment Scale*, prepared by Al-Sharifayn (2008), adopted from the study of Muhammad Nour Al-Din Bakri (2019). It contains (30) items covering three dimensions of parental treatment styles:
 1. The authoritarian dimension, represented by items (1, 3, 6, 9, 12);
 2. The permissive dimension, represented by items (4, 8, 11, 13, 15);
 3. The firm dimension, represented by items (2, 5, 7, 10, 14).

The scale consists of two identical forms: one designed to assess the father's parenting style and the other to assess the mother's, as perceived by the students. It employs a five-point Likert scale with the following response options: *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Neutral*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree* (Batry, 2019, p.54). These responses are scored respectively as (5, 4, 3, 2, 1). Consequently, the respondent's score on each form of the scale ranges between (15–75), with a hypothetical mean of (45). When combining the two forms, the total score ranges from (30–150), with a hypothetical mean of (90), under the assumption that all item scores correlate positively with the total scale score in the present research.

Third Domain: Self-Confidence Scale

This domain included the Self-Confidence Scale, originally developed by Sidney Shrauger (1980) and later translated and standardized by Muhammad Adel Abdullah (2000). The original version consists of (54) statements, while the Arabic-adapted version comprises (48) statements distributed across six dimensions:

- **Communication with others** – 8 statements
- **Social interaction** – 9 statements

- **Physical appearance** – 7 statements
- **Positivity and optimism** – 8 statements
- **Academic performance** – 10 statements
- **Romantic relationships** – 7 statements

Half of the scale includes positive statements, represented by items numbered (1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19, 21, 22, 26, 28, 31, 32, 35, 36, 37, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 47), while the other half consists of negative statements, represented by items numbered (2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 33, 34, 38, 39, 43, 46, 48).

Respondents rate their agreement with each statement according to the following response options: *Applies Completely*, *Applies to a Great Extent*, *Applies Somewhat*, *Rarely Applies*, and *Does Not Apply at All*.

Positive items are scored as (4, 3, 2, 1, 0), while negative items are scored inversely as (0, 1, 2, 3, 4).

According to the scale, the interpretation of scores is as follows:

- (0–64): **Low level of self-confidence**
- (65–128): **Moderate level of self-confidence**
- (129–192): **High level of self-confidence**

Bilal (2014) determined the reliability of the scale using the split-half method and reported a reliability coefficient of 0.84, with internal consistency coefficients for its dimensions ranging between 0.55 and 0.86 (Bilal, 2014, pp.125–130).

The respondent's total score on the Self-Confidence Scale therefore ranges between 48 and 240, with a hypothetical mean of 144, assuming that all item scores correlate with the total scale score in the present research.

Sixth: Psychometric Properties of the Research Scales

First: Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a scale or test accurately measures the construct it is intended to assess. In this study, the researcher employed two well-established and pre-validated instruments—the Parental Treatment Scale and the Self-Confidence Scale. Both instruments had previously demonstrated robust psychometric properties.

Their content validity was ensured through the inclusion of items that comprehensively cover all relevant aspects of their respective constructs, while face validity was confirmed by the clarity and directness of their items in reflecting the intended dimensions of parental treatment and self-confidence.

The following types of validity were evaluated for both research scales:

1) Internal Consistency Validity

A) Calculation of the Internal Consistency Validity of the Parental Treatment Scale

The internal validity of the scale was calculated by determining the correlation between each item score and the total score of the scale. The following table presents these results.

Table (9): Calculation of the Internal Consistency of the Parental Treatment Scale (Father and Mother)

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Correlation Coefficients	0.275	0.122	0.012	0.642	0.404	0.333	0.413	0.086	0.030	0.437
Items	11	12	13	14	15	1	2	3	4	5
Correlation Coefficients	0.590	0.297	0.656	0.234	0.647	0.379	0.236	-0.106	0.711	0.301
Items	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Correlation Coefficients	0.448	0.426	-0.117	-0.222	0.535	0.795	0.380	0.665	0.357	0.744

Significant at the 0.05 level

Significant at the 0.01 level

N = 111, df = 109

The data in Table (9) indicate that items (2, 3, 8, 9) did not show a statistically significant correlation with the total score of the *Father's Parental Treatment Scale*, and items (3, 8) did not show a statistically significant correlation with the total score of the *Mother's Parental Treatment Scale*. These items were therefore excluded from the final data analysis.

B) Calculation of the Internal Consistency Validity of the Self-Confidence Scale

The internal validity of this scale was also determined by calculating the correlation between each item score and the total scale score. The results are presented in the following table.

Table (10): Calculation of the Internal Consistency of the Self-Confidence Scale

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Correlation Coefficients	0.265	0.342	0.378	-0.035	0.253	0.255	0.312	0.421	0.127	0.037
Items	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Correlation Coefficients	0.353	0.487	0.608	0.502	0.056	0.438	0.303	0.449	0.327	0.444
Items	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Correlation Coefficients	0.350	-0.175	0.313	0.600	0.675	0.259	0.377	0.320	0.383	0.586
Items	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Correlation Coefficients	0.301	0.061	0.486	0.438	0.196	0.198	0.264	0.311	0.326	-0.121
Items	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	-	-
Correlation Coefficients	0.311	-0.065	0.575	0.293	0.020	0.492	0.073	0.361	-	-

Significant at the 0.05 level

Significant at the 0.01 level

N = 111, df = 109

The data in Table (10) show that items (4, 9, 10, 15, 22, 32, 40, 42, 45) did not have a statistically significant correlation with the total score of the *Self-Confidence Scale*; therefore, these items were excluded from the final data analysis.

2) Calculation of Construct Validity

Construct validity for the research scales was calculated using the square root of their reliability coefficients. The following table illustrates the results.

Table (11): Calculation of Construct Validity for the Research Scales

Scales	Corrected Spearman Reliability Coefficient	Construct Validity
Father's Treatment	0.752	0.867
Mother's Treatment	0.746	0.864
Overall Parental Treatment	0.766	0.875
Self-Confidence	0.853	0.924

The data in Table (11) indicate that all the research scales possess strong construct validity, meaning they measure what they are intended to measure, as the square root of each reliability coefficient is statistically significant.

3) Calculation of Reliability Coefficients of the Research Scales

The reliability coefficients of the research scales were calculated using Cronbach's Alpha and the Split-Half method corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula. The results are presented in the following table.

Table (12): Calculation of Reliability Coefficients for the Research Scales

Scales	Cronbach's Alpha	Split-Half Reliability (Before Correction)	Split-Half Reliability (After Correction)
Father's Treatment	0.654	0.601	0.752
Mother's Treatment	0.662	0.594	0.746
Overall Parental Treatment	0.786	0.620	0.766
Self-Confidence	0.862	0.743	0.853

The data in Table (12) indicate that all the research scales are reliable, as all their reliability coefficients are statistically significant, confirming the internal consistency of respondents' answers across the scales.

Seventh: Statistical Tools Used

1. **Pearson Correlation Coefficient:** Used to calculate the correlation coefficients between the research scales.
2. **Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient:** Used to assess the reliability of the research scales.
3. **Paired-Sample t-Test:** Used to determine the differences between the arithmetic and hypothetical means of the research scales.
4. **Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis Tests:** Used to examine the differences between the ranked scores of respondents on the research scales according to their academic and social background variables.

Research Results

First: Results Related to the First Research Question

The first research question states:

Is the arithmetic mean of the overall Parental Treatment Scale higher than its hypothetical mean?

To answer this question, a Paired-Sample t-Test was applied. The results are presented in the following table.

Table (13): *Significance of Differences Between the Arithmetic and Hypothetical Means of the Overall Parental Treatment Scale*

Statistic	N	Arithmetic Mean	Hypothetical Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	t-value	df	Significance Level
Overall Parental Treatment	111	93.0901	72	11.33983	1.07633	86.488	110	0.000

The data in Table (13) indicate a statistically significant difference between the arithmetic and hypothetical means of the overall Parental Treatment Scale. The t-value (86.488) with (110) degrees of freedom is significant at the (0.000) level, favoring the arithmetic mean of the scale. This result indicates that respondents are exposed to positive parental treatment.

The findings of the present study support those of Abu Saad (2021), which revealed that the level of parental treatment styles varied between high for the *firm style*, moderate for the *authoritarian style*, and low for the *permissive style*. However, the present results differ from Al-Ghdani (2014:117), who found that the level of parental treatment styles was below the hypothetical mean (Uji et al., 2014, p.294).

Second: Answer to the Second Research Question:

Is the arithmetic mean of the self-confidence scale scores higher than its hypothetical mean?

To answer this question, a one-sample t-test was applied, and the data presented in the following table illustrate the results.

Table (14): *Calculation of the significance of differences between the arithmetic and hypothetical means of the self-confidence scale scores*

Scale	N	Arithmetic Mean	Hypothetical Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	t-value	df	Significance Level
Self-confidence	111	130.4505	117	22.23950	2.11088	61.799	110	0.000

The data in Table (14) show that there is a statistically significant difference between the arithmetic and hypothetical means of the self-confidence scale, as the t-value reached (61.799) with (110) degrees of

freedom, significant at the level (0.000). This difference favors the arithmetic mean, indicating that the respondents possess a high level of self-confidence.

The current result supports the findings of *Ali (2016: 273)*, who concluded that the level of self-confidence among secondary school students was high. It also reinforces the findings of *Al-Sanbani and Al-Tariq (2020: 34)*, which indicated that self-confidence levels among students in both public and private schools were above average. However, the current study's result differs from that of *Nasser Bay, Boumlah, and Alwan (2018: 113)*, which found that the level of self-confidence among most students approaching graduation was moderate.

Third: Answer to the Third Research Question:

Are there statistically significant differences in the ranks of the respondents' scores in the Mann–Whitney and Kruskal–Wallis tests on the parental treatment and self-confidence scales according to certain background variables?

This question was addressed through the following analyses:

1) Calculating the significance of differences according to gender:

The Mann–Whitney test was used to calculate the significance of differences between the ranks of respondents' scores on both research scales according to gender. The data are presented in the table below.

Table (15): Calculation of the significance of differences between respondents' rank scores on both scales according to gender

Scale	N	Gender	Mean Rank	(Z) Value	Significance Level
Parental treatment (total)	58	Male	50.63	-1.841	0.066
	53	Female	61.88		
Self-confidence	58	Male	51.63	-1.497	0.134
	53	Female	60.78		

The data in Table (15) indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between the ranks of respondents' scores on both the self-confidence and parental treatment scales, as the (Z) values were not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This means that all respondents experience similar parental treatment and possess similar levels of self-confidence regardless of gender.

The current result differs from *Salim, Abdel Fattah, and Helmy (2019: 130)*, who found statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level between the mean scores of urban and rural children in the parental treatment scale in favor of urban children. It supports the findings of *Maqbout (2014: 192)*, which revealed no significant statistical differences between males and females in perceiving both positive and negative paternal treatment styles.

It also aligns with *Saad El-Din (2023)*, who found no statistically significant gender-based differences in responses on the parental treatment scale (male/female). However, the current result contrasts with *Ali (2016: 276)*, who found statistically significant differences in self-confidence among secondary school students favoring males, and with *Haider (n.d.)*, who found statistically significant gender differences favoring females.

The current result supports *Nazim (2020: 70)*, which indicated no significant differences in self-confidence attributable to gender, and *Al-Ashhab (2022: 52)*, which found no statistically significant gender differences in self-confidence among students at Ziane Achour University in Djelfa.

2) Calculating the significance of differences according to field of specialization:

The Mann–Whitney test was also used to calculate the significance of differences between the ranks of respondents' scores on both scales according to the field of specialization. The results are presented below.

Table (16): Calculation of the significance of differences between respondents' rank scores on both scales according to field of specialization

Scale	N	Specialization	Mean Rank	(Z) Value	Significance Level
Parental treatment (total)	98	Scientific	55.76	-0.216	0.829
	13	Literary	57.81		
Self-confidence	98	Scientific	57.67	1.505	0.132
	13	Literary	43.38		

The data in Table (16) show that there are no statistically significant differences between the ranks of respondents' scores on both scales, as the (Z) values were not significant at the 0.05 level. This means that all respondents enjoy the same level of self-confidence and receive similar parental treatment regardless of their academic specialization. The current finding supports *Kaniza and Sarah (2022: 65)*, who found no statistically significant differences in self-confidence between literary and scientific streams in secondary education.

3) Calculating the significance of differences according to academic performance:

The Kruskal–Wallis test was used to calculate the significance of differences between the ranks of respondents' scores on both scales according to academic performance. The data are presented below.

Table (17): Calculation of the significance of differences between respondents' rank scores on both scales according to academic performance

Academic Performance	N	Parental Treatment (Mean Rank)	Self-Confidence (Mean Rank)
Passable	6	40.33	43.50
Good	11	46.77	42.68
Very Good	26	55.52	46.10
Excellent	68	59.06	63.04
χ^2	/	2.950	8.513
df	/	3	3
Significance Level	/	0.399	0.037

The data in Table (17) indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between the ranks of respondents' scores on the parental treatment scale according to academic performance, as the chi-square value was not significant at the 0.05 level. However, statistically significant differences were found in the self-confidence scale in favor of respondents with "Excellent" academic performance.

4) Calculating the significance of differences according to the father's education level:

The Kruskal–Wallis test was used to calculate the significance of differences between the ranks of respondents' scores on both scales according to the father's educational level. The results are shown in the following table.

Table (18): Calculation of the significance of differences between respondents' rank scores on both scales according to the father's educational level

Father's Education	N	Parental Treatment (Mean Rank)	Self-Confidence (Mean Rank)
Primary or below	9	65.06	54.50
Preparatory	3	55.50	78.50
Secondary	25	50.24	47.16
University	32	60.66	59.91
Postgraduate	42	53.98	57.00
χ^2	/	2.353	3.886
df	/	4	4
Significance Level	/	0.671	0.422

The data in Table (18) indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between the ranks of respondents' scores on both scales according to the father's educational level, as the chi-square values were not significant at the 0.05 level. This means that all respondents receive similar parental treatment and exhibit comparable levels of self-confidence regardless of their fathers' educational attainment. The current result supports *Abu Laila (2002)*, who found no statistically significant differences in perceived parental treatment styles attributed to the father's education level.

5) Calculating the Significance of Differences According to the Mother's Educational Level:

The significance of differences was calculated using the Kruskal-Wallis test between the ranks of the participants' scores on the two research scales according to the variable of the mother's educational level. The data in the following table illustrate this.

Table (19): *Significance of Differences Between the Ranks of the Participants' Scores on the Research Scales According to the Mother's Educational Level*

Mother's Education	Number	Parental Treatment as a Whole (Mean Rank)	Self-Confidence (Mean Rank)
Primary or Below	9	54.44	60.56
Preparatory	7	61.57	41.50
Secondary	18	41.81	38.06
University	43	60.53	62.84
Postgraduate	34	57.04	58.63
Chi-square (χ^2)	/	4.628	9.370
df	/	4	4
Significance Level	/	0.328	0.052

The data in Table (19) show that there are no statistically significant differences between the ranks of participants' scores on the two research scales according to the mother's educational level, as the Chi-square values were not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that all participants receive similar parental treatment and enjoy the same level of self-confidence despite differences in their mothers' educational backgrounds. The current result supports the findings of *Al-Wajeeh (2024: 649)*, which concluded that there were no differences in parental treatment styles attributed to the variable of the mother's educational level.

6) Calculating the Significance of Differences According to the Father's Occupation:

The significance of differences was calculated using the Kruskal-Wallis test between the ranks of the participants' scores on the two research scales according to the variable of the father's occupation. The data in the following table illustrate this.

Table (20): *Significance of Differences Between the Ranks of the Participants' Scores on the Research Scales According to the Father's Occupation*

Father's Occupation	Number	Parental Treatment as a Whole (Mean Rank)	Self-Confidence (Mean Rank)
Employee	47	59.22	58.77
Self-employed	18	58.92	51.94
Teacher	18	44.72	54.86
Doctor	5	43.00	50.00
Engineer	7	50.71	66.29
Lawyer	4	64.25	79.75
Other Professions	12	61.67	41.54
Chi-square (χ^2)	/	4.475	6.148
df	/	6	6
Significance Level	/	0.613	0.407

The data in Table (20) indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between the ranks of the participants' scores on the two research scales according to the father's occupation, as the Chi-

square values were not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This means that all participants receive similar parental treatment and share comparable levels of self-confidence regardless of the occupations practiced by their fathers.

7) Calculating the Significance of Differences According to the Mother's Occupation:

The significance of differences was calculated using the Kruskal-Wallis test between the ranks of the participants' scores on the two research scales according to the variable of the mother's occupation. The data in the following table illustrate this.

Table (21): *Significance of Differences Between the Ranks of the Participants' Scores on the Research Scales According to the Mother's Occupation*

Mother's Occupation	Number	Parental Treatment as a Whole (Mean Rank)	Self-Confidence (Mean Rank)
Employee	23	59.50	52.67
Self-employed	5	53.50	44.00
Teacher	52	55.38	59.03
Doctor	16	51.97	66.19
Other Professions	15	57.90	43.73
Chi-square (χ^2)	/	0.625	5.186
df	/	4	4
Significance Level	/	0.960	0.269

The data in Table (21) show that there are no statistically significant differences between the ranks of the participants' scores on the two research scales according to the mother's occupation, as the Chi-square values were not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that all participants receive similar parental treatment and possess comparable levels of self-confidence regardless of their mothers' professions.

Fourth: Answer to the Fourth Research Question:

Is there a statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 level between parental treatment styles and self-confidence among secondary school students?

To answer this question, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used, and the data are presented in the following table.

Table (22): *Correlation Matrix Between the Research Scales*

Scales	Father's Treatment	Mother's Treatment	Parental Treatment as a Whole	Self-Confidence
Father's Treatment	1	0.612	0.884	0.387
Mother's Treatment	0.612	1	0.911	0.442
Parental Treatment as a Whole	0.884	0.911	1	0.463
Self-Confidence	0.387	0.442	0.463	1

Note: Significant at the 0.01 level ($n = 111$, $df = 109$)

The data in Table (22) indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between the research scales at the 0.000 level. This suggests that the higher the levels of parental treatment perceived by participants, the greater their sense of self-confidence. The current findings support those of Karima (2020: 412), who found a statistically significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level between parental treatment styles and positive social behavior among children. Similarly, these results reinforce Al-Tamawi's (2020: 486–487) findings, which identified a statistically significant negative correlation between overall parental styles (for both fathers and mothers) and the total score on the psychological adjustment scale at the 0.01 level.

However, the present findings differ from those of Ben Salem and Halfaya (2022: 50), who observed a relationship between parental treatment styles and verbal aggressive behavior among fourth- and fifth-grade primary school students. The current study's results are consistent with those of Bakri (2019), who reported a positive correlation between the authoritative style of both parents and students' academic achievement motivation—indicating that the greater the use of authoritative parenting, the higher the level of academic motivation, and vice versa.

Furthermore, the findings align with those of Khayat and Ben Abdel-Baset (2020: 74), who confirmed the presence of a relationship between parental treatment styles and psychological security among secondary school students. Conversely, the current results differ from those of Al-Ghadani (2014: 131), which revealed a statistically insignificant negative correlation between parental treatment styles as perceived by children and emotional stability. The present findings also support Al-Ratimi (2020: 274), which demonstrated a statistically significant positive correlation between parental treatment styles and academic adjustment among female students at the Faculty of Education in Al-Zawiya. (Uji et al., 2014, p. 294).

The current findings also support Mostafa (2016: 334), who reported a statistically significant relationship at the 0.01 level between self-confidence and the use of social networking sites. They further reinforce the results of Maaishia, Khattatba, and Bouguera (2023: 74), who found a statistically significant correlation between self-confidence and academic perseverance among university students. Similarly, these results align with Ali (2016: 275), which demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between self-confidence and self-esteem among secondary school students. They are also consistent with Haider (n.d.), who identified a positive correlation between academic achievement and self-confidence. Moreover, the present results concur with those of Nasser Bai, Boumellah, and Alouane (2018: 97), who reported a statistically significant correlation between self-confidence and optimism. Finally, they support Kenza and Sarah (2022: 65), who found a statistically significant relationship between self-confidence and academic adjustment among secondary school students.

Conclusions

The research findings revealed that the participants possess a high level of self-confidence, which is strongly related to the parental treatment styles they experience. This indicates that a healthy family environment—characterized by love, warmth, respect, and affection—positively reflects on both the psychological and physical well-being of its members. The parental treatment styles applied to the participants are based on firmness and largely free from manifestations of authoritarianism and leniency.

The findings also showed no statistically significant differences in levels of self-confidence or parental treatment styles according to family variables such as parents' educational level, professions, academic achievement, or gender. This suggests that educating children of both sexes contributes significantly to reducing differences between the personality traits of boys and girls, as both are exposed to similar cultural and social influences. Furthermore, the fathers and mothers of the participants practice sound and largely consistent parenting methods regardless of their educational levels or social status. This has positively reflected in their children's high academic performance and enhanced self-confidence.

Recommendations

- _ Parents should adopt sound parental treatment styles grounded in firmness—relatively free of leniency and entirely devoid of authoritarianism, neglect, bias, excessive pampering, or harshness—so that children may enjoy psychological well-being. This is supported by the current research results, which confirmed a statistically significant relationship between parental treatment styles and self-confidence.

- Parents should focus on strengthening their children's self-confidence to help them overcome neurotic tendencies, face the future positively, and experience happiness, optimism, life satisfaction, and a stronger sense of self.
- Authorities responsible for psychological and social welfare should give special attention to the family by ensuring all conditions that safeguard its physical and functional stability and by supporting it with material and educational resources. The family must be protected as the solid fortress that shields society from fragmentation, deviation, and psychological disorders, thereby preserving its social fabric—especially in the current era of cultural globalization characterized by individualism, disintegration, alienation, identity loss, and shifting value systems.

Suggestions

- Conduct a study on the relationship between self-confidence and parental treatment styles among samples from different educational stages in Libyan society.
- Conduct a study on the relationship between parental treatment styles and psychological disorders among children.
- Conduct a study on the relationship between parental treatment styles and children's personality traits.
- Conduct a study on the relationship between parental treatment styles and children's life orientation.
- Conduct a study on the relationship between parental treatment styles and children's ego strength and psychological resilience.
- Conduct a study on the relationship between self-confidence and the Big Five personality traits across different educational stages.

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