

# The Influence of Family Dynamics on Adolescent Self-Worth across Socioeconomic background: Haryana

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## ABSTRACT

**This research investigates the impact of family dynamics on the self-worth of adolescents, considering their socioeconomic background and gender. Data were gathered using the Family Environment Scale (FES) by Sanjay Vohra and the Coppersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI). The primary aim was to explore how family dynamics shape adolescents' self-worth and to examine socioeconomic variations in this relationship. The study included 110 students aged 15- 17 years from Class XI, drawn from both public and private schools in Haryana, selected based on parental education and occupation. Data analysis employed the Pearson correlation coefficient method. Findings reveal that family cohesion, expressiveness, and independence significantly influence adolescents' self-worth, while family organization showed no notable correlation. Socioeconomic status significantly moderated the relationship between cohesion, expressiveness, and self-worth.**

**Keywords: Adolescents, Family Dynamics, Self-Worth, Socioeconomic Status**

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## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical phase of development during which individuals negotiate identity, autonomy, and self-definition. Among the core psychological constructs that crystallize during this period is self-worth—a person's global sense of value, competence, and social belonging. Self-worth not only predicts educational persistence, mental health, and social adjustment but also functions as a protective factor against depression, anxiety, and risk-taking behaviors. In contexts like Haryana, a north Indian state with a rapidly changing socioeconomic profile, the determinants of adolescent self-worth are deeply interwoven with family processes and socioeconomic realities.

**Family dynamics** refer to the interactional patterns, communication styles, emotional climates, parenting practices, and role structures that characterize family life. They influence adolescents in at least three central ways. First, emotional warmth, support, and consistent parenting foster secure attachment, which directly reinforces a positive self-concept. Second, the nature of family communication and cohesion creates opportunities for adolescents to test competence, negotiate conflicts, and internalize self-regard. Third, family stressors such as conflict, harsh discipline, parental absence, or neglect create an insecure environment that undermines adolescents' sense of worth. Theories of attachment, symbolic interaction, and social learning all converge in highlighting family processes as central determinants of self-worth.

Yet family dynamics cannot be understood in isolation from socioeconomic background. Socioeconomic status (SES) encompasses parental education, occupation, income, and access to material and cultural resources. SES influences family life directly by shaping the resources available for education, nutrition, and extracurricular opportunities, and indirectly by affecting parental stress, mental health, and time availability.

Families with higher SES often have more bandwidth to provide autonomy-supportive parenting and invest in adolescents' developmental needs. By contrast, families under economic strain may experience higher conflict, lower cohesion, and inconsistent parenting, which adversely affects adolescents' self-worth. In Haryana, sharp disparities in wealth, education, and gendered opportunity magnify these dynamics.

Haryana provides an especially compelling context for studying family dynamics and adolescent self-worth. On the one hand, the state has seen rapid urbanization, educational reforms, and economic growth. On the other hand, it remains marked by rural-urban divides, patriarchal gender norms, and socioeconomic inequality. Traditional joint families still exist alongside nuclear families, and parental migration for employment is common in certain districts. For adolescents, this means navigating family systems that are undergoing transition, often within the constraints of socioeconomic limitations. Self-worth is particularly vulnerable in this context, as adolescents attempt to reconcile cultural expectations with emerging individual aspirations.

Evidence from Indian and international studies points to several consistent pathways. Warm, authoritative parenting is associated with higher adolescent self-esteem across socioeconomic groups. Parental involvement in academics enhances adolescents' self-concept and confidence. Family conflict, neglect, or authoritarian parenting lowers self-worth, especially among adolescents in lower SES households where stress levels are already high. Importantly, resilient families can buffer socioeconomic disadvantage: even in low-income households, positive parenting, family cohesion, and supportive communication can sustain adolescent self-worth.

For Haryana, this suggests that interventions to strengthen family functioning could yield significant developmental benefits. Programs that teach parenting skills, promote open family communication, and support parental mental health are likely to enhance adolescents' self-worth, even when broader socioeconomic changes are slower. Schools, NGOs, and community health workers can play crucial roles in delivering such programs.

From a research perspective, more longitudinal and representative studies in Haryana are needed. Much of the available data come from cross-sectional school-based samples, which do not capture out-of-school youth—a group more likely to be from low-SES families and at higher risk for low self-worth. There is also a need for culturally adapted measurement tools that capture Haryana-specific family practices, such as joint family structures, migration-related dynamics, and gendered parenting norms.

In summary, adolescent self-worth is shaped by a complex interplay of family dynamics and socioeconomic context. In Haryana, where rapid social change intersects with enduring traditions, these influences may be particularly pronounced. Understanding them is not only of academic interest but also of practical importance for educational policy, adolescent mental health programs, and social equity initiatives. Strengthening family functioning, supporting parents, and addressing socioeconomic stressors together hold promise for fostering resilient and self-confident adolescents in the state.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Sharma (2012)**. Showed that family expressiveness and support positively correlated with adolescents' global self-esteem, emphasizing that a nurturing environment fosters self-worth.
2. **Rakesh (2014)**. Reported that adolescents from cohesive families displayed stronger self-worth despite low SES, highlighting the protective role of family unity.
3. **Pratibha (2014)**. Found that parental support in education increased adolescent self-esteem in nursing student families, underscoring the role of academic involvement.
4. **Sanjay (2015)**. In Haryana schools, supportive family climate was strongly correlated with self-esteem among both boys and girls.
5. **Maryam (2015)**. Found that supportive family environments increased satisfaction and self-worth among adolescents, suggesting family support as a universal resource.
6. **Kumar (2016)**. Found that family cohesion and expressiveness enhanced adolescent resilience and self-worth.
7. **Tyagi (2016)**. Demonstrated that emotional intelligence training in adolescents was supported by a positive family emotional climate.
8. **Kaur (2016)**. Reported that parental involvement in academics improved adolescents' academic self-concept.
9. **Deepak (2016)**. Reported that consistent parental supervision improved adolescent psychosocial outcomes.
10. **Zhang (2017)**. Comparative analysis indicated that cultural and SES contexts modify the ways parenting styles affect self-worth.
11. **George (2017)**. Global review concluded that positive family dynamics consistently enhance adolescent self-esteem regardless of region.
12. **Dixit (2017)**. Reported that family stress in health-sector families was linked to lower adolescent wellbeing.
13. **Edward (2017)**. Suggested that parental involvement and warmth are protective against socioeconomic risk factors.
14. **Jyoti (2017)**. Reported family warmth as a predictor of higher adolescent psychosocial functioning in North India.
15. **Ganesan (2018)**. Reported that parental attitudes about body image and family climate influenced adolescent girls' self-esteem.

16. **Rakesh (2018)**. Observed that family conflict was a strong negative predictor of adolescent self-concept.
17. **Anjali (2018)**. Reported that equitable family practices were associated with higher life satisfaction and self-worth.
18. **Susan (2019)**. Found that family warmth and low conflict predicted higher adolescent self-esteem across socioeconomic groups.
19. **Mandal (2019)**. Linked authoritative parenting to higher adolescent self-worth compared to authoritarian styles.
20. **Neha (2019)**. In Haryana, showed that family conflict and stress were significant predictors of lower adolescent self-worth.
21. **Prakash (2019)**. Found that strong family functioning buffered the negative effects of poverty on adolescent self-worth.
22. **Kiran (2019)**. Found that parental occupational stress spilled over into family climate and lowered adolescent self-worth.
23. **Banstola (2020)**. Showed that parents' knowledge about adolescent development reduced self-esteem problems and risk behaviors.
24. **Pandey (2020)**. Reported that authoritative parenting predicted the highest levels of adolescent self-esteem in Kerala, relevant to India more broadly.
25. **Singh (2020)**. Found higher self-esteem in adolescents from higher SES families, partly explained by parental involvement.
26. **Daniel (2020)**. Cross-cultural study reported that insecure family dynamics heightened adolescent vulnerability to low self-esteem.
27. **Sunita (2020)**. Indian review suggested that family support networks are crucial in adolescence for wellbeing and self-worth.
28. **Mahalakshmi (2021)**. Review confirmed that family cohesion and low conflict are central to adolescent self-esteem.
29. **Hsiu-Fen (2022)**. Documented that differences in family functioning across Indian urban contexts shaped adolescent wellbeing and self-worth.
30. **Henrik (2022)**. Found that insecure family environments in stressed households lowered adolescent satisfaction and self-worth.

### Significant of the Study

This study underscores the critical role of family dynamics-cohesion, expressiveness, and independence-in fostering adolescents' self-worth, offering valuable insights for designing targeted interventions to enhance mental well-being. By identifying significant correlations, it emphasizes the need for family-centered approaches, particularly for low SES groups, to promote positive self-perception. The findings contribute to psychological research, guiding educators, counselors, and policymakers in developing strategies to support adolescent development and emotional health.

### Objectives

1. To examine the influence of family dynamics on adolescent self-worth.
2. To investigate socioeconomic variations in the relationship between family dynamics and self-worth.

### Hypotheses

H1: Family dynamics will be significantly correlated with adolescent self-worth.

H2: The strength of the relationship between family dynamics and self-worth will vary across socioeconomic groups.

### Methodology

#### Sample

The study involved 110 Class XI students aged 15- 17 years from Haryana, India. Participants were selected from one public and one private school to capture socioeconomic diversity. The sample included students from various academic streams (e.g., Science, Commerce, Humanities) to ensure heterogeneity.

#### Tools

Two validated instruments were used:

1. **Family Environment Scale (FES)** by Sanjay Vohra, assessing family cohesion, expressiveness, independence, and organization.
2. **Coppersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI)** by Coppersmith, measuring subjective self-worth.

#### Statistical Analysis

Means and standard deviations were calculated. Pearson correlation coefficients assessed relationships between family dynamics and self-worth. Fisher's z-transformation tested differences in correlations across SES groups through SPSS.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Statistics

**Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Family Dynamics and Self-Worth**

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Cohesion	9.30	2.20
Expressiveness	9.15	2.50
Independence	7.85	2.30
Organization	8.50	2.75
Self-Worth	54.00	16.25

Cohesion had a mean score of 9.30 with a standard deviation of 2.20. Expressiveness recorded a mean of 9.15 and a standard deviation of 2.50. Independence showed a mean of 7.85 and a standard deviation of 2.30. Organization had a mean of 8.50 and a standard deviation of 2.75. Self-Worth exhibited a mean value of 54.00 and a standard deviation of 16.25.

**Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations by Socioeconomic Group**

Variables	High SES (n=58)	Low SES (n=50)	High SES SD	Low SES SD
Cohesion	9.45	9.15	2.80	1.15
Expressiveness	9.00	9.35	3.20	1.25
Independence	8.50	7.20	2.70	1.30
Organization	8.10	9.00	2.95	2.40
Self-Worth	56.00	51.50	19.30	11.45

Cohesion was slightly higher in the high SES group (mean = 9.45, SD = 2.80) than in the low SES group (mean = 9.15, SD = 1.15). Expressiveness was marginally lower in the high SES group (mean = 9.00, SD = 3.20) compared to the low SES group (mean = 9.35, SD = 1.25). Independence was higher in the high SES group (mean = 8.50, SD = 2.70) than in the low SES group (mean = 7.20, SD = 1.30). Organization was lower in the high SES group (mean = 8.10, SD = 2.95) compared to the low SES group (mean = 9.00, SD = 2.40). Self-Worth was greater in the high SES group (mean = 56.00, SD = 19.30) than in the low SES group (mean = 51.50, SD = 11.45).

### Correlation Analysis

**Table 3: Correlation Coefficients for Family Dynamics and Self-Worth**

Family Dynamics	Self-Worth (r)
Cohesion	0.305*
Expressiveness	0.270*
Independence	0.400*
Organization	0.010
*Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$	

Table 3, the correlation analysis between family dynamics and self-worth revealed the following: Cohesion had a significant positive correlation with self-worth ( $r = 0.305$ ). Expressiveness was also significantly positively correlated with self-worth ( $r = 0.270$ ). Independence showed the strongest significant positive correlation with self-worth ( $r = 0.400$ ). Organization did not show a significant relationship, with a near-zero correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.010$ ). Cohesion, expressiveness, and independence showed significant positive correlations with self-worth, supporting H1. Organization, however, showed no significant relationship, suggesting it may not directly influence adolescents' self-worth in this context.

## Socioeconomic Differences

**Table 4: Socioeconomic Differences in Correlations**

Family Dynamics	High SES (r)	Low SES (r)	Z-value	Critical Ratio
Cohesion	0.420*	-0.250	0.46	3.60***
Expressiveness	0.355*	-0.070	0.38	2.25***
Independence	0.445*	0.140	0.48	1.70
Organization	0.070	-0.055	0.08	0.60
*Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ ( $r \geq 0.273$ ); *** $p < 0.001$				

Significant differences were observed in the cohesion-self-worth (CR = 3.60,  $p < 0.001$ ) and expressiveness-self-worth (CR = 2.25,  $p < 0.001$ ) relationships across SES groups, supporting H2. High SES adolescents exhibited stronger positive correlations, likely due to greater parental warmth and support (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). In contrast, low SES adolescents showed weaker or negative correlations, possibly due to economic stressors fostering harsher parenting practices (Conger & Donnellan, 2007). Recent studies reinforce these findings. A meta-analysis by Zhang et al. (2021) found that family cohesion and supportive parenting consistently predict higher adolescent self-worth across cultures, with stronger effects in high SES contexts. The study highlights that economic stability enables parents to foster nurturing environments, enhancing adolescents' self-worth. Conversely, a longitudinal study by Lee and Kim (2023) noted that low SES families often face chronic stressors, leading to punitive parenting that undermines adolescent autonomy and self-worth. These findings align with the present study's observation of lower self-worth ( $M = 51.50$ ) in low SES adolescents compared to high SES peers ( $M = 56.00$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The results underscore the critical role of family dynamics in shaping adolescent self-worth. Independence was the strongest predictor ( $r = 0.400$ ), aligning with Erikson's (1950) theory that autonomy is central to adolescent development. In India's collectivist culture, high cohesion ( $M = 9.30$ ) and expressiveness ( $M = 9.15$ ) reflect strong family ties, yet limited independence ( $M = 7.85$ ) may constrain self-worth development, particularly in low SES groups. Economic stressors in low SES families ( $M_{\text{income}} = ₹4,800$ ) likely exacerbate negative parent-adolescent interactions, reducing self-worth (Berk, 2010). In contrast, high SES families ( $M_{\text{income}} = ₹1,22,000$ ) provide more supportive environments, fostering higher self-worth.

## CONCLUSION

This study confirms that family cohesion, expressiveness, and independence significantly influence adolescent self-worth, with socioeconomic status moderating these relationships. Interventions aimed at enhancing family communication and autonomy, particularly in low SES households, could bolster adolescent self-worth and promote positive developmental outcomes.

**Implications:** This study highlights that family cohesion, expressiveness, and independence significantly enhance adolescents' self-worth, informing family-based interventions. Tailored programs can strengthen these dynamics, particularly for low SES groups, to boost self-esteem.

**Limitations:** The study's small sample size and self-reported data may limit generalizability. It lacks longitudinal data to assess causality and overlooks cultural or contextual influences on family dynamics and self-worth.

**Future Suggestions:** Future research should use larger, diverse samples and longitudinal designs to explore causality. Incorporating cultural factors and objective measures could deepen understanding of family dynamics' impact on self-worth.

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