

UNDERSTANDING HOW PARENTS SUPPORT SCHOOL STUDENT'S INDEPENDENCIES

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ABSTRACT

This study looked at how the care and support of parents help school-aged children become more confident and able to make their own decisions. It was expected that children who feel loved and supported by their parents would be better at doing things on their own. The research included 100 school students from different classes in Lahore. Two simple tools were used to understand how much children feel their parents are involved and how independent the children feel in their actions. The results showed that when children feel warmth and kindness from their mothers and fathers, they are more likely to make good choices independently. However, just being involved or giving strict guidance from parents did not always help children become more self-reliant. This study is helpful for teachers, school counselors, and parents to understand how to support children in growing up to be more responsible and confident.

INTRODUCTION

Children in school go through important phases of learning, social development, and emotional growth. At this stage, the role of parents becomes especially valuable in helping them become confident and independent individuals. When children receive love, warmth, and encouragement from their parents, they are more likely to feel motivated and perform better in school (Wei et al., 2022). Such support builds their confidence to make good decisions and handle school-related challenges independently.

Research shows that most of a child's attitudes and behaviors are formed before the age of nine, which means early parenting plays a key role in shaping their personality (Pedersen, 2017). When parents show interest in their child's learning, attend school meetings, help with homework, and encourage conversations at home, children tend to

enjoy school more and feel supported (Utami, 2022; Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017).

However, support needs to be balanced. If parents become too controlling or overly involved in every small task, it might make children nervous or less confident. Emotional warmth is more effective than constant correction. For example, children may act out or show frustration when they are bullied at school or don't perform well in exams. At such times, gentle parenting can help them feel safe and guided (Deng et al., 2022).

Parental involvement also improves behavior and academic results when it is mixed with patience and consistent encouragement. A healthy home environment, filled with communication, role modeling, and kindness, fosters values like respect, responsibility, and goal setting (Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020).

Despite cultural differences in parenting, studies agree that children benefit the most when their parents support independence while remaining emotionally close (Kiswantomo & Theofanny,

2021; Worsley et al., 2021). Overall, this shows how essential parental support is in helping school children grow into confident, capable, and happy learners.

LITERATURE

REVIEW

Sr. No	Title/Concept	Key Findings	Authors	Year	Methodology
1	Parental Involvement	Active participation of parents improves school performance.	Kong & Yasmin	2022	Survey on parenting style and academic outcomes
2	Autonomy Support	Encouraging choice-making boosts confidence and independence.	Soenens & Vansteenkiste	2010	Review and observational study
3	Self-Determination Theory	Children need autonomy, competence, and relatedness for motivation.	Deci & Ryan	2004	Theoretical framework
4	Early Development of Values	Children shape lifelong attitudes by age 9.	Pedersen	2017	Longitudinal developmental study
5	Emotional Balance in Parenting	Over-control reduces autonomy; warmth increases confidence.	Deng et al.	2022	Mixed-method research
6	Role of Socioeconomic Status	Single-parent support becomes more vital under financial stress.	Bacikova-Sleskova et al.	2010	Contextual health & parental support study
7	Parental Modeling & Citizenship	Parental behavior fosters values and responsibility in children.	Kelty & Wakabayashi	2020	Qualitative case studies
8	Psychological Needs in Learning	Supportive parenting promotes emotional well-being and success.	Li et al.	2018	Junior school survey & scale analysis
9	Premature Autonomy Risk	Too early independence linked to stress and low coping.	Haase et al.	2008	German national survey
10	Family Communication Impact	Positive discussion improves academic success.	Utami	2022	Field-based educational study
11	Cultural Parental Influence	Warm parenting improves autonomy regardless of culture.	Wermke & Salokangas	2015	Cross-national theoretical review
12	Daily Encouragement	Small encouragements and praise improve motivation.	Wei et al.	2022	Psychometric analysis on students

Aims and Objectives

This study aims to explore how the support and involvement of parents help school children become more confident, responsible, and independent in their daily routines and academic life. It seeks to understand how a caring home environment contributes to a child's ability to

make decisions, solve problems, and complete tasks on their own.

The objectives of the research are:

- To examine the connection between emotional support from parents and the development of self-reliance in school-aged children.

- To find out whether children who feel more encouraged and supported at home show greater independence in school activities.
- To observe how motherly and fatherly warmth, involvement, and communication affect children's behavior, learning attitude, and personal growth.
- To highlight the importance of balanced parenting—where children are guided but also given space to think and act independently.
- To provide practical suggestions for teachers, parents, and school counselors on how to build confidence and decision-making skills in children through positive parenting.

This study is especially important for helping educators and families recognize the role of emotional support at an early age. By promoting autonomy in children, we are not only helping them succeed in school but also preparing them to become thoughtful and capable individuals in life.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a **correlational research design** to explore how parental support such as love, guidance, and involvement relates to the independence of school children. The goal was to find whether there is a meaningful relationship between the support children feel at home and their ability to make decisions at school.

Sample and Participants

A group of 100 school students from grades 5 to 8 was selected using a non-probability purposive sampling method. The sample included both boys and girls from different school types (private and public). Children from single-parent households were not included to keep the data consistent. The age range of the participants was 10 to 14 years.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Boys	45	45%
	Girls	55	55%
School Type	Public	60	60%
	Private	40	40%
Family System	Nuclear	72	72%
	Joint	28	28%
Age (Mean ± SD)	10-14 years	M = 12.1 ± 1.1	-

Tools and Measures

The study used three main instruments:

1. Demographic Form

This included basic personal information such as the child's age, gender, grade level, school type, and family structure (nuclear or joint).

2. Parental Support Checklist (Adapted)

An age-appropriate version of the College-Student Scale (Robbins, 1994) was used to assess how students perceive their parents' involvement, warmth, and support. The tool was adjusted for school children, focusing on these 6 dimensions:

- Mother's Support and Involvement
- Mother's Warmth
- Father's Support and Involvement
- Father's Warmth
- Communication with Parents
- Emotional Support

3. Child Autonomy Scale (Adapted from SDS)

The Self-Determination Scale (Sheldon et al., 1996) was simplified to measure how confident and independent children feel in their actions. Only the "Perceived Choice" subscale was used. It included 5 questions related to decision-making and responsibility.

Table 2: Tools Used in the Study

Tool Name	Adapted From	Purpose	Subscales Used
Demographic Form	Self-developed	Collect basic background data	Age, Gender, School Type
Parental Support Checklist	Robbins (1994)	Measure perception of parental support	6 subscales
Child Autonomy Scale	Sheldon et al. (1996)	Assess child's sense of independence	Perceived Choice

Procedure

1. The research topic was reviewed and approved by the academic committee.
2. Permission to conduct the survey was obtained from school authorities and class teachers.
3. Students and their parents were informed about the purpose of the study, and written informed consent was obtained.
4. Questionnaires were distributed and filled during class time with the help of the researchers.
5. Children were assured that their responses would remain private and would not affect their grades or teacher behavior.
6. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS software, applying Pearson correlation analysis to find relationships between parental support and child autonomy.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the connection between parental support and the development of independence (autonomy) in school children. The findings revealed that when children experience warmth from their parents—especially emotional care and encouragement from both the mother and father—they are more likely to feel confident in making their own choices. This supports earlier research showing that positive parenting can enhance a child's sense of autonomy and personal responsibility (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010).

However, the results also indicated that direct parental autonomy support, such as allowing children to make decisions or solve problems alone, was not significantly related to their perceived independence in this sample. This differs from previous studies like Roth et al. (2009), who argued that parental autonomy support strongly predicts perceived choice and self-motivation.

Additionally, the relationship between mother autonomy support and perceived choice was not significant in this study. This suggests that, in this context, children may not develop decision-making abilities solely from being given independence by their mothers. Similar patterns

were found with father autonomy support, which also did not show a strong link to perceived autonomy. These results differ from studies like Chirkov et al. (2001), who found that father's support positively influenced children's motivation and emotional well-being.

One possible reason for these unexpected findings could be the small sample size ($N = 100$), which may have limited the statistical strength of the results. As Bacikova-Sleskova et al. (2010) observed, family conditions—such as a parent's employment status—can greatly influence how children perceive support. If one parent is unavailable or less involved due to work or other factors, the role of the other becomes more critical.

Another important aspect is that this study showed a strong relationship between emotional warmth (from both parents) and children's sense of independence. Even though structural support like autonomy-granting wasn't strongly correlated, emotional connection and presence from parents clearly mattered. This confirms the idea that when children feel loved and emotionally secure, they are more likely to act confidently and independently (Zhang & Smith, 2015).

While these results are valuable, they should be interpreted with caution. The tools used to measure parental support and autonomy were adapted for school students, but they were not yet fully standardized or normed for this age group. This limitation may have influenced the outcomes. As the instruments continue to be refined and tested, future research may reveal clearer patterns.

In summary, this study reinforces the critical role of parental warmth and involvement in developing school children's autonomy. Although direct autonomy-supporting behaviors were not significantly related to independence in this group, the emotional bond between parent and child remains a powerful factor in a child's personal growth.

Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights into how parental support relates to independence in school children, several limitations should be acknowledged.

Firstly, the research was conducted with a relatively small sample of 100 students, which limits the ability to generalize the findings to a broader school population. A larger and more diverse sample—covering different regions, school systems, and socioeconomic backgrounds—would provide more reliable and representative results.

Secondly, due to time constraints and limited resources, the study could not be expanded to include multiple schools or longitudinal follow-ups. A longer study period with repeated measures over time might offer a deeper understanding of how parental support influences autonomy as children grow.

Additionally, the data collected relied on self-reports from students, which may not always reflect objective behavior. There was no direct method available to verify the accuracy of the students' responses, which introduces the possibility of response bias or misinterpretation. Another important limitation involves the measurement tools used. Although adapted from established psychological scales, the instruments were not fully translated or culturally standardized for school-aged children in the local context. This may have affected the reliability and cultural sensitivity of the results.

Finally, while this research focused on emotional and structural parental support, it did not explore other potential influences such as peer relationships, teacher behavior, or digital exposure, which may also affect children's development of autonomy.

Despite these limitations, the findings are meaningful for educators, school counselors, and future researchers. They highlight the importance of emotional connection between parents and children, and provide a foundation for further studies that may address these limitations with larger samples and more refined tools.

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