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The Effects of Emotional Intelligence and Parenting Styles on Self-Esteem in a Sample of Respondents in Nigeria

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Abstract. Studies consistently suggest that emotional intelligence and parenting styles are associated with self-esteem, although validation has relatively been based on correlation analysis. Using a sample of 252 respondents in Nigeria, the present study examined the relationships among parenting styles, emotional intelligence, and self-esteem with the aim of generating knowledge that transcends the nature and extent of their correlations. A bivariate analysis identified significant correlations: emotional intelligence (i.e., self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, uses of emotion, and regulation of emotion), authoritative parenting, and authoritarian parenting significantly positively correlated with self-esteem. There was no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and parenting styles. Results of the independent-samples t test indicated that emotional intelligence and self-esteem differed by gender. Specifically, women were more likely than men to report high self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, and uses of emotion. Similarly, women were more likely than men to report high self-esteem. Using multiple regression analysis, emotional intelligence and parenting styles were associated with self-esteem: being a student, emotional intelligence (i.e., self-emotion appraisal and uses of emotion), and authoritative parenting were associated with self-esteem. Emotional intelligence accounted for a larger effect on self-esteem than did parenting styles. In general, findings lend credence to the relevance of authoritative parenting in the development of self-esteem and suggest that, among components of emotional intelligence, uses of emotion and self-emotion appraisal may be considered in facilitating improvement of self-esteem among young adults at the developmental stage of increasing self-esteem. Implications of findings for research, education, and practice are discussed.

Keywords. self-esteem, emotional intelligence, parenting styles, parental authority, authoritative parenting

1. Introduction

Studies on self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and parenting styles have identified considerable associations that validate their importance to human development (e.g., Asghari & Besharat, 2011; Belean & Năstasă, 2017; Bibi et al., 2016; Buri, 1989; Buri et al., 1988; Mitrofan, 2011; Pinquart & Gerke, 2019). Although the strengths of their associations range from small to moderate, contradictory conclusions are pervasive, partly because analytical choices that informed the conclusions are primarily correlational. Questions about their complex relationships remain unanswered: predictive validity in the context of competing variables, bidirectional association, and reciprocal predictive relationships among them remain unexplored; questions about relative stability versus developmental dynamism of self-esteem in terms of its association with progressively evolving emotional intelligence remain unanswered; and analytical considerations to disentangle the conceptual overlap between self-esteem and emotional intelligence remain largely ignored. This article examines the associations and differences in self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and parenting styles among young adults, with the aim of generating knowledge that transcends the nature and extent of their correlations.

1.1. Self-Esteem

Self-esteem relates to negative or positive attitude towards self and concerns how individuals perceive and evaluate themselves (Rosenberg, 1965). It is an affective, psychological, and personality dimension of the self and encompasses a constellation of judgment about physical attributes, psychological competence, social interaction, coping skills, and mental abilities about self (Cheung et al., 2015a; Körük, 2017). As an affective appraisal of self, it has endured considerable empirical scrutiny. It has been associated with health (Jafflin et al., 2019), personal and professional burnout (Kupcewicz & Jóźwik, 2020), mental health (Curvis et al., 2018), academic performance and achievement (Christy & Mythili, 2020), and victimization and perpetration of bullying (Jankauskiene et al., 2008). A study found nonsuicidal self-injury and sense of identity assessment form scores in adolescents to be predictive of self-esteem (Akdemir et al., 2016). A meta-analysis of studies also indicates that self-esteem is negatively associated with aggression (Teng et al., 2015) and depression and anxiety (Orth & Robins, 2013; Sowislo & Orth, 2013).

1.2. Emotional Intelligence

A cognitive ability that is deemed critical to understanding self-esteem is emotional intelligence, which is described as the “ability to engage in sophisticated information processing about one’s own and others’ emotion and the ability to use this information as a guide to thinking and behavior” (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 503). It concerns how people perceive and understand emotions of self and others and successfully regulate and communicate those emotions in interacting with others (Zeidner et al., 2009). Over the years, the conception of emotional intelligence has evolved from being conceived as a constellation of interconnected mental abilities to being considered a blend of dispositional traits (e.g., “happiness, self-esteem, optimism, and self-management”; Mayer et al., 2008, p. 503), a proliferation of models that seems to undermine its predictive validity. Nevertheless, retaining emotional intelligence as a constellation of interconnected mental abilities is critical to understanding its predictive validity of dispositional traits.

Emotional intelligence is conceived less in isolation to itself than in relation to other cognitive, dispositional, or personality traits. It has effects on learning, relationships, social, occupational, and psychological well-being and draws its explanatory power from socially

challenging opportunity theory (Zeidner et al., 2009). It is associated with aggressive behavior (Qualter et al., 2019), mental illness (e.g., depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, aggressive behavior; alcohol and substance abuse; Brackett et al., 2011; Hertel et al., 2009; Kaypaklı & Tamam, 2019; Leite et al., 2019; Lizeretti et al., 2012; Mayer et al., 2008; Mikolajczak et al., 2009; Trinidad & Johnson 2002), and academic performance (MacCann et al., 2020). It is based on cognition, in contrast to self-esteem, which is based on affect (Roberts et al., 2001). It is amenable to improvement and capable of improving performance (Cheung et al., 2015b). It is “an indicator of psychological adjustment” (Delhom et al., 2018, p. 1713). Because “self-esteem stability was low during childhood, increased throughout adolescence and young adulthood, and declined during midlife and old age” (Trzesniewski et al., 2002, p. 205), it is possible that emotional intelligence is likely to accelerate self-esteem among adolescents and young adults and improve declining self-esteem in persons in midlife and old age.

1.3. Parenting Styles

A consistently identified major influence on self-esteem is parenting styles, which could be described as entailing child-rearing values and goals, as well as parenting practices and attitudes in raising children (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Pinquart & Gerke, 2019). Baumrind (1966) described three prototypes of child-rearing practices: (a) permissive (i.e., “the permissive parent attempts to behave in a nonpunitive, acceptant, and affirmative manner toward the child’s impulses, desires, and actions”); (b) authoritarian (i.e., “the authoritarian parent attempts to shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set standard of conduct, usually an absolute standard, theologically motivated and formulated by a higher authority”), and (c) authoritative (i.e., “the authoritative parent attempts to direct the child’s activities in a rational, issue-oriented manner. She encourages verbal give and take, shares with the child the reasoning behind her policy, and solicits his objections when he refuses to conform”; pp. 889-891). Based on Baumrind’s conceptualization, Buri (1991) developed a parental authority questionnaire to operationalize parenting styles.

Parenting styles are associated with internalizing, externalizing, and general maladjustment problems (Moreno Méndez et al., 2020), problematic, binge drinking (Zuquette et al., 2019), and peer problems (Obimakinde et al., 2019). Among the three major parenting styles, authoritative parenting has been consistently associated with positive outcomes (e.g., “psychosocial competence . . . maturation, resilience, optimism, self-reliance, social competence, self-esteem;” Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019, p. 169), compared to negative outcomes associated with authoritarian parenting (e.g., aggression, delinquency, anxiety disorders, stress, general adjustment problems; Adubale, 2017; Hovee et al., 2008; Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019; Moreno et al., 2020; Stevens et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2009; Wolfradt et al., 2003) and permissive parenting (e.g., depression, anxiety; Adubale, 2017; Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019; Moreno et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2009; Wolfradt et al., 2003). In general, punitive parenting style has detrimental effects on the mental well-being of children (Zubizarreta et al., 2019).

Associations Among Parenting Styles, Emotional Intelligence, and Self-Esteem

Figure 1 describes the model for understanding the effects of demographic characteristics, emotional intelligence, and parenting styles on self-esteem. Beyond the associations between parenting styles and emotional intelligence, the model highlights the individual effects of parenting styles and emotional intelligence on self-esteem in ways that clarify their relevance for policy, practice, and research.

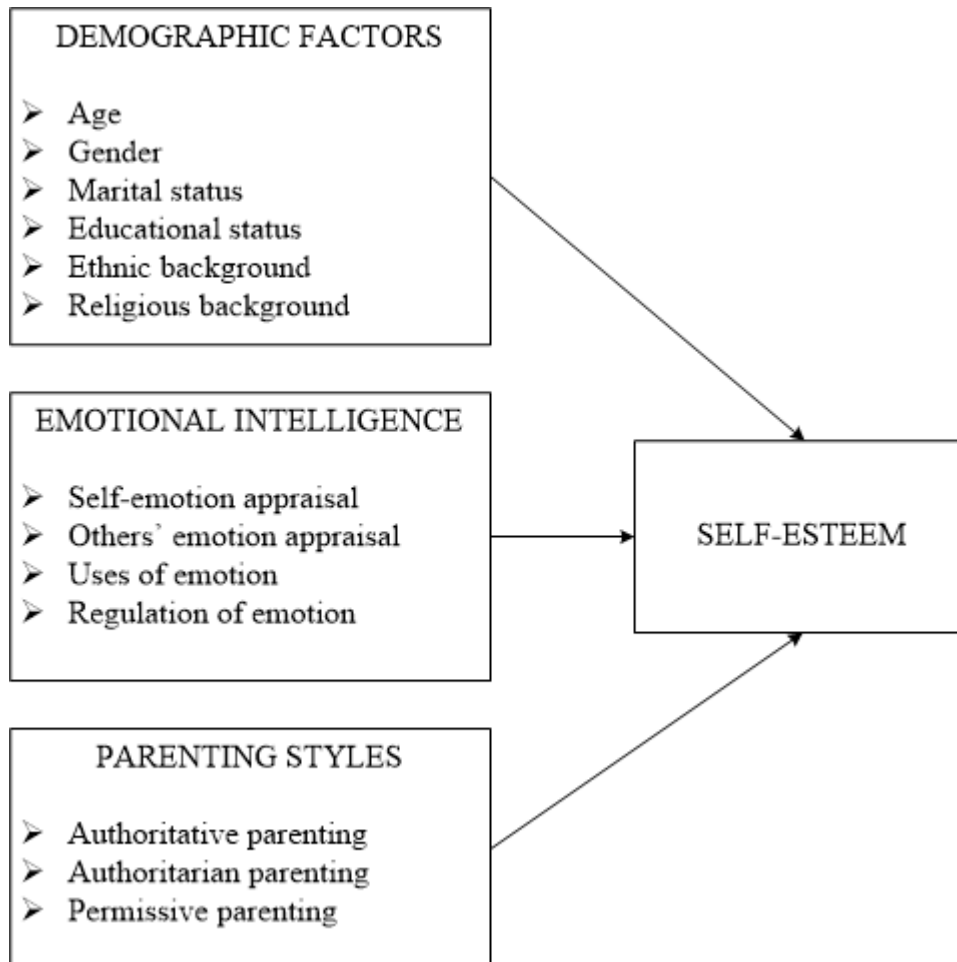


Figure 1. A Proposed Model of the Effects of Emotional Intelligence and Parenting Styles on Self-Esteem

1.4. Association Between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem

Studies consistently report a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem and describe the strength of the relationship as ranging from low to medium (Bibi et al., 2016; Nnabuiife et al., 2018; Rani & Marzuki, 2017; Sa et al., 2019). An increasing number of studies validate the association and other studies suggest that the variables share unique associations with other variables, such as academic performance and achievement (Christy & Mythili, 2020; MacCann et al., 2020) and mental illness (Orth & Robins, 2013; Kaypaklı & Tamam, 2019; Sowislo & Orth, 2013), suggesting that they are worthy of further exploration.

1.5. Effects of Emotional Intelligence on Self-Esteem

Most studies describing the low to moderate association between emotional intelligence and self-esteem have arrived at conclusions about the relationship without examining the relationship in the context of other relevant variables. Studies describing the predictive effects of emotional intelligence on self-esteem are relatively few and some examined only the predictive effects in the context of mediation analysis. For example, in a mediation framework, Johar (2014) depicted the effects of emotional intelligence on organizational commitment through self-esteem, thereby suggesting a considerable impact of emotional intelligence on self-esteem. A similar study highlighted the mediating effects of emotional intelligence on the relationship between achievement and self-esteem: “Accordingly, emotional intelligence is likely to underlie social competence and mediate the contribution of achievement to self-esteem” (Cheung et al., 2015a, p. 63). The authors concluded that “the results imply the value of raising emotional intelligence in order to consolidate the basis for the young adult's self-esteem” (p. 63). In the mediation models, both studies depicted emotional intelligence as having effects on self-esteem.

Recent studies by Pérez-Fuentes, Jurado, del Pino et al. (2019) and by Pérez-Fuentes, Jurado, and Gázquez Linares (2019) support the predictive significance of emotional intelligence on self-esteem in nursing and health care professionals. However, a study examining the reciprocal relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem did not find any significant effects of emotional intelligence on self-esteem, despite finding effects of self-esteem on self-assessed emotional intelligence (Cheung et al., 2015b).

A cursory look at background characteristics may put the lack of reciprocity in the proper perspective, since background characteristics may have more significant relevance to self-esteem than emotional intelligence. To date, a more compelling evidence points to moderate association between emotional intelligence and self-esteem and considerable predictive effects of emotional intelligence on self-esteem. A study found emotional intelligence and self-esteem to be predictive of self-efficacy in teachers (Şahin, 2017) and risky sexual behavior in students (Ugoji, 2013). Nevertheless, questions about which components of emotional intelligence have considerable effects on self-esteem remain unanswered, since emotional intelligence is not a monolithic construct but a construct with several components or subconstructs (at least four components have been identified in the body of empirical research).

1.6. Association Between Parenting Styles and Self-Esteem

Similar to the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem, studies have identified small to moderate positive associations between authoritative parenting and self-esteem (Antonopoulou et al., 2012; Buri, 1989; Buri et al., 1988; Mitrofan, 2011; Pinquart & Gerke, 2019; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020) and a negative or inverse association between authoritarian parenting and self-esteem (Buri, 1989; Buri et al., 1988; Pinquart & Gerke, 2019). Although Pinquart and Gerke (2019) found a very small positive association between permissive parenting and self-esteem in their meta-analysis, Buri et al. (1988) did not find any such association. People develop self-esteem over time through socialization and life experiences (Harter, 2012; Rosenberg, 1965, as cited in Pinquart & Gerke, 2019) and levels of self-esteem vary by society. People from Western societies tend to endorse individualism and favor authoritative parenting, which has positive effects on self-esteem, compared to people from non-Western societies who are known to endorse collectivism and tend to favor authoritarian parenting, which is also known to have negative effects on self-esteem (Bosson & Swann, 2009; Pinquart & Gerke, 2019; Rudy & Grusec, 2001). Nevertheless, Pinquart and

Gerke (2019) did not identify any variations between Western and non-Western societies when examining associations between parenting styles and self-esteem in their meta-analysis of 116 studies. Instead, the associations were deemed to be “universal across cultures” (p. 2029).

1.7. Effects of Parenting Styles on Self-Esteem

In the same way that judgment on the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem was based on correlation analysis, most analyses on the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem have been based on findings from correlational analysis, which results in limited understanding of the predictive capacity of the variables (e.g., the predictive effects of parenting styles on self-esteem). However, a recent study by Hirata and Kamakura (2018) indicated that authoritative parenting style is predictive of self-esteem for both male and female participants, with a moderate effect size. A similar study demonstrated the nurturing effects of authoritative parenting style in describing its effects on self-esteem in a structural equation model (Tafarodi et al., 2010).

1.8. Association Between Parenting Styles and Emotional Intelligence

The association between parenting styles and emotional intelligence is evident in the body of empirical research. Specifically, in a study of adolescents, authoritative parenting was found to have effects on emotional intelligence (Asghari & Besharat, 2011; Cameron et al., 2020; Chong & Chan, 2015; Mitrofan, 2011), a finding that was validated by another study with parents in which democratic parental style was deemed to have positive effects on emotional intelligence (Belean & Năstasă, 2017). A study in Nigeria reached a similar conclusion of the positive association between authoritative parenting by fathers and mothers and emotional intelligence (Adekeye et al., 2015). A literature review on the relationship between parenting styles and emotional intelligence found that “parental responsiveness, parental emotion-related coaching, and parental positive demandingness are related to children’s higher emotional intelligence, while parental negative demandingness is related to children’s lower emotional intelligence” (Alegre, 2010, p. 56). It is interesting that parenting styles and emotional intelligence share unique associations with other variables: both emotional intelligence and nonauthoritative parenting have been associated with addiction and drinking problems (Leite et al., 2019; Zuquette et al., 2019) and internalizing and externalizing problems (Hertel et al., 2009; Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019; Lizeretti et al., 2012).

1.9. Effects of Demographic Factors on Self-Esteem

Current research provides only limited guidance for determining the effects of demographic characteristics on self-esteem in a predictive model, a challenge that may partly be attributed to the fact that most studies reported only correlation analysis in describing the association of relevant variables with self-esteem. Regrettably, correlation does not imply causation, as temporal order cannot be established in correlation analysis. While intuitively possible, depending on the nature of variables being correlated, it is analytically difficult to establish independent and dependent variable in correlation analysis. More challenging in disentangling the complexities of the relationships is the fact that studies describing the predictive effects of relevant variables on self-esteem did not control for demographic variables in the regression analysis (Hirata & Kamakura, 2018; Johar, 2014; Tafarodi et al., 2010), although Pérez-Fuentes, Jurado, del Pino et al. (2019) and Pérez-Fuentes Jurado, and Gazquez Linares (2019) considered “years of experience in the profession as the selection variable” in their step-wise regression model (p. 4, 6). However, recent studies by Cheung et

al. (2015a, 2015b) controlled for demographic variables and found age, business major, and year of study to be significantly predictive of self-esteem in the regression and structural equation model. Akdemir et al. (2016) found gender and presence of a sibling among other factors to be predictive of self-esteem.

Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem

Studies on gender differences in emotional intelligence and self-esteem have produced inconsistent results; some studies identified gender differences and others did not. Studies that found significant relationships suggest that female respondents (girls) were more likely to demonstrate higher emotional intelligence than male respondents (boys; Bibi et al., 2016; Carr, 2009; Ciarrochi et al., 2001; Harrod & Scheer, 2005; Katyal & Awasthi, 2005; Petrides & Furnham, 2000), although Sa et al. (2019) found the opposite: “Emotional intelligence scores were higher among male individuals than among female” (p. 536; see also Ajmal et al., 2017; Khalili, n.d.). Some evidence suggests that the mediating effects of age must be considered in the relationship: Age mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and gender (Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2012). However, some studies did not identify gender differences in emotional intelligence (George et al., 2017; Mokhlesi & Patil, 2018; Nnabuife et al., 2018; Rathi, 2015).

Similar to emotional intelligence, several studies identified gender differences in self-esteem. Studies that identified these differences suggested that female respondents had higher self-esteem than male respondents (Christy & Mythili, 2020; Jenaabadi, 2014), although the result of past meta-analysis suggested that males scored higher than females on self-esteem (Kling et al., 1999; see also Gomez-Baya et al., 2016; Magee & Upenieks, 2019). Yet, it has been suggested that the moderating effect of age must be considered in the relationship because “self-esteem increases from adolescence to middle adulthood” and then decreases as age increases (Bleidorn et al., 2016, p. 404; Magee & Upenieks, 2019; Orth & Robins, 2014). However, some studies did not identify gender differences in self-esteem (Bibi et al., 2016; Nnabuife et al., 2018; Sa et al., 2019).

Based on the above review, the following research questions were developed:

1. Does emotional intelligence differ by gender?
2. Does self-esteem differ by gender?
3. Are there associations among demographic characteristics, emotional intelligence, parenting styles, and self-esteem?

2. Materials and Methods

This study utilized self-report methodology to collect data through SurveyMonkey.com™ from a convenience sample of university students (graduate and undergraduate) and nonstudents in Lagos State, Nigeria. A total of 376 participants responded to the survey. The link to the survey was shared with students in higher institutions in the State. The address book of investigators was also used to share the link with potential respondents. Similarly, the service of internet café operators was used to recruit participants. The Institutional Review Board of Westfield State University, USA approved the study.

2.1. Measures

Self-esteem was operationalized using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). The scale comprises 10 items that capture respondents’ self-report about self-esteem. Examples of questions are “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself; “At times, I think I am no good at all,” and “I feel that I have a number of good qualities”. The 10 items are rated on

a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*). Items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 are reverse coded. Higher scores indicate higher reports of self-esteem and lower scores indicate lower reports of self-esteem. The internal consistency estimate was .78.

Emotional intelligence was operationalized using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS; Law et al., 2004; Wong & Law, 2002). The scale comprises 16 questions that measure four domains of emotional intelligence: self-emotion appraisal (4 items), others' emotion appraisal (4 items), uses of emotion (4 items), and regulation of emotion (4 items). Examples of questions are "I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time," "I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally," "I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them," and "I always know my friends' emotions." The 16 items are rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate higher reports of emotional intelligence and lower scores indicate lower reports of emotional intelligence. The internal consistency estimate for the overall scale was .93 (self-emotion appraisal = .84, others' emotion appraisal = .89, uses of emotion = .89, and regulation of emotion = .90).

Parenting styles was operationalized using a parental authority questionnaire (Buri, 1989, 1991). The scale comprises 30 items that measure three domains of parenting styles: authoritative parenting (10 items), authoritarian parenting (10 items), and permissive parenting (10 items). Examples of questions are "My parent has always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable," "While I was growing up, my parent felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do," and "Even if his/her children didn't agree with him/her, my parent felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what he/she thought was right." The 30 items are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate higher reports of parental authority and lower scores indicate lower reports of parental authority. The Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale was .91 (authoritative parenting appraisal = .85, authoritarian parenting = .86, and permissive parenting = .74).

2.2. Sample Characteristics

The sample was mainly comprised of single ($n = 222$, 88.1%) male ($n = 184$, 58.7%) and female ($n = 104$, 41.3%) young adults with an average age of 25 years ($SD = 6.12$) and without a child ($n = 224$, 88.9%). The majority were undergraduate students ($n = 120$, 47.6%), graduate students ($n = 66$, 26.2%), or nonstudents ($n = 66$, 26.2%) from moderately wealthy ($n = 113$, 44.8%) or neither-rich-nor-poor ($n = 114$, 45.2%) backgrounds. The ethnic background of the majority was Yoruba ($n = 198$, 78.6%); most identified Christianity ($n = 201$, 79.8%) as their religious background. Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the respondents.



Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Sample characteristics	<i>n</i>	%
Age: Mean = 25.86 years, <i>SD</i> = 6.12 years		
Gender		
Male	148	58.7
Female	104	41.3
Marital status		
Single (never married)	222	88.1
Married or other (divorced, widowed)	30	11.9
Educational status		
Student	120	47.6
Graduate	66	26.2
Nonstudent	66	26.2
Family economic background		
Very wealthy	8	3.2
Moderately wealthy	113	44.8
Neither rich nor poor	114	45.2
Moderately poor	15	6.0
Very poor	2	0.8
Children		
Yes	28	11.1
No	224	88.9
Ethnicity		
Yoruba	198	78.6
Igbo and Hausa	54	21.4
Religion		
Christianity	201	79.8
Muslim or other (traditional religion and atheist)	51	20.2

2.3. Data Analysis

Incomplete responses were noted in the 376 available data, as some respondents encountered internet connection problems when completing the survey. Most of incomplete responses contained only the demographic data. After removing them, data were reviewed for duplication and none was identified. Thereafter, listwise deletion was applied to few missing data and 252 cases remained for analysis. Analyses included (a) descriptive analysis to describe respondents' demographic characteristics, (b) zero-order correlations between self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and parenting styles, (c) independent-samples *t* test to determine gender differences in self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and parenting styles, and (d) multiple regression analysis (simultaneous entry) to examine predictors of self-esteem. The covariates include age, gender, marital status, educational status, ethnic background, and religious background. The independent variables were emotional intelligence (i.e., self-emotional appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, uses of emotion, and regulation of emotion) and parenting styles (i.e., authoritative parenting and authoritarian parenting). Self-esteem was the dependent variable. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 25™ (IBM Corp., 2017).

3. Results

3.1 Correlations Between Self-Esteem, Emotional Intelligence, and Parenting Styles

Table 2 describes bivariate relationships among self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and parenting styles. Self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, uses of emotion, regulation of emotion, authoritative parenting, and authoritarian parenting were significantly positively associated with self-esteem. Although emotional intelligence variables (i.e., self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, uses of emotion, regulation of emotion) were significantly related to each other in the way in which parenting styles variables (i.e., authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, and permissive parenting) were significantly positively associated with each other, there was no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and parenting styles variables.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Self-Esteem, Emotional Intelligence, and Parenting Styles

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Self-esteem	.11	.48							
Emotional Intelligence ^a	.11	.80	.354*						
2 Self-emotion appraisal	.24	.87	.309**						
3 Others' emotion appraisal	.85	.11	.262**	.530**					
4 Uses of emotion	.29	.93	.328**	.560**	.545**				
5 Regulation of emotion	.04	.10	.248**	.526**	.452**	.543**			
Parenting styles ^a	.96	.62	.178*						
6 Authoritative parenting	.18	.80	.308**	.035	.072	.120	.021		
7 Authoritarian parenting	.11	.80	.132*	.031	.058	.054	.066	.532**	
8 Permissive parenting	.59	.64	.034	.057	.011	.026	.016	.566**	.471**

Note: *N* = 252. *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation, **p* < .05 (two-tailed), ***p* < .01 (two-tailed).

^aCorrelation between parenting styles and emotional intelligence (.022) is nonsignificant..

3.2 Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem

Results of the independent-samples *t* test to determine whether emotional intelligence and self-esteem differ by gender suggested that women were more likely than men to report high emotional intelligence and self-esteem (Table 3). Specifically, women were more likely than men to report higher self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, and uses of emotion (Research question 1). Similarly, women were more likely than men to report higher self-esteem (Research question 2).

3.3 Associations Between Parenting Styles, Emotional Intelligence, and Self-Esteem

The final model describing the predictors of self-esteem was significant ($F_{(12, 251)} = 7.364, p < .0005$) and accounted for 27% (adjusted $R^2 = .233$) of the variance in self-esteem. Results indicated that student status, emotional intelligence, and parenting styles were

associated with self-esteem (Table 4). Specifically, all things being equal, being a student ($B = .225, p < .0005$), self-emotion appraisal ($B = .091, p = .028$), uses of emotion ($B = .081, p = .043$), and authoritative parenting style ($B = .182, p < .0005$) were significantly related to self-esteem (Research question 3).

Table 3. Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence, Self-Esteem, and Parenting Styles

Variable	Female		Male		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Emotional intelligence	6.25	.66	6.01	.88	2.34	.020
Self-emotion appraisal	6.39	.69	6.14	.96	2.33	.021
Others' emotion appraisal	6.02	.88	5.72	1.24	2.14	.034
Uses of emotion	6.44	.99	6.13	1.12	2.08	.039
Regulation of emotion	6.13	1.12	5.98	1.09	1.07	<i>ns</i>
Self-esteem	3.22	.45	3.04	.49	2.88	.004
Parenting style	2.99	.62	2.94	.66	.761	<i>ns</i>
Authoritative parenting	3.26	.79	3.13	.79	1.27	<i>ns</i>
Authoritarian parenting	3.19	.84	3.06	.78	1.25	<i>ns</i>
Permissive parenting	2.55	.65	2.62	.64	-.93	<i>ns</i>

Note: *df* = 250. *ns* = nonsignificant, *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard deviation.

Table 4. Regressions of Associations Between Emotional Intelligence, Parenting Styles, and Self-Esteem

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95.0% CI	
					LL	UL
Age	.004	.005	.722	.471	-.007	.014
Gender ^a	.096	.058	1.670	.096	-.017	.210
Marital status ^b	-.026	.097	-.272	.786	-.217	.165
Educational status ^c	.225	.063	3.555	<.0005	.100	.350
Ethnic background ^d	.015	.069	.224	.823	-.120	.151
Religious background ^e	.086	.068	1.266	.207	-.048	.219
Emotional intelligence ^f						
Self-emotion appraisal	.091	.041	2.211	.028	.010	.171
Others' emotion appraisal	.003	.031	.089	.929	-.059	.064
Uses of emotion	.081	.040	2.037	.043	.003	.160
Regulation of emotion	.025	.031	.806	.421	-.036	.087
Parenting Styles						
Authoritative	.182	.040	4.518	<.0005	.103	.262
Authoritarian	-.024	.040	-.603	.547	-.103	.054

Note. Note: CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

^aGender = Female = 1, male = 0. ^bMarital status = Single (never married) = 1, other (i.e., married, married but separated, divorced, widowed) = 0. ^cEducational status = Undergraduate/graduate student = 1, Nonstudent = 0. ^dEthnic background = Yoruba = 1, Igbo and Hausa = 0, ^eReligious background = Christianity = 1, Muslim and others (i.e., traditional religion and atheist) = 0. ^fGlobal emotional intelligence ($p < .0005$) was equally significant in the analysis of association between emotional intelligence (index), parenting styles, and self-esteem, controlling for demographic characteristics. Similarly, an examination of hierarchical multiple regressions suggest that emotional intelligence (approximately 12%) accounted for a larger variance on self-esteem than did parenting styles (8%).

A separate analysis describing the predictors of emotional intelligence was equally significant ($F_{(9, 251)} = 4.655, p < .0005$). *Self-esteem* ($B = .596, p < .0005$) was significantly associated with *emotional intelligence*. The model accounted for approximately 14.8% (adjusted $R^2 = .116$) of the variance in *emotional intelligence*.

4. Discussion

The present study highlighted the association between and gender differences in emotional intelligence, parenting styles, and self-esteem, thereby demonstrating their relevance to understanding development of young adults. Findings indicate that emotional intelligence, authoritative parenting, and authoritarian parenting significantly positively correlated with self-esteem. Women were more likely to report high emotional intelligence and self-esteem than men. Being a student, emotional intelligence (i.e., self-emotion appraisal and uses of emotion), and authoritative parenting were associated with self-esteem.

4.1 *Correlations Between Parenting Styles, Emotional Intelligence, and Self-Esteem*

Consistent with previous studies that found small to moderate associations (Bibi et al., 2016; Nnabuife et al., 2018; Rani & Marzuki, 2017; Sa et al., 2019), emotional intelligence, authoritative parenting, and authoritarian parenting significantly positively correlated with self-esteem. Emotional intelligence was found to be correlated with self-esteem, suggesting that an in-depth knowledge about one could improve understanding of the other. For example, the variables shared unique association with educational (e.g., academic performance and achievement; Christy & Mythili, 2020; MacCann et al., 2020) and mental health issues (e.g., depression, anxiety; Orth & Robins, 2013; Kaypaklı & Tamam, 2019; Sowislo & Orth, 2013), suggesting that they are worthy of consideration for addressing academic and psychological issues in young adults.

In parallel to findings in previous studies (Antonopoulou et al., 2012; Buri, 1989; Buri et al., 1988; Mitrofan, 2011; Pinquart & Gerke, 2019; Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020), authoritative parenting correlated with self-esteem, thereby lending credence to the universality of the association (Pinquart & Gerke, 2019). Although previous studies found negative or inverse relationships between authoritarian parenting and self-esteem (Buri, 1989; Buri et al., 1988; Pinquart & Gerke, 2019), a statistically significant low positive relationship was noted in the present study. Contrary to a very small positive association between permissive parenting and self-esteem found in a recent meta-analysis (Pinquart & Gerke, 2019), the association was negative and not statistically significant in the present study, a finding that is similar to that reported by Buri et al. (1988). Similarly, despite the significant association between parenting styles and emotional intelligence in previous studies (Adekeye et al., 2015; Alegre, 2010; Asghari & Besharat, 2011; Belean & Năstasă, 2017; Cameron et al., 2020; Chong & Chan, 2015), the present study did not find any significant correlation.

4.2 *Gender Differences in Parenting Styles, Emotional Intelligence, and Self-Esteem*

In this study, emotional intelligence differed by gender: Women were more likely than men to demonstrate high emotional intelligence, a difference that is particularly statistically significant for three of the four components of emotional intelligence (i.e., self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, and uses of emotion). This validates findings from previous studies (Bibi et al., 2016; Carr, 2009; Ciarrochi et al., 2001; Harrod & Scheer, 2005; Katyal & Awasthi, 2005; Petrides & Furnham, 2000) but contradicts studies that did not identify gender differences in emotional intelligence (George et al., 2017; Mokhlesi & Patil, 2018; Nnabuife et al., 2018; Rathi, 2015) or that identified men to be likely to have higher emotional intelligence than women (Sa et al., 2019). Similarly, it was found that female respondents had higher self-esteem than male respondents, which is consistent with previous studies (Christy & Mythili, 2020; Jenaabadi, 2014) but contrary to findings in some studies

that identified males to be likely to have higher self-esteem than females (Gomez-Baya et al., 2016; Kling et al., 1999; see also Magee & Upenieks, 2019) or that did not identify gender differences in self-esteem (Bibi et al., 2016; Nnabuife et al., 2018; Sa et al., 2019). Beyond the greater propensity of men to agree with strongly worded questions women (Magee & Upenieks, 2019) or the greater tendency of women to agree with strongly worded items (Michaelides et al., 2016), future hope and aspiration engendered by undergraduate and graduate education, supportive relationships and decent socioeconomic family background, resilience and emancipation in the face of cultural oppression, and optimism engendered by religious beliefs may be attributed to why women perceive and evaluate self or use and appraise self and others' emotion better than men. Women's ability to acquire and utilize emotional skills for survival and navigate complex socioemotional environments underlie their ability to foster emotional connection and engage successfully in social interaction with others to a greater extent than that seen in men.

The present study did not identify gender differences in parenting styles, a finding that is particularly not surprising, given the lack of contrary evidence in the body of empirical research. Although studies on gender differences in parenting styles or on paternal and maternal differences in parenting styles are relatively sparse, anecdotal evidence suggests that fathers are more inclined to an authoritarian parenting style while mothers are more inclined to authoritative or permissive parenting styles. In fact, the influence of culture, personality, and gender of child in parenting choices must be considered in understanding gender differences in parenting styles (Nhan, n.d.; Uji, 2014; Weisberg et al., 2011). Fathers tend to be caring and compassionate toward their daughters, in contrast to firm and aggressive treatment of sons. Fathers also tend to be the parent of choice in engaging in physical activities with children, whereas mothers tend to be the parent of choice in meeting the nurturing and supportive needs of children. In fact, gender of child and parents are identified as risk factors for victimization with corporal punishment: Although "mothers used corporal punishment more frequently than fathers" (Mahoney et al., 2000, p. 266), boys are more physically punished than girls (Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2014; Lansford et al., 2010) and fathers are more likely to perpetrate physical abuse in parenting a child (Lee et al., 2008). Despite these anecdotal differences in practices, findings in the present study did not identify gender differences in parenting styles experiences reported by respondents.

4.3 Associations Between Emotional Intelligence, Parenting Styles, and Self-Esteem

In addition to correlations, effects of emotional intelligence and parenting styles on self-esteem were examined, after controlling for demographic characteristics. The results provided better clarification of the associations, in contrast to previous studies. The analysis identified the effects of student status on self-esteem: Being a student was associated with self-esteem, which is not surprising when one considers the importance of education on self-esteem. Self-esteem encompasses unique characteristics (e.g., self-confidence, competence, sense of social belongingness, self-identity, self-control) that are necessary for academic performance and achievement among students. Education enhances positive perception of self, aspirations about the future, and engagement in social experience to the extent of helping promote favorable evaluation and judgment about self. In fact, certain qualities (e.g., confidence, competence) come with experience of being a student and determine the extent to which one succeeds academically or perceives self favorably (Booth & Gerard, 2011). In a meta-analysis that analyzed 46 studies from 150 studies examined, K r k (2017) concluded that "self-esteem has a medium level effect . . . on student achievement" (p. 254).

The results regarding the effects of authoritative parenting on self-esteem confirmed previous studies (Hirata & Kamakura, 2018; Tafarodi et al., 2010) and suggest that authoritative parenting has the capacity to promote self-esteem. Parents utilize various parenting styles to raise children and shape their psychological well-being and behavior through socialization. The nurturing nature of authoritative parenting and its associated degree of “warmth, support, affirmation” may be attributed to its positive effects on self-esteem (Pinquart & Gerke, 2019; Tafarodi et al., 2010, p. 301). Authoritative parents are “warm, firm, and accepting of their *children’s* needs for psychological autonomy” to express opinions and form own beliefs (Steinberg, 2001, p. 1, emphasis added; Pinquart & Gerke, 2019). This nurturing component of authoritative parenting plays a significant role in the emergence and development of self-esteem.

Similar to authoritative parenting, emotional intelligence was predictive of self-esteem, as in previous studies (Cheung et al., 2015a; Johar, 2014; Pérez-Fuentes, Jurado, del Pino et al., 2019; Pérez-Fuentes, Jurado, & Gásquez Linares, 2019) and suggests that emotional intelligence is worthy of consideration in promotion of self-esteem, although the uses of emotion and self-emotional appraisal are the most important predictors. However, Cheung et al. (2015b) did not identify reciprocal predictive effects of emotional intelligence on self-esteem and concluded that “perceived and real performance based on emotional intelligence is not sufficient to enhance self-esteem” (p. 302). In their reciprocal model, they found self-esteem to be a strong predictor of self-assessed emotional intelligence, in contrast to the present study, in which emotional intelligence accounted for more variance in self-esteem than self-esteem accounted for variance in emotional intelligence. Several factors may be attributed to this difference in findings, including differences in sample (undergraduate students versus a mixed sample of students and nonstudents), age (early stage of young adulthood versus middle stage of young adulthood), and analytic choices (structural equation modeling versus multiple regression analysis). Nevertheless, findings in the present study lend credence to the relevance of emotional intelligence to self-esteem and suggest that the ability to use and appraise self-emotion successfully might boost self-confidence and how one feels about self. Increasing emotional intelligence has the potential to increase self-esteem in young adults.

4.4 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

This study has both strengths and limitations. An important strength relates to its examination of the relationships among emotional intelligence, parenting styles, and self-esteem beyond correlation analysis. In fact, it is the first known study to examine the influence of parenting styles and emotional intelligence on self-esteem in respondents in Nigeria. The knowledge derived provides the basis for future comparisons. Another strength of the study relates to its use of the Internet, which allows for wider coverage of data collection from a large section of respondents. Similarly, the anonymity that the online system affords data collection enhances the validity of findings. There are strong indications that respondents “perceived their anonymity was better protected when completing online questionnaires” (Ward et al., 2014, p. 84). In general, findings provide considerable opportunity for comparisons with empirical knowledge from similar studies across societies.

Despite the above strengths, some limitations are notable, one which relates to the use of the Internet to collect data from respondents: Those who have access to the Internet may differ markedly in their views and characteristics from those who lack access to the Internet, thereby limiting the generalizability of findings. Nevertheless, research indicates that computerized or online data are suitable for explanatory research (Briones & Benham, 2017;

Walter et al., 2018). Several studies have utilized the online mode of data collection (Fakunmoju et al., 2015, 2016a, b, 2017; Buchanan & Smith, 1999; Olatunji et al., 2015; Stanton, 1998) and results indicate that data that are collected in paper-and pencil format are equivalent to those that are collected online (Colasante et al., 2019; Gosling et al., 2004; Lewis et al., 2009; Weigold et al., 2013) across countries (De Beuckelaer & Filip Lievens, 2009). Moreover, respondents in this study appeared to be educated young adults, suggesting that the findings may not be generalizable to less educated older adults. This realization may shed light on the positive correlation between authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles or the strength of the correlations among parenting styles, as it may be unique to the region or suggest social desirability responses. Future studies will shed further light on this observation.

4.5 *Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research*

Findings in the present study have implications for policy, practice, and research. The positive effects of authoritative parenting on self-esteem demonstrate the importance of adopting the parenting practice for proper development or bottom-up formation of self-esteem. A social policy that strengthens parental use of authoritative parenting during childhood will go a long way in witnessing favorable self-esteem during adulthood. Similar predictive effects of emotional intelligence on self-esteem suggest that continued development of self-esteem depends in part on fostering emotional intelligence, such that interventions focusing on uses of emotion and appraisal of self-emotion have a better chance of improving self-esteem among young adults. Because one cannot go back to childhood to enhance authoritative parenting experiences of young adults, enhancing their emotional intelligence becomes the viable tool for increasing self-esteem. As a result, integrating emotional intelligence content in training, curriculum, and awareness-raising programs will aid in improving self-esteem in young adults. Because it is cognitive trait, emotional intelligence can be learned and people can be trained to increase emotional intelligence, which in turn may improve self-esteem and its associated effects. Social interaction is critical to utilization of emotional intelligence: Social and cognitive activities that reward socialization would not only increase emotional intelligence but also have indirect effects on self-esteem. Therefore, social experience and educational activities, including leisure, that may increase emotional intelligence have the potential to improve self-esteem.

To increase knowledge about parenting styles and emotional intelligence, future studies may consider a combination of respondents in various developmental stages to determine the influence of emotional intelligence on self-esteem across developmental stages, instead of focusing on a single population of respondents (e.g., adolescents, students, parents, young adults). For example, because “self-esteem stability was low during childhood, increased throughout adolescence and young adulthood, and declined during midlife and old age” (Trzesniewski et al., 2002, p. 205; see also Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005), comparative analysis of emotional intelligence and self-esteem across the lifespan may focus on similarities and differences among respondents in their childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. Such studies may help to determine the trajectory of emotional intelligence and self-esteem, the type of interventions that will improve self-esteem, the possible role of emotional intelligence on developmental change in self-esteem, and when emotional intelligence may be best deployed to improve self-esteem. For example, “Developmental periods during which rank order stability is relatively low may be ideal targets of intervention programs because self-esteem may be particularly malleable during these times of relative upheaval in the self-concept” (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005, p. 160). The integration of

developmental focus in the examination of the association between emotional intelligence and self-esteem may clarify their reciprocal predictive relationship.

It must be reiterated that emotional intelligence and self-esteem share unique association with educational outcomes, such as academic performance and achievement (e.g., Christy & Mythili, 2020; MacCann et al., 2020) and mental illness, such as depression and anxiety (e.g., Orth & Robins, 2013; Kaypaklı & Tamam, 2019; Sowislo & Orth, 2013). As a result, future studies may examine the underlying mechanisms or mediating role of their shared association.

5. Conclusion

Gender is critical to understanding emotional intelligence and self-esteem and student status is vital to understanding self-esteem. Although emotional intelligence and authoritative parenting were predictive of self-esteem, emotional intelligence accounted for more variance in self-esteem than did authoritative parenting, suggesting that emotional intelligence is more critical to improvement in self-esteem in young adults at the developmental stage of increasing self-esteem. Nevertheless, findings demonstrate that cognitive, affective, and parental factors play a critical role in social and psychological development and how individuals perceive and interact with self and others.

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