



# Effects of Parental Involvement on Adolescents

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## BACKGROUND

The extent to which parents affect their child's emotional and cognitive development has been a consistently popular topic both in the media and the scientific literature. Much of the scientific work that has investigated these relationships has focused on examining the impact of parenting styles. For instance, parenting styles have been found to be either negatively associated or positively associated with the child's weight later in their lives, but the specific relationship between parenting style, weight, and psychological outcomes of children have remained largely unstudied (Taylor, Wilson, Slater, & Mohr, 2012).

Childhood obesity has become a major problem that families often struggle with, particularly as children move into early adolescence or adulthood. A high body mass index (BMI) in childhood is negatively associated with self-esteem and body satisfaction (Taylor, et al 2012). A study found that depressive moods in the 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade predicted their obesity one year after being studied and a diagnosis of depression between the ages of 6-15 years predicted larger BMIs in those people 10-15 years later (Pine, Goldstein, Wolk, & Weissman, 2001; Carter, Dellucci, Turek, & Mir, 2015).

Levels of parental involvement clearly have an impact on childhood self-esteem and weight that carry into their adulthood. As explained in previously cited studies, specifically weight and self-esteem levels are inhibited by the level of parenting a child received while in their fundamental development stages of their lives (Wardle, et al. 2005; Pine, et al. 2001). There is a prominent need for the investigation of the biological and psychological effects that different levels of parental involvement can have on a person.

## OBJECTIVE

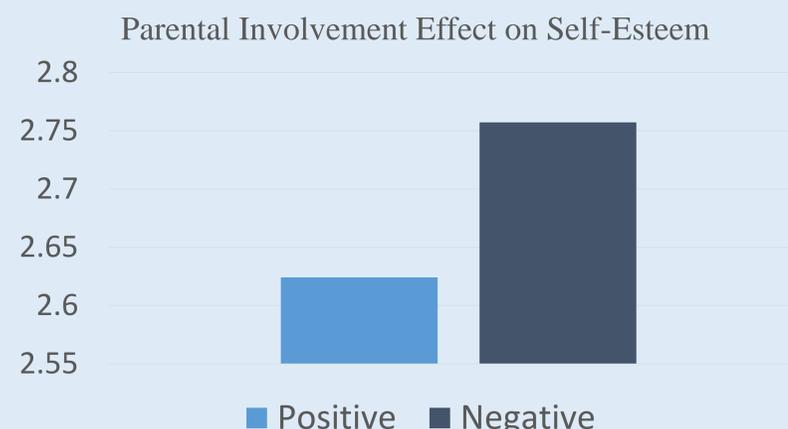
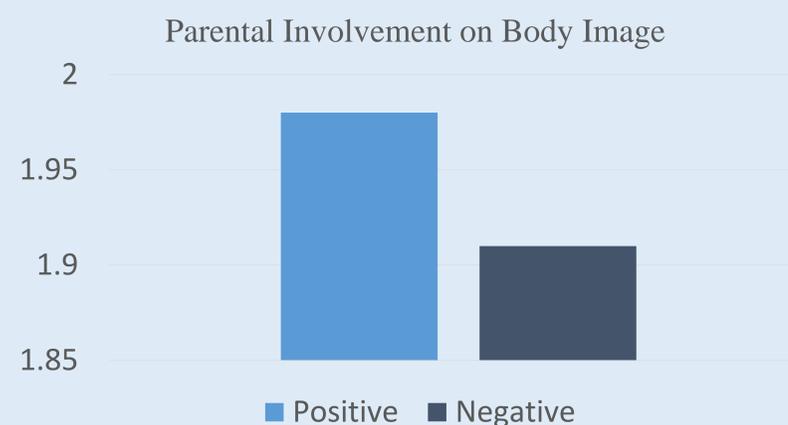
The present study evaluated impact of parental involvement using self-reported measures from adults reflecting back on their own experience, and recollected changed in weight (gain/loss) and self-esteem (high/low). We hypothesized that as an adult reflecting back on their own childhood experience, they would see a decrease in their perceived body image as a result of a lack of parental involvement.

## METHODS

Participants took part in an online study where they were asked to describe either a negative or positive event from their childhood. Subsequently they completed several surveys related to self-esteem and body image, they also provided basic demographic information. A between-participants design was employed, with self-esteem and body image as dependent measures. A series of t-tests were employed to evaluate differences between recalled events.

## RESULTS

An independent samples t-test revealed the Standard Deviation for body image were  $P= 0.5922$  and  $N= 0.7471$ . The Standard Deviation for self-esteem were  $P= 0.3123$  and  $N= 0.2637$



## DISCUSSION

As shown in the graphs, there was a trend difference between the self-esteem and body image. As hypothesized, participants showed a trend toward having a lower perception of body image if they were prompted to discuss a negative childhood experience. However, the opposite trend was observed with self-esteem; reported self-esteem was higher when participants reflected on a negative event. One explanation for this difference may be that participants successfully overcoming this experience may have made them feel more competent and independent, this boosting their self-esteem.

A limitation to this study was the brief extraction of the levels of parental involvement. We found it challenging to assess positive/negative levels of parental involvement through a self-reported measure. Future research could also take into consideration the socio-economic status of the participant to see if that has anything to do with how participants are involved with their children.

## REFERENCES

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