

# Parenting Styles and Psychological Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Academic Achievement

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**Abstract – The main objective of the present study was to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and psychological well-being as mediated by academic achievement. In the study, randomly selected 502 adolescent (281 grade ten and 221 grade twelve) students filled out measures of psychological well-being and parenting style. Participants were 17.76 years old on average (SD = 1.76). Reasonable and decent parenting styles positively, pampering and autocrat parenting styles negatively predicted psychological well-being in general and the six dimensions (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal sense of growth, purpose in life and self-acceptance) in particular. Furthermore, the regression and path analysis revealed that the relationship between parenting styles and psychological well-being was partially and significantly mediated by academic achievement. Parents and child care centers were advised to exercise reasonable and decent parenting styles.**

**Keywords: Parenting style, Psychological Well-Being, Academic Achievement**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Parenting Styles

Parents basically mold and shape their children into adults through their world of influence named parenting (Baumrind, 1991). According to Baumrind, parenting can be explained in terms of two components such as parental responsiveness and demandingness. Parental demandingness is the extent to which parents set guidelines for their children, and how their discipline based on these guidelines. Parental responsiveness is the emotional characteristic of parenting. Responsiveness passes on to the degree to which parents support their children and attend their children's needs. Both parenting responsive and demanding have been linked to secure attachment. With these concepts of responsiveness and demandingness, identified three styles of parenting: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive.

Another study by Aemro (2015) identified four parenting styles (reasonable parenting style, decent parenting style, pampering parenting style and autocrat parenting style) in Ethiopian context, specifically, in Amhara region. Autocrat/authoritarian parents tend to over control their children's overall activities. They usually do not show love and

excessively use punishment to discipline their children. Autocrat parents are strict disciplinarians, highly controlling, punitive style, and unlikely to show affection or to praise their children (Aemro, 2015; Baumrind, 1991). Pampering and/or indulgent parents tend to fulfill the needs and desires of their children. They do not reprimand their children whatever the children do. Pampering parenting style is related to permissive or indulgent parenting style. Permissive or indulgent parents are non-punitive, affectionate, overly tolerant, and allow children to make things by their own decisions (Aemro, 2015; Baumrind, 1991).

Reasonable/authoritative parents allow their children to do what they want to do as long as the children have justification to convince their parents. They freely discuss with their children on day to day activities and they usually use advice rather than punishment for their children's wrong doings. Authoritative/reasonable parents explain and justify their expectations and actions to their children, and they are responsive to feedback. They set clear guidelines and they implement reasonable control in a legitimate and loving manner (Aemro, 2015; Baumrind, 1991). Decent parents tend to give due attention to cultural norms and expectations, and they direct their children to obey these cultural norms and expectations. They closely monitor their

children's daily activities and reward or punish accordingly (Aemro, 2015).

## 1.2 Psychological Well-Being

According to Huppert (2009), psychological well-being is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. In relation to psychological well-being, Berman, et al (2006) noted that humans have three basic psychological needs (competence, autonomy and relatedness) and satisfying with these needs lead one's to be psychologically well and well-becoming to an adolescent in the future.

Similarly, Ryff explained psychological well-being as flourishing, functioning well and composed of six factors: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, a sense of independence, having a purpose in life, a sense of personal growth, and environmental mastery (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Psychological wellbeing of adolescents means being content with life and understanding an abundance of positive emotions, when joined with the absence of psychopathology, is linked with greatest academic function, social skills and support and physical health, being a stage that lays strong foundation for future personality, and a critical period during human development in which life goals, values, direction and purpose in life are created (Jessica, 2011; Berman, et.al, 2006), guaranteeing psychological wellbeing of adolescents is a socio psychological necessity.

## 1.3 Academic Achievement

Academic achievement can be described as the performance outcome that indicates the extent to which an individual has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university as measured by cumulative averages (Taylor, 2014). Some studies revealed that children from good parenting showed high level of academic success (Berger, et.al, 2011). Previously conducted studies revealed that parenting styles affect adolescents' academic achievement. In turn, academic achievement affects overall psychological well-being and its dimensions.

Ethiopian students who attend education in high schools in general and grades ten and twelve in particular are expected to be effective in their education and join higher education. Thus, academic success is regarded as their major life achievement and key goal of life. During their academic career, students face various responsibilities and challenges and this could be the main reason and primary source of their stress and anxiety. In the majority of cases adolescents are able to handle the difficulties which they face; however, in the number of cases these challenges may have a serious impact on the young person's psychological well-being. In order for adolescents to achieve their life goals and obtain academic success, it is important to be in a

psychologically healthy condition. Stressful atmosphere may create and/or elevate psychological distress and reduce their academic performance (Dwyer & Cummings, 2001).

## 1.4 Parenting Styles, Psychological Well-Being and Academic Achievement

A study by Aemro (2015) revealed that decent parenting style and reasonable parenting style contributed significantly and positively to adolescents' psychological wellbeing, while autocrat parenting style and pampering parenting style did not contribute positively. This study used the overall psychological well-being model by Deci, and did not touched the dimensions of psychological well-being and the present study tried to see the relationship between and among parenting styles (reasonable, decent, pampering and autocrat) and dimensions of psychological well-being (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal relation with others, personal growth, purpose in life and self-acceptance). In addition, the present study investigated the mediation role of academic achievement on the relationship between parenting styles and psychological well-being.

In the Ethiopian context the education structure has various levels like preschool education, primary education, high school and preparatory to higher education and finally higher/tertiary education. An individual is expected these levels education to be employed in government and private companies. Therefore, having higher education is a crucial task this is because adolescents and elderly persons might have access to a better job opportunity. On the other hand, for admitting in a university, Ethiopian students have to pass entrance exams two times at grade ten (entrance for higher education preparatory school) and grade twelve (entrance for higher education/tertiary education); hence, not only students but also parents experience a lot of tensions due to a tough competition. It is well-documented that stressful life affects physical and psychological well-being (Cohen et al. 2007). A Meta-analysis study by Bucker, et.al, (2018) reported that students subjective well-being is highly and consistently correlated with academic achievement.

Other researchers (e.g., Durlak, et.al, 2011; Merwe and Honours, 2005) indicated that positive psychological interventions at school have a positive effect on several student variables including wellbeing and academic achievement. However less is known about the direct relationship between wellbeing and academic achievement in schools. The branch of positive psychology at school is just at its beginning and the effects of promoting wellbeing on academic achievement need to be researched further (Miller, Connolly and Maguire, 2013). Scholars have recently increased requests to apply positive psychology in schools

and youth-orientated settings Teaching positive psychology concepts to young people may potentially equip them with knowledge and skills that may have a lasting positive impact on their lives.

To conclude, abundant research has been conducted regarding the relationship between parenting styles and students' academic achievement in the Western world and somehow in Asia. However almost all of the studies focused on university students. This implies that further research is important and in need for high school and higher education preparatory students.

## **2. PRESENT STUDY**

Previously conducted researches indicated that parenting styles and academic achievement are both important variables influencing well-being in adolescents. The present study was aimed to investigating the impact of parenting styles on multiple dimensions of psychological well-being (autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relation with others, positive sense of growth, purpose in life and self-acceptance) as mediated by academic achievement. Specifically, the present study tried to find answers for the following two basic questions:

1. Is there significant relationship among parenting styles, academic achievement and adolescents' psychological well-being?
2. What is the mediating role of academic achievement on the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' psychological well-being?

## **3. METHODS**

### **3.1 Participants and Procedure**

Participants for the study were randomly selected from 6 schools (3 grade ten and 3 grade twelve and twelve sections) in Amhara region 3 city administrations (Gondar, Bahir Dar and Dessie) with an approximate population of 11789 students. After receiving verbal consent from school principals and participants, 502 students (281 grade ten and 221 grade twelve) participated in the study. They answered questions about demographic data and filled out the questionnaires described in section 3.2 below in their classrooms in the presence of a research assistant. Participants' average age was 17.69 years (SD = 1.76; ranging from 15 years to 22 years).

### **3.2 Measures**

To obtain information on the demographic characteristics of the participants' eight items were prepared by the researcher. Items measuring demographic variables such as, gender, age, grade

level, academic achievement, family background (family structure, family size, parental education and monthly parental income ) were presented to the participants.

### **3.1.1 Psychological Well-Being Measure**

The present researcher used the medium version of Ryff's psychological well-being scale (consisting of 54 items) based on the advice given from the author of the theory and developer of the scale. The scale consists of a series of statements reflecting the six areas of psychological well-being: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life and Self-Acceptance. Each sub-scale consists of 9 items. Respondents rate statements on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 6 indicating strong agreement (Ryff, 1995). Validity and reliability were checked through pilot test and the general psychological well-being measure, the internal item reliability was found to be .84 coefficients of alpha and its dimensions (autonomy .74, environmental mastery .84, personal sense of growth .83, personal relation with others .74, purpose in life .76 and self-acceptance .75).

### **3.1.2 Parenting Style Measure**

The present researcher used Adolescents' Perceived Parenting Style scale/APPS/, which was developed and validated by Aemro (2015) in Ethiopian context specifically in Amhara region, to collect data from adolescents. The scale consisted of 26 items rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Of these 26 items, seven items were aimed at measuring reasonable parenting style, eight items were intended to measure decent parenting style, six of them were designed to measure pampering parenting style, and five items were aimed at measuring autocrat parenting style. Validity and reliability were checked and the parenting style measures were found internal item reliability .73 reasonable parenting style .79 decent parenting style .70 pampering parenting style and .74 autocrat parenting style.

## **4. RESULTS**

### **Parenting Styles, Psychological Well-Being and Academic Achievement**

In order to see the effects of the two independent variables (parenting styles, and academic achievement) on the dependent variable (psychological well-being) both descriptive and inferential statistics were computed and the results were presented and described. The following table displayed the descriptive statistics (means and

standard deviations) of both the independent and dependent variables.

**Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Psychological Well-Being, Parenting Styles and Academic Achievement (N = 502)**

Variables	Mean	SD
Psychological well-being	234.2809	27.62261
Reasonable Parenting	27.2988	5.54876
Decent Parenting	30.2769	5.78223
Pampering Parenting	16.9462	4.44652
Autocrat Parenting	11.2729	4.15268
Academic Achievement	66.1240	9.75397

The table above displayed the means and standard deviations of psychological well-being (mean =234.28 and SD =27.62), reason able parenting style (mean =27.29 and SD =5.54), decent parenting style (mean =30.27 and SD =5.78), pampering parenting style (mean =16.94 and SD =4.44), autocrat parenting (mean =11.27 and SD =4.15) and academic achievement (mean =66.12 and SD =9.75). From this presentation, it is possible to report that decent parenting is practiced more followed by reasonable parenting and autocrat parenting style last. The following table presented the inter correlation matrix between the independent (parenting styles and academic achievement) and dependent variable (psychological well-being).

**Table 2: Inter correlation between and among Psychological well-being, Parenting Styles and Academic Achievement**

Variables	PWB	RP	DP	PP	FT	AcA	AP
Psychological well-being	1						
Reasonable Parenting	.227**	1					
Decent Parenting	.152**	.506**	1				
Pampering Parenting	-.093**	.226**	.168	1			
Academic Achievement	.262**	.192*	.096*	-.020	.285*	1	
Autocrat Parenting	-.132*	-.335**	-.124*	.105	-.194*	-.161*	1

\*\*correlation significant at 0.01

\*correlation significant at 0.05

PWB =Psychological well-being, RP =Reasonable parenting, DP =Decent parenting, PP =Pampering

parenting, FT =Future thinking, AcA =Academic Achievement and AP = Authoritarian parenting.

As can be understood from Table 5 above, all of the five independent variables (reasonable parenting style, decent parenting style, pampering parenting style, autocrat parenting style and academic achievement) were significantly correlated with the dependent variable (psychological well-being). Specifically, the correlation analysis revealed that there were statistically significant and positive relations between reasonable parenting style, decent parenting style, academic achievement and psychological well-being ( $r = .227$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = .152$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and  $r = .262$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) respectively. This showed that the two parenting styles (reasonable parenting style and decent parenting style) and academic achievement will increase adolescents' state of psychological well-being. On the contrary, two parenting styles (pampering parenting style,  $r = -0.093$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and autocrat parenting style,  $r = -.132$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) negatively and significantly correlated with adolescents psychological well-being. This implies that as parents exercise either pampering or authoritarian parenting styles adolescents state of psychological well-being declines.

From the inter correlation matrix it is possible to see that academic achievement has the highest ( $r = .262$ ) correlation with psychological well-being followed by reasonable and decent parenting styles ( $r = .227$  &  $r = .152$  respectively). And autocrat parenting style took the highest ( $r = -.132$ ) negative correlation with adolescents psychological well-being followed bay pampering parenting style ( $r = -.096$ ).

When we see the relationship between the parenting styles and academic achievement: the two parenting styles (reasonable parenting style,  $r = .192$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and decent parenting style,  $r = .096$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) have significant positive correlations with academic achievement. This showed that exercising either reasonable or decent parenting style results in better academic achievement. Contrary to this, authoritarian parenting style ( $r = -.161$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) has significant negative correlation with academic achievement. This in turn informs us, when parents exercise authoritarian parenting style academic achievement will decline. Pampering parenting style also has negative but not significant correlation with academic achievement.



**Table 3: Summary of ANOVA Table, Academic Achievement and Parenting Styles**

(N = 502)

Source of Variation	Sum Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Regression	2327.486	4	581.872	6.379	.000 <sup>b</sup>	.221 <sup>a</sup>	.049
Residual	45337.667	497	91.223				
Total	47665.153	501					

a. *Dependent Variable Achievement*

b. *Predictors (Constant) Reasonable Parenting Style, Decent Parenting Style, Pampering Parenting Style, Autocrat Parenting Style*

As can be seen from Table 6 above, the Analysis of Variance result showed that the independent variables (parenting styles) contributed ( $r = .221$  &  $R^2 = .049$ ,  $F = 6.379$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) 4.90 percent to adolescents academic achievement. The regression analysis test witnessed that the two parenting styles (reasonable and decent parenting styles) contributed positively and significantly. Table 7 below displayed the results of the regression analysis, academic achievement as predicted by parenting styles.

**Table 4: The Result of Regression Analysis, Predicting Academic Achievement from Parenting Styles (N= 502)**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	62.159	3.279		18.960	.000					
Reasonable	.287	.097	.163	2.946	.003	.192	.131	.129	.624	1.603
Decent	.017	.086	.010	.195	.845	.096	.009	.009	.738	1.354
Pampering	-.107	.101	-.049	-1.059	.290	-.020	-.047	-.046	.907	1.102
Autocrat	-.228	.112	-.097	-2.024	.044	-.161	-.090	-.089	.835	1.198

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement

As shown in Table 7 above, reasonable and autocrat parenting styles explained the variance significantly ( $\beta = .163$ ,  $p < 0.05$  &  $\beta = -.097$ ,  $p < 0.05$  respectively) predicted students' academic achievement. This implies that as parents exercise reasonable parenting style students achievement increases by .163 units and on the contrary when parents exercise autocrat parenting style students achievement decreases by .097 units. The remaining two parenting styles (decent parenting style & pampering parenting style) do not have significant prediction of the explained variance of academic achievement.

To check the effects of parenting styles and academic achievement a linear regression analysis was made and the results were displayed in Table 8 & Table 9 below.

**Table 5: Summary of ANOVA Table, Psychological Well-Being, Parenting Styles and Academic Achievement (N = 502)**

Source of Variation	Sum Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Regression	47828.250	6	7971.375	11.798	.000 <sup>b</sup>	.354 <sup>a</sup>	.125
Residual	334439.146	495	675.635				
Total	382267.396	501					

a. *dependent variable PWB*

b. *Predictor (constant) academic achievement, parenting styles and future thinking*

As can be seen from Table 8 above, the Analysis of Variance result showed that the three independent variables together (parenting styles, future thinking and academic achievement  $r = .354$  and  $R^2 = .125$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) contribute 12.50 percent to adolescents psychological well-being and this contribution is significant at 0.000 level of significance. The regression analysis test witnessed that two of the independent variables (reasonable parenting style and academic achievement) contributed positively and significantly. Specifically, reasonable parenting style and academic achievement have coefficient of determinations ( $r = 0.227$ ,  $R^2 = .051$  and  $r = .262$ ,  $R^2 = .068$ ) respectively. This implies that the two independent variables (reasonable parenting 5.15 percent and academic achievement 6.86 percent) together contributing twelve percent of the total explained variance of psychological well-being. The regression analysis also revealed that future thinking; pampering and authoritarian parenting styles do not have significant contributions to the explained variance. The table below presented the details of the results of the regression analysis.

**Table 6: The results of Regression Analysis, Predicting Psychological Well-Being from Parenting Styles and Academic Achievement (N= 502)**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	167.413	10.898		15.362	.000
	Reasonable Parenting	.801	.249	.161	3.219	.001
	Decent Parenting	.251	.235	.053	1.067	.286
	Achievement	.672	.127	.237	5.290	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological well-being

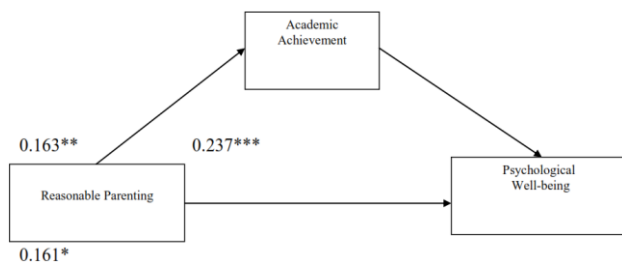
As can be inferred from the table above, the unique contributions of reasonable parenting style ( $\beta = .161$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and academic achievement ( $\beta = .237$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) were significant. In addition, the research results indicated that reasonable

parenting and academic achievement have positive and significant contributions to adolescents' psychological well-being.

### The Mediating Role of Academic Achievement on the Relationship between Parenting Styles and Psychological well-being

In order to see the mediation role of academic achievement on the relationship between parenting styles and psychological well-being a simple mediation model was processed based on the correlations and predictions of each of the variables (reasonable parenting style, decent parenting style, pampering parenting style, autocrat parenting style and psychological well-being). From among the four parenting styles only reasonable parenting style had positive and significant prediction with academic achievement and psychological well-being. Thus, the path model was processed considering only reasonable parenting style.

The following Path Model revealed the mediation role of academic achievement on the relationship between parenting style and adolescents' psychological well-being



**Fig 1: Simple Mediation Model/Path coefficient for predicting psychological well-being from reasonable parenting style**

As indicated in the above figure the mediation of academic achievement on the relationship between reasonable parenting style and psychological well-being the indirect effect was .0382 and Sobel test was significant ( $p = .009$ ). The results of the current study provided evidence for partial mediation. Specifically, the path from reasonable parenting style to psychological well-being was partially mediated by academic achievement. This showed that adolescents who scored good results in their academic performance have good psychological well-being compared to their counterparts who scored low academic achievements.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The main objective of the present study was to investigate the relationship between parenting styles, academic achievement and psychological well-being. Accordingly, the computed inter correlation and regression analysis results revealed that psychological well-being (dependent variable) was

positively and significantly correlated with reasonable and decent parenting styles. This research finding is consistent with previously conducted research results (e.g. Gladstone and Parker, 2005; Aemro, 2015; Cripps & Zyromski, 2009) reported that authoritative/ reasonable parenting style and indulgent/decent parenting styles positively correlated with children/adolescents' well-being in general and psychological well-being in particular. On the contrary, the correlation test result showed significant negative correlation between psychological well-being and pampering and authoritarian parenting styles. This research result is supported by research results of Amato (2005), Fletcher, et.al (2008), Andras (2018). This implies that, when parents exercise authoritative/reasonable and decent parenting styles children's/adolescents' psychological well-being will be enhanced significantly. On the other hand when parents exercise permissive/pampering and authoritarian/autocrat parenting styles children's/adolescent's psychological well-being will be low and ill-being increases.

The total correlation between the independent (parenting styles) and dependent variable (psychological well-being) is positive and significant and all the four independent variables (reasonable parenting style, decent parenting style, pampering parenting style and autocrat parenting style) together contributed 7.70 percent to adolescent's psychological well-being. From this it safe to report that parenting style is an important family related factor to determine children/adolescents psychological well-being and overall satisfaction and success. This result is in line with some previously conducted studies (e.g. Aemro, 2015). This implies that parenting and parenting styles are crucial in determining adolescents' overall psychological well-being.

Similar with the total/general/ psychological well-being, five dimensions of psychological well-being (environmental mastery, personal growth, personal relation, purpose in life and self-acceptance) were positively and significantly correlated with reasonable and decent parenting styles. From this it is possible to infer that reasonable and decent parenting styles enhance total psychological well-being by enhancing the specific dimensions of the general psychological well-being. This finding is fully supported by different researchers. For instance, (Gladstone and Parker, 2005; Aemro, 2015; Cripps & Zyromski, 2009) found out that children and adolescents who perceived their parents high in affection, warmth, and caring, but low in over-control tend to be better in self-determination, communication with others and understanding the self-whereas, children of autocrat parenting tend to be distressed, being aimless and confused in their life.

As one of the objectives of the study was identifying the relationship between academic achievement and overall psychological well-being and its dimensions the computed correlation analysis revealed that there was significant positive relationship between academic achievement and overall psychological well-being and all the six dimensions of psychological well-being. This implies that as academic achievement increases psychological well-being increases and in turn as overall psychological well-being increases academic achievement increases. It is also possible to explain that as academic achievement increases students level of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, personal relation with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance increase.

The findings of the present research are found to be consistent with other studies (e.g. Grabel, 2017) reported that the promotion of wellbeing and resilience can heighten satisfaction with life and can support creative thinking as well as better learning and academic success. Similarly, other researchers (Durlak, 2011; Turashvili, 2012) indicated that high academic achievement/high GPA/ resulted in high psychological well-being. Regarding specific dimensions of psychological well-being and academic achievement the present research finding is supported by different research results (e.g. Ryff & Singer, 2008) revealed that high academic achievement enables students to be competitive, related with others, self-determination, high motivation, positive evaluation with the self and other personal characteristics. From this discussion it is possible to infer that academic achievement determines overall psychological well-being and its dimensions and in turn high psychological well-being and its dimensions determine academic achievement. This implies that education contributes to psychological well-being by allowing students to make progress toward their goals or to adapt to changes in the world around them.

Regarding the effects of parenting style and academic achievement on psychological well-being the regression analysis result showed that the three independent variables together (parenting styles, future thinking and academic achievement) contributed 12.10 percent to adolescents psychological well-being and this contribution is statistically significant. The regression analysis test witnesses that two of the independent variables (reasonable parenting and academic achievement) contributed positively and significantly. The two independent variables (reasonable parenting 5.15 percent and academic achievement 6.86 percent together contributing twelve percent of the total explained variance of psychological well-being. These results echo the findings of previous research findings (e.g. Gonzalez, 2017; Gupta & Mahtani, 2013). From this discussion it is possible to say that parenting styles and academic achievement

determine the psychological well-being of adolescents.

Regarding the mediating role of academic achievement on the relationship between parenting style and psychological well-being the path analysis indicated that academic achievement significantly and partially mediated the effect of parenting style (especially, reasonable parenting style) on adolescents' PWB and this finding corroborates with the research results of Xiang, et.al. (2017).

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the current study indicated positive and significant relationship among parenting styles, psychological well-being and academic achievement. In addition the findings revealed that academic achievement has significant role in mediating the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' psychological well-being. Thus, from the findings of the present study, parents, child care centers, schools and other stakeholders will benefit by being informed about the type of parenting style that is most effective to adolescents' positive development and high psychological well-being.

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