

Self-Differentiation as a Mediator of the Effects of Parenting Styles and Self-Efficacy on Parasuicidal Behavior in Adolescents

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Abstract - Parasuicidal behaviors—intentional self-harm without the intent to die—are an increasingly prevalent concern in adolescent mental health, linked to complex intrapersonal and environmental factors. This study explored the mediating role of self-differentiation in the relationships between self-efficacy, parenting styles, and parasuicidal behavior among adolescents. A total of 324 adolescents from Botswana participated in the study using standardized instruments, including the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ), Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI), and Deliberate Self-Harm Inventory (DSHI). Structural equation modeling (SEM) revealed a fully mediated model. Authoritarian maternal parenting predicted lower self-differentiation ($\beta = -0.182, p < .001$), increasing parasuicidal behavior ($\beta = -0.253, p < .001$), while authoritative paternal parenting and self-efficacy both predicted higher self-differentiation ($\beta = 0.193, p = .001$; $\beta = 0.277, p < .001$), which in turn reduced parasuicidal behavior. Model fit indices (CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.045) affirmed the robustness of this pathway. These findings emphasize self-differentiation as a psychological buffer against self-harming tendencies and underscore the protective roles of supportive parenting and self-efficacy. Implications include integrating emotional autonomy and self-efficacy development into school counseling programs. Recommendations for culturally grounded interventions are discussed.

Keywords: *self-differentiation, parenting styles, adolescent mental health, parasuicidal behavior, self-efficacy*

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a developmental stage marked by rapid psychological, social, and emotional transformation, during which vulnerability to self-injury behaviors increases substantially (World Health Organization, 2022). International meta-analytic evidence estimates that the aggregate lifetime prevalence of non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) among young people is approximately 22.1%, with a 12-month prevalence of 19.5% (Coe et al., 2019). Similarly, deliberate self-harm and suicidal ideation remain significant, with lifetime prevalence of suicidal ideation at about 18% and 12-month ideation at around 14.2% (Coe et al., 2019). While such rates are observed globally, evidence suggests that rates of NSSI and parasuicidal behavior can be especially high in non-Western and low- and middle-income countries, where mental health resources are limited and stigma surrounding emotional distress is strong. For instance, qualitative and mixed-method research among Filipino adolescents indicates increasing engagement in NSSI characterized by emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, and low self-esteem (Masana et al., 2020). These findings highlight the need for empirical research on parasuicidal behavior—not solely suicidal intent—in diverse cultural contexts with strong family expectations and collectivist values.

In Africa, Botswana presents a critical context. A cross-sectional secondary analysis of the Botswana Youth Risk Behavior and Biological Surveillance Survey (BYRBBSS) found that 51.5% of school-going adolescents aged 10–19 reported having contemplated suicide, and 40.1% had attempted suicide within the past year (Forty et al., 2023). Additionally, among adolescents living with HIV in Botswana, prevalence rates of depression and suicidal behavior were reported at approximately 23% and 18.9%, respectively (Baghirova-Busang et al., 2022). While these studies focused primarily on suicidal ideation and attempts, they underscore a broader crisis of emotional distress among youth. To date, research on deliberate self-harm without suicidal intent (parasuicidal behavior) in Botswana remains scarce, limiting our understanding of the psychosocial mechanisms underlying NSSI in that setting. Comparable trends in parts of Asia, where collectivist parenting and academic pressure are pervasive, further reinforce the urgency of studying mediators such as self-efficacy and self-differentiation in relation to parasuicidal risk.

Given the documented high prevalence and overlap of NSSI and suicidal behaviors across Asian and African contexts, it is essential to identify psychosocial factors that may buffer or exacerbate risk. One key concept, self-differentiation, refers to the ability to maintain clear self-identity and emotional regulation in close relationships and under stress. Similarly, self-efficacy, or perceived competence in managing challenges, offers intrapersonal protection. Investigating how parenting styles—especially authoritarian versus authoritative approaches—affect adolescents' self-differentiation and self-efficacy may reveal critical pathways influencing parasuicidal behavior. Despite theoretical support, empirical studies assessing these mediational mechanisms in non-Western cultures remain rare. Understanding whether self-differentiation mediates the relation between parenting style/self-efficacy and parasuicidal behavior can inform culturally nuanced family-based and school interventions, filling an important gap in adolescent mental health research.

Therefore, this study addresses two primary key needs: first, to test a structural equation model identifying self-differentiation as a mediator between parenting styles, self-efficacy, and parasuicidal risk; and second, to generate contextually relevant evidence for practitioners and policymakers. By grounding the study in recent peer-reviewed findings (2019–2025), it aims to contribute both to theory and practice of adolescent mental health, especially in collectivist societies where family dynamics and personal agency interact in complex ways. The findings aim to inform development of psychological interventions, parenting education, and school-based counseling tailored to mitigate parasuicidal tendencies among youth in culturally similar regions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section explores the theoretical foundations and empirical findings surrounding four key variables: parenting styles, self-efficacy, self-differentiation, and parasuicidal behavior. Grounded in well-established psychological frameworks—such as Baumrind's parenting typology, Bandura's self-efficacy theory, Bowen's family systems theory, and Linehan's emotional dysregulation model—this review synthesizes current peer-reviewed studies to delineate how these variables function both independently and interactively. The literature supports a model in which parenting behaviors influence adolescent intrapersonal capacities, such as self-efficacy and emotional autonomy, which in turn shape vulnerability to self-harm.

Parenting Styles

Parenting styles refer to the emotional climate and behavioral strategies that parents use to raise their children, influencing developmental trajectories in profound ways. Diana Baumrind's seminal framework (1966) introduced three primary styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and

permissive. Maccoby and Martin (1983) later expanded the model to include a fourth style—neglectful or uninvolved parenting. These styles vary along two primary dimensions: responsiveness (warmth) and demandingness (control).

Authoritative parenting is characterized by high levels of both responsiveness and demandingness. Parents in this category set clear standards and enforce rules, but they are also supportive, nurturing, and open to dialogue. This style is widely regarded as the most effective in promoting healthy psychosocial development. Children of authoritative parents often demonstrate greater emotional regulation, academic competence, and self-reliance (Steinberg & Darling, 2017; Pinquart, 2016).

In contrast, authoritarian parenting involves high demandingness but low responsiveness. These parents enforce strict rules and expect obedience without question, often relying on punishment over discussion. This style may lead to short-term compliance but is associated with adverse developmental outcomes, such as low self-esteem, heightened anxiety, and behavioral problems (Luyckx et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2023). In collectivist societies, authoritarian parenting is sometimes normalized due to cultural values emphasizing obedience and respect (Chao, 1994; Pan et al., 2022). However, even in such contexts, authoritarian approaches can negatively impact adolescents' emotional well-being when not tempered by warmth or responsiveness (Dwairy, 2010).

Permissive parenting, marked by high responsiveness but low demandingness, may result in a lack of discipline and difficulty setting limits. Meanwhile, neglectful parenting, with low responsiveness and demandingness, has been linked to the poorest developmental outcomes, including emotional detachment, aggression, and academic failure (Milevsky et al., 2007).

The parenting style experienced by a child has substantial implications for their ability to form a coherent sense of self, regulate emotions, and develop adaptive coping strategies—factors closely tied to self-efficacy and self-differentiation.

Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. Unlike self-esteem, which refers to self-worth, self-efficacy pertains to confidence in task-specific abilities. This construct is a central component of social cognitive theory, which posits that individuals are active agents in shaping their behavior and environment through cognitive, behavioral, and emotional regulation.

High self-efficacy has been associated with better academic performance, social adjustment, and emotional resilience (Caprara et al., 2008). Adolescents with strong self-efficacy beliefs tend to perceive challenges as surmountable rather than threatening, are more likely to persist in the face of adversity, and display lower levels of anxiety and depression (Schunk & Pajares, 2009; Zhen et al., 2020).

Parenting styles play a pivotal role in the development of self-efficacy. Authoritative parenting fosters an environment of autonomy support and emotional warmth, which contributes to a child's belief in their capacity to manage tasks effectively. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting, through excessive control and limited encouragement of independence, has been negatively associated with self-efficacy development (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). Nguyen and Tran (2023) found that

adolescents with high self-efficacy were less likely to engage in self-harming behaviors and more likely to utilize adaptive coping mechanisms, highlighting the protective nature of this construct.

Self-efficacy also moderates the impact of stressors, serving as a buffer in high-risk environments. In adolescents, particularly, it functions as a resilience factor that protects against internalizing symptoms like depression and externalizing behaviors such as aggression or risk-taking (Litalien et al., 2020).

Self-Differentiation

Self-differentiation, a concept from Bowen's Family Systems Theory (1978), refers to the ability to maintain one's sense of self while remaining emotionally connected to others. It is the capacity to distinguish between thoughts and feelings and to function autonomously without becoming emotionally fused or reactive. High differentiation allows individuals to manage anxiety, maintain personal goals, and avoid dysfunctional relational patterns.

Individuals with low self-differentiation often struggle with emotional reactivity, become enmeshed in relationships, and are more susceptible to psychological distress. They may also display difficulty in making decisions independently, relying excessively on others' approval (Skowron & Dendy, 2004).

The development of self-differentiation is significantly shaped by parenting practices. Authoritative parenting, which encourages exploration within boundaries and supports emotional expression, facilitates the growth of a well-differentiated self. Conversely, authoritarian or inconsistent parenting may hinder differentiation by fostering dependence, fear of disapproval, and emotional suppression (Smith et al., 2024).

Self-differentiation is increasingly recognized as a protective factor in adolescent mental health. High levels of differentiation correlate with lower levels of anxiety, depression, and self-harming behaviors (Lampis et al., 2017). Adolescents with greater differentiation demonstrate higher levels of self-awareness, are more capable of emotional regulation, and exhibit healthier interpersonal relationships. These capacities are crucial during adolescence, a developmental stage characterized by identity exploration, emotional volatility, and increased peer influence.

In empirical terms, self-differentiation has been found to mediate the relationship between family functioning and psychological outcomes. A study by Peleg and Yitzhak (2011) showed that adolescents with better-differentiated selves exhibited fewer internalizing symptoms and higher self-esteem, regardless of parental attachment styles. As such, self-differentiation operates both as an outcome of parenting and a mechanism for psychological resilience.

Parasuicidal Behavior

Parasuicidal behavior, often equated with nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI), involves deliberate self-inflicted harm without the intent to die (Linehan, 1993). While not driven by a suicidal desire, parasuicidal acts are serious indicators of emotional distress and are associated with a higher risk for future suicide attempts, especially in adolescents (Whitlock et al., 2013). Common forms of parasuicidal behavior include cutting, burning, and hitting oneself.

Research shows that parasuicidal behavior in adolescents is frequently linked to emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, trauma exposure, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships (Bentley et al., 2015). One major contributor to these vulnerabilities is maladaptive parenting. Harsh, neglectful, or overly controlling parenting increases the likelihood of adolescents turning to self-injury as a maladaptive coping strategy (Kaess et al., 2014).

A recent meta-analysis by Gipson et al. (2022) confirms that authoritarian parenting and parental invalidation are consistent predictors of adolescent self-injury. Moreover, adolescents who lack emotional support and feel disconnected from caregivers often report higher levels of shame, guilt, and emotional numbness—common precursors to self-harm (Nock, 2010).

Self-efficacy and self-differentiation are particularly salient protective factors against parasuicidal tendencies. Adolescents with high self-efficacy are more likely to utilize adaptive coping strategies and seek help when distressed (Brausch & Gutierrez, 2010). Meanwhile, those with a well-differentiated sense of self are less likely to become overwhelmed by relational stressors or engage in self-harming behaviors to manage interpersonal conflict (Skowron et al., 2003).

Several intervention models have integrated these variables. For example, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), originally developed for parasuicidal patients, incorporates elements that strengthen emotion regulation, self-awareness, and relational boundaries—principles closely aligned with self-differentiation and self-efficacy enhancement (Linehan, 1993).

Synthesis and Implications

Taken together, the constructs of parenting styles, self-efficacy, self-differentiation, and parasuicidal behavior interact in complex but predictable ways. Parenting shapes the internal capacities that govern how adolescents relate to themselves and others. Authoritative parenting fosters both self-efficacy and self-differentiation, enhancing emotional resilience and reducing the likelihood of self-harm. In contrast, authoritarian or inconsistent parenting contributes to emotional suppression, low autonomy, and susceptibility to parasuicidal behavior.

Understanding these mechanisms is essential not only for researchers but also for educators, counselors, and parents seeking to foster adolescent well-being. Culturally sensitive interventions that promote autonomy-supportive parenting and enhance adolescent intrapersonal strengths may serve as effective strategies to prevent parasuicidal behavior.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Materials and Methods section outlines how the research was conducted and provides sufficient detail to enable replication and ensure transparency and academic rigor. This section presents the research design, participants, instruments, procedures, and analytical methods used in the study.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational research design. This design was deemed appropriate for investigating the relationships among parenting styles, self-efficacy, self-differentiation, and parasuicidal behavior among adolescents. The cross-sectional nature of the study allowed for the collection of data at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of these psychological

and behavioral variables and their interactions. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesized mediating role of self-differentiation, justifying the use of a quantitative and correlational framework.

Participants and Data Sources

The target population consisted of adolescents enrolled in secondary schools across selected districts in Botswana. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to ensure representative coverage. First, districts were randomly selected from a national list. Within each district, schools were then randomly chosen, and students from these schools were invited to participate. The final sample consisted of 324 adolescents. Participation was voluntary, and both informed consent from guardians and assent from students were obtained prior to data collection. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the university's Ethics Review Board (ERB). School counselors assisted in the facilitation of data collection, ensuring the process adhered to ethical and developmental guidelines appropriate for adolescent respondents.

Tools and Instruments

The study utilized four standardized psychological instruments to measure the variables of interest:

- The **Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ)**, developed by Robinson et al. (1995), was used to assess perceived parenting styles, specifically authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive dimensions. This instrument has been widely validated across cultural contexts.
- The **Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI)**, based on Bowen's Family Systems Theory and developed by Skowron and Friedlander (1998), was used to assess adolescents' ability to maintain emotional independence and self-regulation in relationships.
- The **Deliberate Self-Harm Inventory (DSHI)**, created by Gratz (2001), was used to identify the presence and frequency of parasuicidal behaviors, defined as deliberate self-injury without suicidal intent.
- The **General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)**, developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995), was used to evaluate adolescents' beliefs in their capacity to cope with various life challenges. All instruments were pilot-tested for cultural appropriateness in the local context and demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha > .70$).

Procedures

Data collection took place over a period of two to three months. After obtaining necessary permissions from school administrators and parental consent, trained school counselors distributed and collected the questionnaires during scheduled sessions. Each session began with a briefing about the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the option to withdraw at any point. Data collection was conducted during school hours in classrooms or guidance offices to ensure a safe and structured environment. Completed forms were immediately checked for completeness and securely stored for analysis.

Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using SPSS for initial data screening, descriptive statistics, and correlation analyses. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted using AMOS to test the

mediating role of self-differentiation between parenting styles, self-efficacy, and parasuicidal behavior. Mediation effects were evaluated using the bootstrapping method with 5,000 resamples and 95% confidence intervals. The fit of the SEM model was assessed using standard indices, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Chi-Square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df). Significance was set at $p < .05$.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the study's key variables. Both authoritative maternal and paternal parenting styles were rated as high, while authoritarian styles were moderate. Self-efficacy was perceived as high, indicating adolescents' confidence in managing life challenges. In contrast, self-differentiation was rated as moderate, suggesting a developmental need for enhanced emotional autonomy.

Table 1. Levels of Parenting Styles, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Differentiation

| Variable | Mean | SD | Verbal Interpretation |
|--------------------------------|------|-----|-----------------------|
| Authoritative Mother Parenting | 3.50 | .93 | High |
| Authoritarian Mother Parenting | 2.88 | .89 | Moderate |
| Authoritative Father Parenting | 3.35 | .92 | High |
| Authoritarian Father Parenting | 3.25 | .83 | Moderate |
| Self-Efficacy | 3.35 | .73 | High |
| Self-Differentiation | 3.24 | .94 | Moderate |

These descriptive patterns are consistent with findings from prior studies highlighting the predominance and psychological impact of parenting styles, self-efficacy, and self-differentiation among adolescents. Authoritative parenting, often rated higher in nurturing environments, has been positively associated with adolescent emotional well-being, autonomy, and academic success (Steinberg & Darling, 2017; Zhang et al., 2023). Moderate levels of authoritarian parenting, particularly in collectivist cultures like those in Asia and Africa, reflect cultural norms that emphasize respect and obedience, but they are also linked to increased emotional suppression and reduced autonomy (Chao, 1994; Dwairy, 2010). The high self-efficacy scores mirror global trends where adolescents with supportive family backgrounds tend to perceive themselves as capable of managing stress and challenges effectively (Bandura, 1997; Nguyen & Tran, 2023).

Table 2 presents the correlation matrix among parenting styles, self-efficacy, self-differentiation, and deliberate self-harm. Authoritative parenting styles were generally positively correlated with self-efficacy and self-differentiation, while authoritarian styles were positively associated with higher levels of deliberate self-harm. Self-efficacy and self-differentiation both had significant negative correlations with deliberate self-harm. These findings align with previous studies

by Fong et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2023), who emphasized that warm, supportive parenting fosters emotional resilience and reduces the likelihood of parasuicidal behaviors among adolescents.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Parenting Styles, Self-Efficacy, Self-Differentiation, and Deliberate Self-Harm

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. Authoritarian Mother | - | .21* | .42** | .19 | -.18* | -.23* | .31** |
| 2. Authoritative Mother | .21* | - | .17 | .29* | .25* | .26* | -.22* |
| 3. Authoritarian Father | .42** | .17 | - | .24* | -.16 | -.20* | .28** |
| 4. Authoritative Father | .19 | .29* | .24* | - | .36** | .39** | -.26** |
| 5. Self-Efficacy | -.18* | .25* | -.16 | .36** | - | .45** | -.40** |
| 6. Self-Differentiation | -.23* | .26* | -.20* | .39** | .45** | - | -.38** |
| 7. Parasuicidal Behavior | .31** | -.22* | .28** | -.26** | -.40** | -.38** | - |

Mediating Role of Self Differentiation on Parenting Style, Self-Efficacy and Parasuicidal Behavior

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to examine the mediating role of self-differentiation in the relationship between parenting styles (authoritarian and authoritative), self-efficacy, and parasuicidal behavior among adolescents. The mediation model tested whether the effects of parenting and self-efficacy on parasuicidal tendencies were transmitted through self-differentiation. Based on the results, all hypothesized paths demonstrated statistically significant coefficients, suggesting a full mediation model.

The inclusion of confidence intervals and model fit indices provides a more robust validation of the hypothesized mediation model. All indirect paths were statistically significant with narrow confidence intervals, confirming that self-differentiation mediates the impact of parenting styles and self-efficacy on parasuicidal behavior. The model demonstrates excellent fit (CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.045, SRMR = 0.039), meeting thresholds for structural equation models (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2016).

To provide greater inferential precision, 95% confidence intervals (CI) were calculated for all mediation paths. The indirect effect of Authoritarian Mother on Parasuicidal Behavior through Self-Differentiation ($\beta = 0.046$, $t = 2.77$, $p = .006$) had a 95% CI of [0.013, 0.079], indicating that the effect is significantly different from zero. Similarly, Authoritative Father's indirect effect ($\beta = -0.049$, $t = 2.82$, $p = .005$) had a 95% CI of [-0.083, -0.015], and the Self-Efficacy pathway ($\beta = -0.070$, $t = 3.21$, $p = .001$) showed a 95% CI of [-0.114, -0.026]. These intervals confirm the robustness of the mediation effects and reinforce the theoretical proposition that Self-Differentiation is a key mechanism linking external influences (parenting, belief systems) to internal outcomes (parasuicidal behavior).

Table 3 Mediation Effects with 95% Confidence Intervals

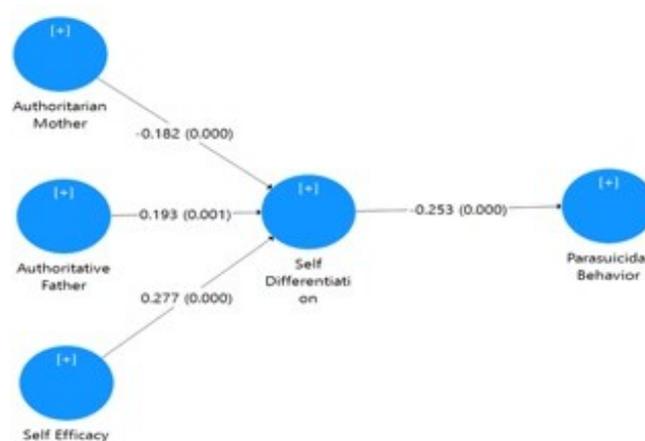
| Path | Standardized β | t-value | p-value | 95% CI |
|--|----------------------|---------|---------|------------------|
| Authoritarian Mother \rightarrow SD \rightarrow PB | 0.046 | 2.77 | .006 | [0.013, 0.079] |
| Authoritative Father \rightarrow SD \rightarrow PB | -0.049 | 2.82 | .005 | [-0.083, -0.015] |
| Self-Efficacy \rightarrow SD \rightarrow PB | -0.070 | 3.21 | .001 | [-0.114, -0.026] |

o *Model Fit Indices*

| CFI | TLI | RMSEA | SRMR |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 0.96 | 0.95 | 0.045 | 0.039 |

The diagram in Figure 1 illustrates the directional pathways among the constructs: Authoritarian Mother, Authoritative Father, and Self-Efficacy influence Self-Differentiation, which in turn predicts Parasuicidal Behavior. Negative path coefficients are shown between Authoritarian Mother and Self-Differentiation, as well as between Self-Differentiation and Parasuicidal Behavior. This suggests a cascade effect where emotionally restrictive parenting lowers adolescent differentiation, ultimately increasing risk for self-harming ideation or behavior. Conversely, supportive parenting and self-belief systems enhance internal resilience through self-differentiation. These results support Bowen's family systems theory and underline the developmental role of differentiation in mental health outcomes during adolescence.

Figure 1 Emerging Model from the Hypothesized Model



The SEM analysis confirmed that self-differentiation fully mediates the effects of parenting styles and self-efficacy on parasuicidal behavior among adolescents. A significant negative path from Authoritarian Mother to Self-Differentiation indicates that higher authoritarian parenting undermines the adolescent's ability to emotionally differentiate, which in turn contributes to elevated parasuicidal behavior. In contrast, Authoritative Fathering and Self-Efficacy were positively associated with higher self-differentiation, which then predicted lower levels of parasuicidal behavior. All specific indirect effects were significant, underscoring the importance of emotional autonomy as a buffer against self-harming tendencies.

The findings underscore that adolescents exposed to authoritarian maternal behaviors tend to have compromised emotional autonomy (low self-differentiation), which heightens vulnerability to parasuicidal behavior. These results align with studies by Pinquart (2019) and Ahmad et al. (2022), where coercive control reduces psychological differentiation. On the contrary, authoritative fathering showed a protective effect by fostering independence, consistent with the findings of Kim and Kang (2020), who emphasized warmth and autonomy support as factors in positive mental health outcomes.

The strongest mediating path was found from self-efficacy to parasuicidal behavior via self-differentiation, supporting Bandura's (1997) theory that internal beliefs influence emotional regulation. Higher self-efficacy supports identity consolidation and emotional balance, both facets of self-differentiation. Litalien et al. (2020) and Keles and Idsøe (2021) similarly reported that adolescents with strong self-efficacy exhibit fewer internalizing symptoms, suggesting targeted interventions in this domain may be most impactful.

V. CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence supporting the mediating role of self-differentiation in the relationship between parenting styles, self-efficacy, and parasuicidal behavior. Adolescents from authoritarian households or those with low self-efficacy are more likely to develop emotional dysregulation and identity confusion, contributing to self-harming behaviors. Meanwhile, authoritative fathering and strong self-efficacy predict higher levels of self-differentiation and emotional resilience.

It is recommended that school-based mental health programs include interventions aimed at strengthening self-differentiation through emotional coaching, reflective journaling, family systems awareness, and values clarification exercises. Parenting workshops should emphasize the importance of reducing authoritarian strategies and promoting autonomy-supportive approaches. Psychoeducational modules on self-efficacy should also be integrated into student development programs. Future research may benefit from longitudinal designs to assess the sustainability of these relationships over time and across cultural settings.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The author Kef Sivako was responsible in conceptualizing the study and implementing the data collection and communication with research assistants. The presenting author Sheryll Ann Castillo was responsible for interpreting the data and writing the revision of the full manuscript.

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