

Parenting Styles and Self-Employment Intentions Among Sri Lankan Youth: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

Colombo Economic Journal (CEJ)
Volume 3 Issue 1, June 2025: PP 147-175
ISSN 2950-7480 (Print)
ISSN 2961-5437 (Online)
Copyright: © 2025 The Author(s)
Published by Department of Economics,
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
Website: <https://arts.cmb.ac.lk/econ/colombo-economic-journal-cej/>

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Received: 28 February 2025, **Revised:** 05 June, 2025, **Accepted:** 07 June 2025.

Abstract

The impact of parenting styles on self-efficacy and self-employment intentions among youth remains underexplored in the Sri Lankan context. In particular, limited research has examined the mediating role of self-efficacy in this relationship. This study aims to investigate how different parenting styles affect the self-employment intentions of Sri Lankan youth, with a specific focus on self-efficacy as a mediating variable. Employing a quantitative research design, information was gathered from 248 youth respondents using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that supportive and encouraging parenting styles positively influence both self-efficacy and the intention to pursue self-employment. Conversely, authoritarian or controlling parenting styles exert a negative effect on these outcomes. Furthermore, the results confirm that self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship between parenting styles and self-employment intentions, highlighting its pivotal role in fostering entrepreneurial aspirations among youth.

Keywords: Parenting Styles, Self-efficacy, Self-employment Intention, Sri Lankan Youth.

JEL Codes: L26, L24, L32, O43

Introduction

Over the past two decades, Sri Lanka has made impressive strides toward reducing poverty and unemployment. However, vulnerable populations have been disproportionately impacted by recent crises including COVID-19 followed by the economic downturn, making many people who were just above the poverty line much more vulnerable and impoverished. All types of poverty have seen a sharp rise in the last three years and the World Bank (2023) forecast the poverty rate will nearly double from 13.1% in 2021 to 25.6% in 2022. Similarly, the unemployment rate in Sri Lanka increased from 5.3% in 2020 to 6.6% in 2023 due to the crises (World Bank, 2023). One of the most highlighted issues in Sri Lanka is the increased youth unemployment rate which triggered significant youth unrest in recent years. The youth unemployment rate for the 15-24 age range in 2021 is 26.5%, and for the 25-29 age range for the same year is 11.4% (Department of Census and Statistics [DCS], 2022). Scholars highlighted that youth empowerment for economic engagement through education, skill development, and self-employment support are essential strategies to reduce youth unemployment (Burchell & Coutts, 2019). Chigunta (2017) highlighted that encouraging youth for self-employment is the best alternative strategy to decrease youth unemployment.

During the last 70 years, successive governments and other institutions, including vocational training and education institutions in Sri Lanka have provided numerous programs and support to develop entrepreneurship to create self-employment opportunities (Silva, 2021). However, youth unemployment in Sri Lanka is at a higher rate. Amarasooriya et al. (2009) explained that social, cultural, economic and political factors affect the discouragement of youth self-employment. Gunathilaka and Samaraweera (2021) described those socioeconomic factors, including education level, vocational training, family income, residential factors, digital literacy, demographic factors, and health factors including disability and mental stress affect the self-employment choice.

Previous research has explored various influences on young people's desire to pursue self-employment, yet some important questions remain unaddressed (Shinozaki, 2012). One of these is how different parenting styles might shape young people's intentions to become self-employed. Parenting plays a crucial role in youth development, helping to shape behaviours and ambitions (Perera & Perera, 2022). Drawing on Baumrind's (1971) well-known research, parenting can generally be classified into authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and, later, uninvolved styles each defined by varying levels of responsiveness and demandingness. Furthermore, a notable research gap exists regarding the impact of Baumrind's parenting styles authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved on individuals' aspirations toward self-employment (Tennakoon & Siriwardhana, 2021).

Previous studies have focused on factors such as family background, peer support, entrepreneurial education, and external environments in relation to self-employment intentions. However, a gap remains in understanding the specific effects of parenting styles on entrepreneurial aspirations (Tennakoon & Siriwardhana, 2021). Despite clear evidence that parenting influences academic success, behaviour, and psychosocial outcomes, its potential impact on young people's entrepreneurial intentions is still largely unexamined. Exploring this relationship could provide valuable insights into ways of fostering an entrepreneurial culture among youth and promoting economic growth. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the effects of different parenting styles on self-employment intentions and self-efficacy plays a mediatory role in this connection.

Theoretical Background

Self-employment Intention

Several studies have examined entrepreneurial intention due to the importance of cognitive processing or planning required to create a business (Perera, et al., 2015). According to Pratheeba (2014), intention is a conscious state of mind that tries to accomplish a specific goal. Similarly, Mijoč et al. (2016) have defined the intention as a state of mind which is required to consider, get experience, and accomplish pre-determined goals. Self-employment or entrepreneurial intention is defined as the plan to launch a new business (Dissanayake, 2013). Similarly, self-employment intention is viewed as the commitment towards starting a new business or self-employment (Mijoč et al., 2016). Thus, it is identified the self-employment intention as a plan to own a business, or start a new business (Ayalew & Zeleke, 2018). Due to the high retrenchment rate and inconsistencies in the labour market, self-employment can be considered a privilege to the national environment and the individuals in it by introducing new business ventures and ensuring capable skilled individuals can get an alternative source of income to boost the economy (Saraih et al., 2017).

Research on self-employment has examined a series of features that effect persons' intentions and decisions to pursue it. Demirgüc-Kunt et al. (2009) highlight that a variety of personal, social, institutional, financial, and labor market factors can impact a person's choice to become self-employed. Additionally, other studies point to the roles of personality traits, demographics like age and gender, capital requirements, entrepreneurial education, and family business background as key influences on self-employment decisions (Segal, et al., 2005). Numerous studies are focusing on the influence of the entrepreneurial intention of undergraduates (Pretheeba, 2014).

Parenting styles and self-employment intention

Over the past decades, research has been conducted on the relationship between parents' role in influencing children's behavioural outcomes. Significantly, a clinical study by Flaherty and Sadler (2011) emphasised that positive maternal-infant attachment can influence an infant's development. In similar studies, it was underlined that intensive mothering and parenting influence are predominant in children's behavioural and psychosocial outcomes (Paat, 2010). Thus, parents have a critical role in improving the social and emotional development of their infants, children, and adolescents. Due to the status of parental influence on children's behaviour, many scholars were researching parenting styles. Parenting styles were first demonstrated by Baumrind (1967) in her study "influence of parenting styles on preschool behaviour". Significantly, Baumrind's (1971) theory of parenting styles is the most well-known theory which has been classified into three groups, namely "authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting" styles. Due to its significance, almost every research paper that has been written on parenting styles includes discussion relating to Baumrind's (1967, 1971) parenting styles.

In a later study, these three styles are grouped based on high and low values on two dimensions such as 'parental responsiveness (warmth)' and 'demandingness (control)' (Maccoby & Martin, 1986). Responsiveness refers to supportiveness, sensitivity, and involvement whereas demandingness means the control or high expectation that parents hold on their children's behaviour (Suldo & Huebner, 2004). The authoritative style is characterised by high demandingness and high sensitivity. Moreover, the authoritarian parenting style was included in the high demandingness and low responsiveness quadrant. The permissive parenting style is included in the low demandingness and high responsiveness category. The uninvolved style aligns with Baumrind (1971) concept of the rejecting-neglecting style. Besides, Baumrind (1991) introduced "neglectful" parenting styles as the fourth parenting style.

Research has examined how Baumrind's parenting styles—authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved impact various youth outcomes, including academic success, behaviour, personal development, and psychosocial well-being. The study of Sanjeevan and de Soyza (2018) underline the critical role of parenting styles in shaping adolescent well-being. Authoritative parenting emerged as the most effective style, fostering a healthier emotional environment, while neglectful parenting was associated with poorer mental health outcomes, particularly higher levels of depression and stress (Sanjeevan & de Soyza, 2018). This reinforces the importance of supportive and responsive parenting in promoting adolescent mental health in Sri Lanka. Some studies have also begun exploring the relationship between parenting and self-employment intentions, focusing on aspects like family support and entrepreneurial family background. For instance, Georgescu and Herman (2020)

explored that students with an entrepreneurial family background had stronger intentions to pursue entrepreneurship than those without such a background. They further noted that factors like entrepreneurial education and personality traits positively impacted self-employment intentions. Similarly, Lingappa et al. (2020) identified positive correlations between family and peer support and entrepreneurial intentions, while Shinozaki (2012) highlighted that parents' employment status and household income during adolescence significantly influenced employment outcomes in young adults. This gap underscores the need for more targeted studies to explore how different parenting approaches may shape young adults' entrepreneurial aspirations within these cultural contexts (Georgescu & Herman, 2020; Lingappa et al., 2020; Shinozaki, 2012; Tennakoon & Siriwardhana, 2021).

Self-efficacy, Parenting and Self-employment Intention

Bandura (2005) has introduced self-efficacy theory as a response to social learning theory, which emphasises the perceived capability to perform and learn for performance accomplishment (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). Therefore, confidence, motivation and belief are important for any individual to achieve goals at the desired level. Nevertheless, there was a new paradox identifying self-efficacy as synonymously attached to self-concept and self-esteem (Lunenburg, 2011). Yet, self-efficacy can be identified as individual perception and feelings about certain abilities while self-esteem can be viewed as the overall evaluation of one's worth (Bandura, 1977). Moreover, it was identified that individuals tend to perform tasks when they have high self-efficacy while not preferring to perform tasks when they have low or no self-efficacy (Van and Shortridge-Baggett, 2001). Moreover, Bandura (2005) stresses that believing one's actions or having a higher self-efficacy level will stimulate desirable results. Likewise, self-perception of skills and abilities to perform pre-established activities and decisions has been identified as self-efficacy (Nowiński et al., 2019).

The underlying assumption of self-efficacy theory is to enhance employee motivation and performance level which will be determined by humans' initial beliefs of capability or proficiency in tasks (Lunenburg, 2011). Finally, self-efficacy strength means the degree of conviction or the distinguishability of skills. The self-efficacy concept is a dominant factor in influencing career decisions (Bandura, 1982). Social cognitive theory has emphasised the importance of self-efficacy in individuals which can support accomplishing performance goals, enhancing the learning experience and social persuasion (Zhang et al., 2019).

Self-efficacy and parental support have been key objects of research due to the challenges that adolescents face during the transition to adulthood. Therefore, parental support, career support and self-efficacy have been important aspects of

children's career decisions (Zhang et al., 2019). Studies are examining the association between self-efficacy and parenting. A Chinese study has found that parenting practices can have a career-specific influence and increase the self-efficacy level in career decision-making of Chinese adolescents (Zhang et al., 2019). Furthermore, Rizwan et al. (2021) observed a positive relationship between parenting responsiveness and students' self-efficacy in a study involving secondary school students in Pakistan. Furthermore, Ahmed et al. (2020) highlighted the influence of parenting styles on self-efficacy, underscoring the pivotal role of parents in fostering self-belief in their children. Subsequently, Katz et al. (2007) have identified that parenting style can influence not only achievements in academic and social settings but also poverty. Thus, parents' role in shaping children's behavioural outcomes plays a vital role.

Authoritarian parental style and self-employment intention: Baumrind (1967; 1991) originally conceptualised authoritarian parenting as characterized by high control, low warmth, and little flexibility, often resulting in children exhibiting traits such as insecurity, hostility, and low contentment (Baumrind, 1971). Parents employing authoritarian tactics typically prioritise obedience and punitive measures over open communication and responsiveness (Reitman et al., 2002). Studies have consistently shown negative outcomes associated with authoritarian parenting, including low social skills, self-esteem, and psychological well-being in children. While authoritarian parenting may initially seem effective in low-income settings due to its strict disciplinary nature (Steinberg et al., 1994), further research suggests that it can lead to increased behavioural problems and decreased academic achievement (Zahedani et al., 2016). However, authoritarian parenting, characterised by low warmth and high control, is often associated with anxiety and anger in children (Adam et al., 2004). Research consistently links authoritarian parenting to negative outcomes, including lower social skills, self-esteem, and psychological well-being in children. Although this strict approach may appear effective in certain low-income settings due to its strong disciplinary nature (Steinberg et al., 1994), it has been found to contribute to higher behavioural issues and decreased academic achievement over time (Zahedani et al., 2016). On the other hand, a more responsive and warm parenting style has been shown to have a positive effect on children's emotional health and engagement, supporting self-confidence and motivation (Adam et al., 2004). Based on these results, the study's hypotheses are ;

H1: Authoritarian parental style has a negative impact on the self-employment intention of Sri Lankan youth.

Authoritative parental style and self-employment intention: The authoritative parenting style, characterised by high levels of warmth, responsiveness, and reasonable demands, has consistently been related with positive developing results in

children (Baumrind, 1967). Research indicates that children elevated by authoritative parents tend to exhibit traits such as responsibility, social competence, and self-reliance (Baumrind, 1991). Furthermore, authoritative parenting fosters open communication, independence, and shared decision-making within the. Nie et al., (2022) found a significant positive connotation between authoritative parenting and proactive behaviour among college undergraduates in China, indicating the beneficial influence of this parenting style on behavioural outcomes. Studies have consistently shown that children of authoritative parents demonstrate higher levels of psychosocial well-being compared to their peers (Steinberg et al., 1994).

Research consistently highlights that children raised by authoritative parents tend to achieve higher academic success and greater psychosocial well-being than their peers (Steinberg et al., 1994). For example, a study by Rizwan et al., (2021) among secondary school students in Pakistan demonstrated that responsive parenting positively impacts students' self-efficacy. Therefore, it is plausible that authoritative parenting could be positively linked to self-employment intentions in Sri Lankan youth, as the skills fostered by this parenting style align closely with entrepreneurial requirements.

H2 Authoritative parental style has a positive effect on the self-employment intention of Sri Lankan youth

Permissive parental style and self-employment intention: Permissive parenting, characterised by low levels of demand and high levels of communication, allows children significant freedom in their activities with minimal parental control (Baumrind, 1971). This parenting style is often viewed as lenient, where parents act as resources rather than active agents of control over their children's behaviour (Baumrind, 1971). Permissive parents promote independence and encourage bi-directional communication with their children, fostering an environment of freedom and autonomy (Baumrind, 1967; 1971). Studies on permissive parenting reveal mixed effects on children's development. This parenting style, which provides children with high levels of freedom and independence, can foster positive traits like reduced stress, improved social skills, and increased self-esteem (Turner et al., 2009). However, it is also linked to behavioural issues, including delinquency, school misconduct, and emotional struggles such as depression and anxiety, possibly due to a lack of structure and guidance (Steinberg et al., 1994). Therefore, while permissive parenting can have its challenges, the freedom it allows may serve as an advantage in fostering entrepreneurial aspirations. Therefore, it is reasonable to posit that the permissive parenting style positively impacts on self-employment intention.

H3 Permissive parental style has a positive influence on the self-employment intention of Sri Lankan youth

Uninvolved parental style and self-employment intention: Research indicates that children of uninvolved parents are more likely to exhibit internalising and externalising problems, including anxiety, delinquency, antisocial behaviour, depression, and poor self-regulation (Baumrind, 1991). They may also demonstrate low self-esteem, lack of social responsibility, and poor school competence (Steinberg et al., 1994). Neglectful parenting has been connected with aggressive, impulsive behaviour in children, as well as an increased likelihood of engaging in risky behaviours such as loitering, substance abuse, and criminal activities (Steinberg et al., 1994). Uninvolved or neglectful parents may not actively engage with their children's entrepreneurial aspirations or provide the necessary support and guidance (Margraf & Pinquart, 2016). Adolescents raised in neglectful environments may lack the encouragement, role modelling, and resources needed to develop entrepreneurial intentions (Margraf & Pinquart, 2016). Therefore, while parental role models can influence children's decision-making regarding self-employment, the effectiveness of this influence may be limited in neglectful parenting contexts (Chlosta et al., 2012). Thus, the neglectful parenting style may contribute to lower levels of self-employment intention among adolescents by depriving them of the necessary support, encouragement, and role modelling needed to foster entrepreneurial aspirations and behaviours (Chlosta et al., 2012). This neglectful parenting style can lower adolescents' self-employment intentions by withholding the guidance and role modelling essential for developing entrepreneurial aspirations and behaviours. Therefore, it is plausible to suggest that uninvolved parenting style is negatively associated with self-employment intention.

H4 Uninvolved parental style has a negative influence on the self-employment intention of Sri Lankan youth

Authoritarian parental style and self-efficacy: Noel et al. (2021) examined that authoritarian parenting was negatively correlated with self-efficacy among secondary school students, suggesting that the strict, controlling nature of this style may undermine a child's belief in their ability to make independent decisions and solve problems. Authoritarian parents typically emphasise obedience and discourage autonomy, which may limit children's opportunities to develop confidence in their capabilities—a key component of self-efficacy. Furthermore, research by Oppenheimer et al. (2013) highlights that parental behaviours characterised by engagement and positive regard tend to foster positive behavioural outcomes in children, such as resilience and self-confidence, traits that are often absent in authoritarian parenting due to its restrictive nature. Thus, the hypothesis that authoritarian parental style is negatively correlated with the self-efficacy of Sri

Lankan youth aligns with findings that show how an authoritarian approach may hinder the development of self-efficacy, potentially reducing the likelihood of pursuing self-employment.

H5 Authoritarian parental style has a negative effect on the self-efficacy of Sri Lankan youth

Authoritative parental style and self-efficacy: Authoritative parenting, characterised by high levels of warmth and control, fosters a sense of competence and confidence in children, thereby enhancing their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). It was identified that authoritative parenting influences self-efficacy in adolescents (Turner et al., 2009). Similarly, Noel et al. (2021) found that authoritative parenting style was significantly correlated with self-efficacy levels among secondary school students. Moreover, authoritative parenting has been linked to longitudinal benefits, as children raised in environments under authoritative parenting tend to develop secure family attachments and healthy coping mechanisms, which may help to enhance self-efficacy level of children (Steinberg et al., 1994). These secure attachments foster a sense of trust and emotional stability, providing a strong foundation for children to explore their capabilities and face challenges independently. The balanced approach of authoritative parents combining warmth with appropriate levels of control encourages autonomy and decision-making, key components of self-efficacy. By allowing children to take initiative while providing guidance, authoritative parenting supports the development of problem-solving skills and confidence in their abilities. Similarly, Noel et al. (2021) reported a significant relationship between authoritative parenting and self-efficacy among secondary school students in Uganda, highlighting the universality of these findings across different cultural contexts. The literature suggests that authoritative parenting is positively correlated with various positive outcomes in children, including self-efficacy.

H6 Authoritative parental style has a positive impact on the self-efficacy of Sri Lankan youth

Permissive parental style and self-efficacy: The study by Noel et al. (2021) found positive associations between permissive parenting styles and self-efficacy among students. These findings indicate that parents who adopt permissive approaches, characterized by warmth, supportiveness, and low levels of control, may contribute to the development of self-efficacy beliefs in their children. Bandura's social cognitive theory further supports the notion that parenting practices emphasising autonomy and independence may foster self-efficacy in youth. Baumrind's (1991) research laid the foundation for understanding different parenting styles, with permissive parenting included high levels of responsiveness and warmth yet low levels of control. This approach offers children significant autonomy, allowing them

to explore their interests and make independent decisions from an early age. Such autonomy fosters an environment where children can develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills—core components of self-efficacy. By experiencing fewer rigid structures and fewer restrictions, children raised by permissive parents are often encouraged to take initiative, experiment, and learn from their own successes and failures. While Baumrind (1991) did not specifically investigate self-efficacy, the nurturing nature of permissive parenting suggests its potential role in shaping positive self-beliefs. These findings highlight the significance of considering parenting styles, such as permissive parenting, in understanding the development of self-efficacy among youth in Sri Lanka.

H7 Permissive parental style has a positive impact on the self-efficacy of Sri Lankan youth

Uninvolved parental style and self-efficacy: In the context of uninvolved parenting, where parents demonstrate minimal involvement and support in their children's lives, adolescents may lack the necessary encouragement and guidance to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy. Bandura (2005) suggests that parental support and positive reinforcement are essential factors in fostering self-efficacy beliefs in children. However, in uninvolved parenting environments, adolescents may perceive a lack of support and affirmation from their parents, leading to lower levels of self-efficacy (Bandura 2005). Without the confidence instilled by supportive parental figures, adolescents raised in uninvolved parenting environments may struggle to develop a sense of competence and belief in their abilities to succeed in self-employment activities. As highlighted by Solesvik (2017), individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy are able to handle conflicts and challenges, recognising them as growth opportunities than insurmountable obstacles. However, in the absence of parental involvement, children may internalise failures more deeply, seeing setbacks as confirmation of their inadequacy. Examining the parenting styles and self-efficacy of secondary school students, Noel et al. (2021) found that uninvolved styles showed no significant relationship. Therefore, the uninvolved parenting style may negatively impact adolescents' self-efficacy levels, hindering their confidence and belief in their abilities to pursue self-employment opportunities.

H8 Uninvolved parental style has a negative impact on self-efficacy of Sri Lankan youth

Self-efficacy and Self-Employment Intention: Recent evidence suggested that self-efficacy in entrepreneurs plays a vital role in prompting the motivation level of individuals who aspire to start new business ventures (Ahmed et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2019). Bandura's self-efficacy theory in particular has become popular in this research arena. Due to its popularity, a concept called entrepreneurial self-efficacy

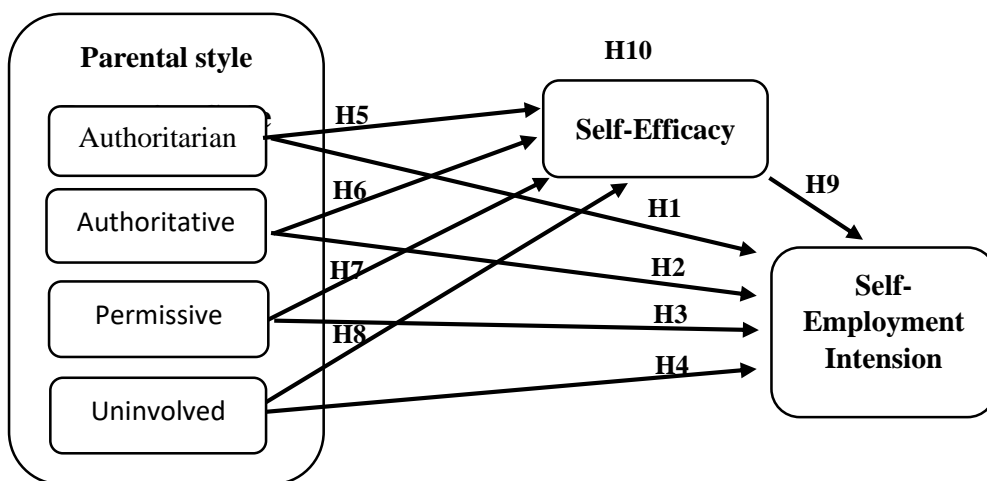
has developed in recent. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy has defined as one's belief to succeed or be accomplished as an entrepreneur (Susetyo & Lestari, 2014). Results suggest that individuals with higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy, who consider themselves effective in adjusting to entrepreneurial roles, can easily embark on a self-employment venture than their counterparts (Ahmed et al., 2020). Saraih et al. (2017) have identified that self-efficacy influences the self-employment plans among engineering students in public institutions in Malaysia. This research was based on 345 final-year students based on the quantitative primary research study. Self-efficacy has a significant positive influence on self-employment intention (Rachmawan, Lizar & Mangundjaya, 2015). Moreover, entrepreneurial experience also has a significant positive influence on self-employment intention.

H9 Self-efficacy has a positive impact on self-employment intention of Sri Lankan youth

The mediating effect of self-efficacy: This research assumed that self-efficacy is mediating in the relationship between parenting styles and self-employment intention. The literature shows that parenting styles significantly influence the advancement of self-efficacy of youth, which in turn impacts their self-employment intention (Tam et al., 2012; Turner et al., 2009). Studies have shown that youth with higher self-efficacy, cultivated through supportive and empowering parenting, are more likely to consider and embark on entrepreneurial ventures (Zhao et al., 2005). Varying parenting styles significantly influence self-efficacy levels, which in turn play a pivotal role in shaping self-employment intentions by affecting individuals' confidence in their ability to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. This underscores the pivotal role of self-efficacy as a mediator, linking parenting styles to self-employment intention. Thus, the study predicts that;

H10: Self-efficacy has a mediating effect on the connection between parenting styles and self-employment intention

The study develops a framework combining parenting styles, self-efficacy and planned behavioural theories to test it empirically in the Sri Lankan context. As illustrated in Figure 1, parenting styles is the independent variable and dependent variable is the self-employment intention. Self-efficacy is the mediator in the connection between parenting styles and self-employment intention.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Methodology

This research has chosen positivism philosophy with a deductive approach with already established or known conceptualization used to generate a testable conclusion. The research deployed a quantitative method with the primary data collected through a questionnaire survey. Sri Lankan youth population is the unit of analysis and is defined as the age group between 15 to 29 years with special consideration on the nature of transitioning from youngster to mature in the Sri Lankan context (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development, 2014). The Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) forecasted that there are 2,511,000 male youth and 2,841,000 female youth population in Sri Lanka in 2023. The sample frame selected was youth in the age range of 15-29 living in all nine provinces of Sri Lanka. The sample size was determined using the 'Inverse Square Root Method' method (Kock & Hadaya, 2018) which is used primarily in the context of PLS-SEM. It's designed to estimate the minimum sample size necessary for research studies utilizing PLS-SEM, ensuring adequate statistical power for the analyses. The formula gave a 248-sample size.

A multistage sampling process was selected to decide the sample. First, one district representing each province in Sri Lanka was selected using a simple random sampling technique. Second, the study randomly selected one Divisional Secretary Division (DSDs) to represent each district. Thirdly, one Grama Niadary (GN) division was randomly selected to represent each DSD. Finally, the study selected youth to participate in this research through collaboration with the relevant Divisional Secretary's office, since there was no exact sample frame to identify youth who were actively engaged in self-employment or interested in starting their businesses. Based on the available youth during the survey time, the study completed 248 interviews

with youth representing nine clusters in nine provinces. In the sample, the majority of respondents, 67%, were male, while the remaining 33% were female. The educational qualifications of respondents spanned from primary level to graduation. The respondents encompassed 32% urban, 61% rural, and 7% estate sector.

Parenting styles were measured using four dimensions including authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved (Buri, 1991; Robinson et al., 2001; Steinberg et al., 1994). Six items were used to measure the authoritative parental style adopted by Buri (1991); Robinson et al., (2001), eight items were used to measure the authoritarian parental style adopted by Buri (1991); Robinson et al., (2001); seven items were used to evaluate the permissive parental style adopted by Steinberg et al. (1994) and six items were used to measure the uninvolved parental style Buri (1991); Steinberg et al. (1994).

Self-efficacy is measured using four dimensions including actual performance (using five items), vicarious experience (using five items), verbal persuasion (using five items), and physiological arousal (using five items) adopted by Puni et al. (2018); Solesvik (2017). Self-employment Intention was measured by nine items used by Bolton and Lane (2012); Vinogradov et al. (2013).

Given the study's exploration of multiple independent and dependent variables, PLS-SEM was employed to test the proposed hypotheses. PLS-SEM, implemented using SmartPLS (Version 4), was selected over Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) tools such as AMOS due to the complexity of the research model and the study's emphasis on prediction. According to Hair et al. (2011), PLS-SEM is particularly appropriate for analysing composite models and focusing on the prediction of key constructs. A hierarchical reflective model was adopted to assess the measurement model.

Results

The PLS-SEM encompasses two steps: the measurement model and the structural model. First, the measurement model is evaluated by testing for reliability and validity. Subsequently, the structural model is assessed using multiple regression analysis to study the impact of parenting styles on self-efficacy and self-employment intention. Table 1 shows that all item loadings exceed 0.7 and all T-statistics exceed 1.96, establishing indicator reliability for the four variables of the self-efficacy construct in the first order. Both composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA) are used to measure internal consistency reliability. Both values are above the acceptable threshold of 0.7, suggesting good internal consistency.

Table 1: Measurement of First-order Constructs

Construct		Loading	t-statistics	CR	CA	AVE
	Actual Performance			0.922	0.925	0.762
	Have positive life experiences.	0.821	28.95			
	Can perform many things based on my previous positive experiences.	0.887	38.40			
	When I get negative life experiences, I always get high self-motivation.	0.833	26.33			
	When I faced challenging experiences, I gained self-confidence.	0.925	92.75			
	I succeed to resolve serious issues no matter how hard I try.	0.895	50.82			
2	Vicarious Experience			0.915	0.916	0.746
	In my life, I have had many experiences of imagining how I do things and achieve results	0.835	33.29			
	I am fortunate to observe how people succeed in their lives and work	0.848	32.76			
	To me, the advantages of being an entrepreneur outweigh the disadvantages.	0.889	53.33			
	I find an entrepreneurial career appealing, and if given the opportunity and resources	0.906	63.78			
	I would like to start my own business.	0.840	30.32			
3	Verbal Persuasion			0.907	0.914	0.762
	In my life, I have received much positive appreciation and encouragement	0.886	57.10			
	In my life, I have received many suggestions	0.845	37.43			
	In my life mostly I take my own self-instructions	0.872	49.49			
	More frequently my works and behaviours were positively interpreted	0.830	30.81			
	My close family approved my decision to create a firm	0.740	16.68			
	My friends approve of my decision to create a firm	0.784	23.98			
4	Physiological Arousal			0.952	0.957	0.755
	I have performed inexperienced tasks and achieved results	0.752	20.43			
	I have performed experienced tasks with better results.	0.888	48.40			
	In my life, I have performed many difficult tasks taken as challenges	0.904	51.06			

I am capable of generating creative ideas and solutions tailored to a given situation	0.915	60.48			
I believe I can feel good in this role even if my workload is increasing	0.907	59.23			
I am well-equipped to respond effectively to unforeseen situations.	0.921	79.73			
I'm typically able to manage whatever situations I encounter.	0.743	21.02			
I am confident in my ability to start and effectively manage a business.	0.898	50.01			

Source: Survey Data, (2024).

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) represents the amount of variance captured by the construct relative to measurement error. AVE which is also above the recommended threshold of 0.5, indicates good convergent validity. Similarly, the CR for all four variables indicates good reliability, and CA suggests good internal consistency reliability of all four variables. AVE is higher than 0.5 indicating good convergent validity. Thus, the self-efficacy construct appears to be well-constructed, with indicators that have high loading values, are statistically significant, and contribute to good reliability and convergent validity. When analyzing the discriminant validity of the first-order construct, it is a measure of the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs by empirical standards. The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) is a modern and more reliable method to assess discriminant validity in the context of PLS-SEM. The HTMT value should be compared to a threshold to determine whether discriminant validity is established. The threshold commonly used is $HTMT < 0.90$, it is a conservative threshold suggesting good discriminant validity. Since the HTMT ratio is lower than the threshold as shown in table 2, it indicates good discriminant validity in the second-order construct.

Table 2: Discriminate validity of the first-order construct

	1	2	3	4
1. Actual Performance	0.888			
2. Vicarious Experience	0.887	0.813		
3. Verbal Persuasion	0.810	0.819	0.876	
4. Physiological Arousal	0.881	0.896	0.898	0.897

Source: Survey Data, (2024).

The second-order constructs were developed based on the latent variable score of the first order constructs. Table 3 demonstrates substantial reliability and validity for the second-order reflective constructs.

Table 3: Measurement of Second-order Constructs

		Loading	t-statistics	CR	CA	AVE
1	Authoritative Parenting			0.944	0.946	0.783
	Whenever I express disagreement, my parents become quite upset	0.870	39.19			
	My parents frequently gave me specific instructions about what to do and how to do it.	0.915	78.34			
	If I didn't meet my parents' expectations, they punished me.	0.862	45.39			
	My parents frequently tell me that I will know things better when grown-up	0.911	88.17			
	When I record good grades for exams my parents tell me to do even better	0.876	50.11			
	My parents reduce allowance or incentives when I am not behaving as they expect	0.872	44.39			
2	Authoritarian Parenting			0.943	0.944	0.715
	When my parents established rules or policies, they rarely explained the reasons behind them	0.854	33.79			
	I didn't feel comfortable discussing my parents' expectations with them, especially when I found those expectations to be unreasonable.	0.875	41.73			
	While we were growing up, my parents consistently provided guidance and direction in a logical and objective manner.	0.806	28.33			
	My parents did not take the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions.	0.876	43.71			
	Although my mother gave me guidance on my behaviour and activities, she was not always open to hearing my concerns or discussing her decisions with me..	0.872	42.21			
	My parents did not understand when I disagreed with any policy set by them.	0.845	37.83			

	My parents do not admit it if they make a mistake.	0.816	29.54			
	They do not admit that youth sometimes know more	0.815	29.58			
3	Permissive Parenting Style			0.920	0.921	0.676
	My parents believed that in a well-managed home, children should have as much influence in family matters as the parents.	0.812	33.91			
	My parents felt that children should be free to make their own choices, even if those choices conflicted with their parents' wishes.	0.853	42.78			
	My parents did not think it was necessary for me to strictly follow rules and regulations.	0.761	22.22			
	My parents rarely provided clear expectations or guidelines for my behavior.	0.812	32.68			
	When making family decisions, my parents often prioritized what the children wanted.	0.860	39.18			
	My parents did not see themselves as primarily responsible for guiding and directing my behavior as I grew up.	0.830	36.59			
	My parents let me make most of my own decisions without giving much direction.	0.822	34.56			
4	Uninvolved Parenting Style			0.899	0.906	0.668
	My parents never gave me expectations and guidelines for my behaviour.	0.871	38.36			
	My parents do not notice whether I behave well at home.	0.868	43.99			
	My parents do not notice whether I behave well at college.	0.768	25.12			
	Parents do not punish me when I do not obey.	0.729	16.60			
	Makes me feel bad after talking over my worries with my parents	0.786	28.72			
	My parents do not worry on the engagement of me for family matters	0.870	52.92			
5	Self-efficacy			0.962	0.962	0.898

	Actual Performance	0.944	16.03			
	Vicarious Experience	0.951	11.79			
	Verbal Persuasion	0.940	82.00			
	Physiological Arousal	0.956	19.02			
6	Self-employment Intention			0.950	0.953	0.669
	Rather than going abroad, the best option is to start a self-employment	0.703	19.62			
	Invest resources whether time or money into ventures that deliver substantial returns.	0.880	50.62			
	Plan ahead on projects	0.796	26.88			
	I am saving money to start a business.	0.680	18.76			
	I dedicate my time to learning how to build my business.	0.782	28.16			
	Determined to start a business or to be my own boss	0.790	28.27			
	Fully committed to pursuing entrepreneurship	0.862	44.38			
	Deeply considering launching a business	0.870	38.27			
	Value a distinctive and unique approach	0.896	56.60			
	Embrace experimentation and innovative methods	0.844	25.04			

Source: Survey Data, (2024).

For indicator reliability, standardized factor loadings exceed the 0.7 threshold, indicating strong relationships between individual indicators and their respective constructs. These loadings are also statistically significant, solidifying their reliability. For the internal consistency reliability: both CA and CR surpass the recommended 0.7 value for each latent variable, indicating a high degree of internal consistency among the indicators measuring each construct. Finally, for the convergent validity, AVE values are above the 0.5 threshold, confirming that each construct captures most of the variance in its indicators. Table 4 indicates that the HTMT ratio is below the chosen threshold ($HTMT < 0.90$, this is a conservative threshold suggesting good discriminant validity), it suggests that the constructs are sufficiently distinct, confirming discriminant validity.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity of the Second-order Constructs

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Authoritative	0.836				
2. Permissive	0.701	0.837			
3. Self-efficacy	0.829	0.860	0.816		
4. Self-employment Intention	0.875	0.890	0.849	0.891	
5. Uninvolved	0.835	0.879	0.754	0.896	0.834

Source: Survey Data (2023).

The first step of the structural model is analyzing the multicollinearity. The VIF values range from 3.893 to 7.906. The VIF values for Authoritarian, Permissive, and Uninvolved with their respective predictor variables are below the threshold, indicating no multicollinearity issue. Table 5 presents the evaluation results of nine hypothetical relationships established within the structural model. According to the obtained results, all nine relationships are significant.

Table 5: Path Coefficients and Significance

		Path coefficients	T statistics	Decision
H1	Authoritarian -> Self-employment Intention	-0.115	4.276	Accepted
H2	Authoritative -> Self-employment Intention	0.291	5.579	Accepted
H3	Permissive -> Self-employment Intention	0.078	2.781	Accepted
H4	Uninvolved -> Self-employment Intention	-0.118	3.747	Accepted
H5	Authoritarian -> Self-efficacy	-0.121	2.228	Accepted
H6	Authoritative -> Self-efficacy	0.599	11.168	Accepted
H7	Permissive -> Self-efficacy	0.110	2.426	Accepted
H8	Uninvolved -> Self-efficacy	-0.161	3.395	Accepted
H9	Self-efficacy -> Self-employment Intention	0.434	8.585	Accepted

R-squared 0.862, Source: Survey Data (2024).

The study measures the mediating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between parenting style and self-employment intention. Table 6 shows the mediating effect of self-efficacy.

Table 6: Mediating effect of self-efficacy

Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	T statistics	Decision
Authoritative -> Self-efficacy -> Self-employment Intention	0.260	6.023	Partial Mediation
Permissive -> Self-efficacy -> Self-employment Intention	0.048	2.282	Partial Mediation
Uninvolved -> Self-efficacy -> Self-employment Intention	-0.070	3.302	Partial Mediation
Authoritarian -> Self-efficacy -> Self-employment Intention	-0.052	2.331	Partial Mediation

(N=248), Source: Survey Data (2024).

Discussion

This study contributes to the understanding of how parenting styles influence adolescents' interest in self-employment. Table 5 shows that the negative path coefficient (-0.115) for authoritarian parenting suggests a potential deterrent effect (H1). Strict rules and control in authoritarian households might stifle the development of risk-taking behaviour, a key ingredient for starting and running a business. While these parents might offer close attention, the lack of autonomy could limit the development of independent decision-making skills needed for entrepreneurs (Schmitt-Rodermund, 2004). The study found a positive association between authoritative parenting and self-employment intention (Table 5) by accepting H2 (path coefficient = 0.291). This aligns with Wijaya and Rinaldi's (2019) work identifying authoritative parenting as the strongest influence on self-employment interest. Authoritative parents strike a balance between structure and support. They provide clear expectations while encouraging exploration and fostering a sense of independence and responsibility. This style might nurture risk propensity (Schmitt-Rodermund, 2004), a crucial trait for venturing into self-employment. These discussions can expose adolescents to the possibilities and challenges of self-employment, allowing them to make informed decisions about their future.

Table 5 further shows that the weak positive association (path coefficient = 0.078) suggests permissive parenting might not actively nurture self-employment intention (H3). While permissive parents might be supportive and allow for exploration, the lack of guidance and structure could leave adolescents without a clear direction (Wijaya & Rinaldi, 2019). They might explore various options but struggle to make informed decisions or develop the necessary discipline for entrepreneurial success. Self-employments need a balance between exploration and goal-oriented action. Permissive parenting, without providing a framework for focused effort, might not adequately prepare adolescents for the demands of self-employment. The negative

path coefficient (-0.118) suggests uninvolved parenting might hinder self-employment intention (H4). When parents are uninvolved, adolescents might lack the role models, encouragement, and support system necessary to consider and pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Self-employment requires a strong support system to navigate challenges and celebrate successes (Steinberg et al., 1994).

Results in Table 5 indicates a weak negative correlation between authoritarian parenting and self-efficacy (H5). This rigid and controlling style might restrict adolescents' autonomy and sense of control, hindering their belief in their abilities. This is consistent with Nessai et al. (2015) but differs from Tam et al. (2012) who found no significant relationship. This inconsistency highlights the complexity of these relationships. Potential explanations include variations in how authoritarian parenting was measured across studies might influence the results and differences in the sample populations (age and socioeconomic background) could play a role. Another possibility is that the measurement of authoritarian parenting in this study might have captured variations within this style. Some authoritarian parents might be more rigid and controlling, while others might offer some degree of structure and clear expectations, leading to a weaker negative association with self-efficacy. These research results strongly support the positive influence of authoritative parenting on self-efficacy (H6). This aligns with studies by Turner et al. (2009), Tam et al. (2012). This style, characterized by warmth, clear expectations, and open communication, likely fosters a sense of competence and confidence in adolescents. They receive support and guidance while also having the autonomy to develop their skills and decision-making abilities. Interestingly, this study finds a stronger contribution ($\beta = 0.599$) compared to Tam et al. (2012) who reported 12.8%. Parenting styles might be interpreted differently across cultures. In the Sri Lankan context, authoritative parenting practices might resonate more strongly with children, leading to a more significant effect on self-efficacy.

Similar to previous research, this study suggests a minimal impact of permissive parenting on self-efficacy (H7). While permissive parents might be supportive, the lack of clear boundaries and expectations might not equip adolescents with the necessary skills and self-regulation to develop strong self-efficacy. The weak positive but insignificant correlation aligns with findings by Olubunmi et al. (2019) and distinguishes it from Aldhafri (2011) who reported a positive influence on academic self-efficacy alongside authoritative parenting. This difference underlines the importance of considering the specific type of self-efficacy being measured. Permissive parenting might have a more nuanced effect depending on the domain (e.g., academic vs. entrepreneurial self-efficacy). Both this study (H8) and prior research by Olubunmi et al. (2019), Turner et al. (2009), demonstrate a negative

correlation between uninvolved parenting and self-efficacy. When parents are uninvolved and provide minimal support or guidance, adolescents might lack the encouragement and feedback necessary to develop a strong belief in their capabilities.

Authoritarian and uninvolved parenting had a negative influence, while permissive and authoritative styles had positive effects. The study recommends that parents and schools prioritize authoritative parenting styles to promote self-efficacy among students. The strong positive correlation between self-efficacy and self-employment intention (H9) aligns with the broader literature. High self-efficacy fosters the belief in one's ability to succeed in entrepreneurial endeavors. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to believe in their ability to succeed as entrepreneurs. They are more likely to take initiative, persevere through challenges, and achieve their goals. Expanding beyond the immediate impact on self-efficacy Tam et al. (2012) contribute to the literature by revealing the broader consequences of parenting styles. Katz et al. (2007) underline that parenting styles not only affect academic and social achievements but also have implications for socioeconomic factors like poverty. The comparison of parenting styles in influencing self-efficacy levels, noting the higher self-efficacy in male adolescents compared to their female counterparts, adds value to the understanding of these dynamics.

Table 6 shows the mediating effect of self-efficacy in the relationship between parenting style and self-employment intention. Results show that self-efficacy has a positive partial mediating effect on the relationship between both authoritative and permissive parental styles and self-employment intention while self-efficacy has a negative partial mediating effect on the relationship between both uninvolved and authoritarian and self-employment intention. Tam et al. (2012) contribute to the literature by revealing the broader consequences of parenting styles. Katz et al. (2007) underline that parenting styles not only affect academic and social achievements but also have implications for socio-economic factors like poverty. Finding of lower self-efficacy in females compared to males aligns with previous research (Tam et al., 2012). However, it is important to consider the potential influence of cultural norms in Sri Lankan context. Traditional Asian cultures might emphasise different expectations for males and females, impacting parenting practices and potentially contributing to the observed gender difference in self-efficacy.

Conclusion

This study offers a comprehensive analysis of how different parenting styles—authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved influence self-efficacy and self-employment intentions among Sri Lankan youth. The findings reveal that authoritarian and uninvolved parenting styles have a notably negative impact on both self-efficacy and entrepreneurial aspirations. In contrast, authoritative and permissive

styles are positively associated with these outcomes, underscoring the importance of warmth, responsiveness, and balanced parental control in nurturing entrepreneurial potential. Notably, the study identifies authoritative parenting as a key contributor to the development of self-employment intentions, providing novel empirical insights into the role of family dynamics in shaping youth entrepreneurship in the Sri Lankan context.

The study further establishes the mediatory role of self-efficacy, demonstrating how it bridges the relationship between parenting styles and self-employment intentions. Thus, the study concludes and provides sufficient empirical evidence of the importance of considering parental influences when understanding young Sri Lankans' career aspirations. The study contributes not only to theoretical frameworks but also offers empirical and methodological insights that advance the understanding of the complex interplay between parenting styles, self-efficacy, and self-employment intentions among youth in Sri Lanka. Methodologically, this study contributes by employing a rigorous research design, incorporating structural equation modelling (SEM) for data analysis. The SEM allows for a comprehensive examination of the complex relationships among variables, providing a more understanding than traditional regression analysis.

The study examines the practical value of promoting authoritative and permissive parenting styles to enhance youth self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intent. For parents and caregivers, adopting practices that balance emotional support with appropriate autonomy can help cultivate the confidence and resilience needed for entrepreneurial success. Educational institutions can benefit by incorporating entrepreneurship education that emphasises self-efficacy development through experiential learning, mentorship programs, and real-world problem-solving activities. Tailoring programs to address the unique challenges and strengths of female entrepreneurs can help bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurial participation and success. Policymakers could use these findings to craft policies that support parenting education programs, particularly those aimed at fostering authoritative and permissive parenting approaches. Such initiatives could play a key role in nurturing an entrepreneurial culture, thereby contributing to broader economic development goals.

Acknowledgements: We extend our sincere appreciation to the youth entrepreneurs and their parents who generously participated in the survey and qualitative data collection. Their openness and collaboration were vital in shaping the depth and relevance of this study. We also express our sincere thanks to the anonymous reviewers and the editorial board of the Colombo Economics Journal for their constructive feedback and editorial support.

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