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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED PARENTING STYLE, SELF-COMPASSION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract: Parenting behaviors have been linked to adolescents' self-compassion, but it is less clear how they relate to adolescent psychological flexibility. Psychological flexibility is an individual's ability to respond according to environmental demands and internal experiences to reach their goals. The present study aimed to find the relationship between perceived parenting style, self-compassion and psychological flexibility among adolescents. 180 samples of adolescent boys(95) and girls(85) of age range from 17 – 19 years were selected for the study using convenience sampling technique. The variables were measured using Perceived Parenting Style Scale developed by Divya and Manikandan (2013), Self-Compassion Scale – short form developed by Raes, Pommier, Neff, and Van Gucht, (2011), Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ) developed by Hayes et al., (2004). The research design used in the present study was ex post facto research design. Karl Pearson's product-moment correlation and t-test were used for statistical analysis. The results shown that there was significant correlation between the dimensions of perceived parenting style (authoritative, authoritarian parenting style) and self-compassion among adolescents. There was no correlation with the other variables and there was no gender difference among the variables. The study implied the importance of the parents being authoritative rather than authoritarian.

(Key words: adolescents ,perceived parenting style, self-compassion, psychological flexibility).

INTRODUCTION

Every stage in human development is important. In every stage of life span development humans develop different attitudes and behavior. Personality development happens through-out the human life. Period of Adolescence is considered to be important in terms of physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.

Parents often refuse to change their beliefs about their child's abilities as they grow older. And therefore, they treat adolescent kids same as they did when they were young. Nonetheless, they expect them to act "appropriately according to age," especially when it comes to taking responsibility. The so called 'Generation Gap' between parents and children results in changes in values and norms. The views about parenting style changes during this period. It is the stage where individuals try to understand more about their self. Adolescents often engage in a self-criticism, when they fail to meet the demands of parents/teachers/society. Since this period is considered to be a period of stress and storm, acceptance is less and denial is more. Harsh judgment about themselves makes them to feel isolated from the society and significant others.

PARENTING STYLES

Parenting styles refers to the unique way in which individuals raise their children. Most of the parents assess their parenting based on the time spent with the children, however, it is not the time spent but the quality parenting matters. Parents adopt a different parenting styles based on the life span development of their children. For example for an infant more love, care and affection is showed with fewer restrictions. Whereas for an adolescent kids, more restrictions with lot of rules and regulations. Cultures do play an important role in parenting. During adolescence, most of the parents find it difficult to raise their kids as they want much freedom and liberty. Adolescents feel there is too much rules from parents. As a result conflict arises between parent and child. Children, rose with more love, care and affection exhibit positive emotions and have a good physical and psychological well-being. Authoritative parents bring up their children in a positive way with love and affection; teach them to regulate their emotions, express emotions in an appropriate way. Children of authoritative parents yield best results in a various areas such as behavior, psychological and social adaptation. On the contrary authoritarian style parenting puts lot of rules, commands to be obeyed, with no or minimal explanation or feed-back about the behavior. They are more particular about discipline. Though the children raised by authoritarian parents are obedient, but they seem to be less happy. Permissive parents give freedom to their children thinking that they are friends of them. They do not interfere in any of the children affairs. They allow their children to make their own decisions.

SELF-COMPASSION

Compassion is the feeling of kindness, care and understanding of people who are in pain. When compassion turns inwards it is self-compassion (Neff, 2012). Being kind and understanding ourselves when we suffer, feel sad or inadequate is self-compassion. Self-compassion consists of three main components: Self-kindness, Humanity, and Mindfulness.

Whenever we encounter pain or personal shortcomings in our life, rather than ignoring them being kind to one self is self-kindness. Not hurt oneself by self-criticism also refers to self-kindness. Many of our life incidents make us to think that "I am a failure" but if we recognize that everyone fails, makes mistakes, goes wrong at any point of life time is humanity. We are often disappointed if we do not get what we want either in ourselves or in our life circumstances. Mindfulness refers to being mindful of our negative thoughts and emotions and approached with balance and equanimity (Neff & Dahm, 2003)

Dakers and Guse (2020) in their research had found out approachable parenting, characterized by sensitivity, warmth, and acceptance is associated with the ability to develop self-compassion during adolescence. Especially, the father's upbringing style (parenting style) seems to make a unique contribution to the self-compassion of adolescent. Parenting styles along with self-compassion is a significant predictor of antisocial behavior (Zareian, Tajikzadeh and Sarafraz, 2017).

PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY

Psychological flexibility refers to living in the present moment fully and having contact with experience without acting in a defensive way (Kashdan, & Rottenberg, 2010). Being psychologically flexible makes us to be in contact with the difficult thoughts, feelings and sensations and experience a holistic view of the situation. Being flexible helps us to make better decision making by analyzing our long term goal in our life. It is not only accepting positive emotions but also welcoming the undesired thoughts, emotions and sensations. In our day to day life we give more importance to short-term impulses ignoring the long-term values. Being psychologically flexible helps us to avoid such impulses and helps to control the unwanted inner events.

In a study conducted in Pakistan among adolescents, it was found that perceived parenting style is a significant predictor of psychological flexibility (Bibi, et al., 2021). In another study conducted with university students of Malaysia, it was found significant correlation between parental autonomy, parental responsiveness and psychological flexibility (Tarampal Singh and Mofrad, 2015). Both authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles was found to be correlated with psychological flexibility in a longitudinal study conducted with high school students in Australia by Williams, Ciarrochi and Heaven (2012).

Results of research conducted by Woodruff, et al., (2013) suggested that self-compassion and psychological inflexibility may demonstrate greater associations with psychological health.

Parenting is of pivotal importance because it lays the foundation of the personality structure on which the entire life of an adolescent is based. Proper parenting helps the adolescents to overcome self-criticism and to have self-compassion. The adolescents should be more self-compassionate and flexible to manage their negative emotions. Thus, the present study aimed at better understanding the perception of parenting styles its consequences on adolescents. The previous studies have the parenting style as the separate study and psychological flexibility as a single variable study. Hence, the present study aimed at the combination of all the three variables as well as identifying the trends and gaps in the recent literature.

HYPOTHESES:

Authoritarian Perceived parenting style would be significantly related to self-compassion (H1) Authoritative Perceived parenting style would be significantly related to self-compassion (H2) Permissive Perceived parenting style would be significantly related to self-compassion (H3) Self-compassion would be significantly related to psychological flexibility (H4)

Authoritarian Perceived parenting style would be significantly related to psychological flexibility (H5)

Authoritative Perceived parenting style would be significantly related to psychological flexibility (H6)

Permissive Perceived parenting style would be significantly related to psychological flexibility (H7)

Boys and girls would not differ significantly in their perceived parenting styles, self-compassion and psychological flexibility (H8).

METHOD:

The research design used in the present study was an Ex post facto research design. Using convenient sampling technique adolescents of age ranging from 17 to 19 were selected as participants. The participants of the study were from college, where the researcher had presented the need for the study and a brief explanation about the study was given. An informed consent was taken from the parents as well as from participants and confidentiality was guaranteed. The participants were also allowed to withdraw from study. The participants have been thanked in advance for their willingness to taking part in the study. Karl Pearson's Product-Moment correlation to find out the relationship between perceived parent style, self-compassion and psychological flexibility. Independent t-test is used to find out the significant difference between boys and girls.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 180 samples are selected from adolescent boys (95) and girls (85) age range from 17 – 19 years, who were studying in various colleges in Chennai and know to read and write in English.

MEASURES:

Perceived Parenting Style Questionnaire: The Perceived Parenting Style Scale developed by Divya and Manikandan (2013) measure the perception of the children about their parent's behavior. It measures perceived parenting style of the subject with regard to three dimensions such as authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. It consists of 30 items in which responses were elicited in a 5 Point Likert scale.

Self Compassion Scale-SF: The SCS-SF is a short scale and has only 12 items scale was constructed and validated by Raes, Pommier, Neff, and Van Gucht,(2011). It is a 5point Likert scale and has a near-perfect correlation with the 26-item SCS when examining total scores.

Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ): This is Perhaps the most commonly used measure of psychological flexibility developed by Hayes et.al., AAQ (2004). It is a 7-point Likert scale with 9 items.

RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

AN PPS- Authoritarian Perceived Parenting Style; AV PPS- Authoritative perceived parenting Style; P PPS-Permissive Perceived Parenting Style; SC-Self-Compassion; PF-Psychological flexibility.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. AN PPS	2.5	0.6	1	0.43**	-0.36**	-0.30**	0.05 ^{NS}
2. AV PPS	2.5	0.7	-	1	-0.33**	0.24**	0.30**
3. P PPS	3.6	0.6	-	-	1	0.18*	0.01 ^{NS}
4. SC	3.3	0.4	-	-	-	1	0.28**
5. PF	3.2	0.4	-	-	-	-	1

**0.01 Level of significance;*0.05 level of significance; NS – not significant

From the above table it was found that all the participants have perceived the both authoritarian and authoritative equally. While permissive parenting styles seems to be on the higher side. All the three types of parenting styles were found to be significantly related to self-compassion however, authoritarian style was negatively correlated. Self compassion and psychological flexibility was also correlated. Only authoritative parenting style found to be related with psychological flexibility. Hence the hypothesis 1,2,3,4, and 6 was accepted. Hypothesis 5 and 7 was rejected.

Table 2: Gender difference on variables

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	't'
AN PPS	Boys	95	24.4	5.19	1.2 ^{NS}
	Girls	85	25.3	6.54	
AV PPS	Boys	95	25.2	6.90	1.1 ^{NS}
	Girls	85	24.0	7.20	
P PPS	Boys	95	36.1	5.68	0.68 ^{NS}
	Girls	85	36.7	5.67	
SC	Boys	95	39.1	5.37	0.07 ^{NS}
	Girls	85	39.3	5.14	
PF	Boys	95	29.4	3.67	1.2 ^{NS}
	Girls	85	28.7	4.18	

NS - Not Significant

From table 2 it was found that boys and girls did not differ in any variables. Hence the hypothesis 8 was rejected.

DISCUSSION

The present study is aimed to find the relationship between the perceived parenting style, self-compassion and psychological flexibility. Perceived parenting style refers to how children think about their parenting style. In the present research permissive parenting style was found to be perceived higher when compared to other parenting styles. In the present generation many parents think that children should enjoy their life and their wants were fulfilled immediately. There is no delaying of gratification. This could be reason why many children perceived their parenting style as permissive. Once upon a time grand-parents used to tell moral stories to their grand children. This helped the children along with parenting style to develop self- compassion and flexibility. As many children are being raised in nuclear family self-compassion and psychological flexibility was found to be in a moderate level in the current study.

Authoritarian parenting style is characterized by demanding and non-responsive strategies. Parents demand high obedience from the child (Baumrind 1966). Buri, Louiselle, Misukanis, & Mueller, (1988) in their study found an inverse relationship with self-compassion which is in line with the present study. Negative correlation was found in the present study.

Authoritative parenting style was found to be more adaptive and responsive. Children raised in this environment were found to be more self-regulated and independent (Baumrind 1966). Authoritative parenting style was found to be more optimal in raising children (Steingberg, 2001). It was found that children raised by high responsive parents had high self compassion (Pepping et al., 2015). A positive correlation was found in the present study. As suggested in the previous literatures, in the present study also it was confirmed that both warmth and rejection was correlated with self compassion. Also the study conducted by Hall, (2015) confirmed the relationship with permissive parenting style and self-compassion. Highly supportive parents were thought to have high self-compassion and which is reflected in children.

In a study conducted by Bibi et al., (2015) it was found the parenting styles were correlated with psychological flexibility and no gender difference was found. But in the present study only authoritative style was found to be correlated. Supportive and responsive parenting was found to be associated with empathetic behavior of the adolescents ((Laible & Carlo, 2004). As authoritative parents' shows more concern towards their children they have more psychological flexibility. Psychological flexibility is characterized by individuals' ability to respond to the emotional demands in a proper way(Kashdan, & Rottenberg, 2010). Overall the study implied the importance of parenting styles on self-compassion and psychological flexibility.

LIMITATIONS:

The study questions were assessed for overall parenting styles but not father and mother separately. Also it is only the perception of the children and it may not be the actual one. The study did not cover the entire adolescent's age range. The scale which was used to assess the parenting styles did not cover neglectful parenting. The future researchers can consider all the above factors and can do the study.

IMPLICATIONS:

The results of the study indicated how an individual is being raised has a profound effect on his/her characteristic thought and behavior. Also authoritative parenting styles is significantly associated with self-compassion and psychological flexibility. Since self-compassion and psychological flexibility is associated with overall well-being of the adolescents, it is important to train the parents to use authoritative style.

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