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Abstract

The aim of this research consisted of examining parental socialization taking into account the nature and variability of daily situations. The objectives of this study were: to explore parent´ behavior according to the degree of importance of diverse situations included in the Parental Socialization Scale in Adolescence (ESPA29); and to analyze whether the importance of these situations is associated with parents´ different socialization practices. Using the information provided by experts in family and/or adolescence, responses of 223 adolescents on the ESPA29 were analyzed from dimensional and typological approaches depending on the relevance of the educative situations over which parents have to intervene. Data analysis showed that adolescents perceived their mothers´ behavior differently depending on the importance of daily situations. The need for understanding parental socialization across educative situations is highlighted.

Keywords: parenting practices, parenting styles, socialization, situational analysis, behavioral consistency, adolescence, Delphi technique.

Introduction

Parental socialization refers to a series of processes taking place within the family in order to inculcate minors a specific system of values, rules, and beliefs (Bornstein, 2002). This topic of study has a long tradition in the analysis of the family as a development setting for children and adolescents. Accordingly, although classic contributions have been essential (Baumrind, 1967, 1971; Maccoby &

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Martín, 1983), relevant contributions are currently being made, providing a more precise perspective of socializing practices and, particularly, of their assessment (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Parke & Buriel, 2006). In general, two perspectives of analysis are noteworthy in the study of parental socialization: (1) focusing on global tendencies of parenting behavior, establishing parental typologies, and (2) focusing on specific dimensions of parenting, being the most frequently studied warmth (sometimes referred to as acceptance or responsiveness), and control (referred to demanding, behavioral control, intrusiveness or firmness). Both approaches are complementary and they contribute very interesting levels of analysis and outcomes for the study and assessment of parenting although neither one, by itself, can encompass the complexity of this construct. The goal of this study is to provide a complementary approach to the two aforementioned perspectives, exploring parental socialization in specific educative situations. The premise of this research is both innovative and interesting because, to the best of our knowledge, there are no previous studies on parenting taking into account the variability in parental practices across daily situations.

There is a broad range of instruments to assess parents' educational behavior (i.e., Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen & Hart, 1995; Silk, Morris, Kanaya & Steinberg, 2003), but very few propose a contextualized analysis, and none of them incorporates this situated approach into the scoring criteria. An example is the "Parental Socialization Scale in Adolescence" ["Escala de Socialización Parental en la Adolescencia"] (ESPA29) designed by Musitu and García (2001), an instrument supported by a solid theoretical approach based on the traditional models of parenting (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) and with adequate psychometric properties for Spanish (López-Jáuregui & Oliden, 2009; Musitu & García, 2001), Portuguese (Nunes, Luis, Lemos & Musitu, 2015) or Brazilian (Martínez, García, Musitu & Yubero, 2012) population.

In this instrument, Musitu and García (2001) analyze parental socialization based on adolescents' perceptions of their parents' reactions in 29 diverse representative scenarios of the western culture. Particularly, this instrument presents 13 *positive situations* in which the minors behave appropriately according to parental expectations (e.g., "If I behave appropriately at home and don't interrupt"), and 16 *negative* ones in which they disobey or behave inappropriately ("If I leave home to go somewhere without asking anyone for permission"). For each positive situations, adolescents has to rate the frequency of parental practices of affection ("he/ she shows affection") and indifference ("he/she seems indifferent") while for each *negative situation*, adolescents has to rate the frequency of parental practices of reasoning ("he/she talks to me"), detachment ("it's the same to him/her"), verbal scolding ("he/she scolds me"), physical punishment ("he/she spanks me"), and revoking privileges ("he/she takes something away from me"). This instrument provides the analysis of parental socialization from two perspectives of analyses:

Dimensional perspective: The educational actions presented in ESPA29 are grouped into two dimensions that, in turn, include different educational strategies: (1) acceptance/involvement measures the extent to which parents express reactions of approval and affect contingently with the adolescents' positive behavior, and the extent to which they use strategies of inductive control for inadequate behaviors. The practices examined are affect, indifference, detachment, and dialogue; (2) strictness/imposition assesses the way parents control adolescents when they transgress family rules, through the independent or simultaneous use of revoking privileges, verbal scolding or physical punishment.

Typological perspective: From the scores of both dimensions, parents are classified into one of the four parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, negligent, or indulgent), according to the habitual method of dichotomizing scores on the general dimensions (acceptance/involvement and strictness/imposition) by the median split procedure.

This instrument proposes a situated study (dimensional and typological) of parental socialization, but not a specific and differentiated analysis of parents' actions as a function of the characteristics of the situation. That is, the original scoring does not inform whether or not the parents always behave similarly across different educative situation. Nevertheless, a situated study could be possible with a complementary analysis. The present research aimed to make progress on this topic with two objectives: (1) to examine a complementary scoring of the ESPA29, in order to analyze the extent to which parental practices vary depending on the degree of importance of the different educational situations presented in the tool; and (2) to analyze the variability of parental socialization across the importance of educational situation.

Methodology

In order to achieve both objectives, a descriptive and quantitative research was carried out. The methodology of this research is presented below taking into account the characteristics of the sample, measures and procedure.

Participants

The sample of this study was composed by experts and adolescents. The experts participated for achieving the first objective, while adolescents were involved for the second objective. On the one hand, 15 Spanish specialists (10 women and 5 men) in the area of family and/or adolescence, who came from three different settings of the Andalusian community: university, social services, and secondary education. Their work experience was 15.15 years on average. On the other hand, 226 Spanish adolescents, aged between 11 and 17 years ($M = 13.63$, $SD = 1.83$),

distributed proportionately according to sex (49.12% girls and 50.88% boys), who were registered in public (64.29%) and private schools (35.71%) at the following educational levels: Primary Education (28.32%), Compulsory Secondary Education (58.85%) and High school (12.83%). The adolescents' mothers were 41.29 years old (SD = 7.56), 76.60% had completed primary school (low), 19.27% had finished high school (medium), and 4.13% had university education (high).

Measures

Parental Socialization Scale in Adolescence (Musitu & García, 2001): this scale assesses the adolescents' perception of their parents' behavior in 29 educative daily situations (positive and negative) and, as mentioned, it provides results on two dimensions (acceptance/involvement and strictness/imposition), seven educational practices (affection, indifferent, detachment, dialogue, revoking privileges, verbal scolding and physical punishment), and four socialization styles (authoritative, authoritarian, negligent, and indulgent). Although it can collect information from both parents, in this study, the mothers' results were only analyzed.

Scale of Parental Situational Action Need: This instrument evaluate the need for adults to immediately act or react somehow in each situation of ESPA29. When considering positive situations, the participant must assess the importance of the parents' positively reinforcing the minor; when considering negative situations, It is must assess the extent to which they consider it necessary for the adults to do something to control the minor or to shape his or her behavior. Each situation is rated on a Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 (*unnecessary*) *to* 5 (*very necessary*).

Scale of agreement with the conjoint Delphi assessment: This scale was designed as a result of the previous instrument. The ESPA29 situations were classified and arranged according to the need for parental intervention (from highest to lowest) according to experts participating in a Delphi process. To classify and order the positive and negative situations were considering the Landeta (1999) criteria describes later. This order allowed the professionals to show their degree of agreement with the global opinion of the group. The response scale ranges between 1 (strongly disagree) and 4 (strongly agree).

Procedure

The procedure was different for each objective. With respect to the first one, a Delphi technique was realized in collaboration with experts in family and/or adolescence. This methodology provides consensual information by a group of specialists on the basis of their individual responses and the feedback they receive

in various rounds from the group results, until they reach a majority consensus (Landeta, 1999; León & Montero, 2003). Following the recommendations of Landeta (1999), the steps followed in this study for the development of the Delphi technique were:

Identify the panel of experts: The selection of experts was intentional, asking for the voluntary collaboration of 15 professionals who work in one of the three settings of Andalusian community above mentioned in the section of participants. The unique criteria for the selection were: (a) having extensive knowledge of in family and/or adolescence; and (b) having more than five years of work experience.

On the first round: sending and receiving the above-described questionnaire (*Scale of Parental Situational Action Need)* through e-mail.

On the second round: returning the results of the first round to the experts, requesting for their degree of agreement with the second instrument (*Scale of agreement with the conjoint Delphi assessment).* As there was a high degree of consensus, the Delphi technique was completed without requiring more rounds.

With regard to the second objective, adolescents were selected according to random sample stratified by conglomerates considering the ownership (private/ public) of the school and the adolescents' age and sex. 14 schools were selected with this procedure and then the participants were selected based on per level. Adolescents completed the instrument in class in the presence of a trained interviewer. Informed consent forms were requested and obtained from parents and adolescents prior to participation in the research.

Results

Firstly, results obtained using Delphi technique are presented. Two rounds were necessary to evaluate and reach an agreement between experts according to the importance or need for parental intervention of the situations included in the ESPA29. In the first round data were obtained for ranking and classifying the 29 situations. The medians (*Me*) of the scores (from highest to lowest) were used as precedence criterion and the means (from highest to lowest) and the standard deviations (from lowest to highest) were used to break ties (Landeta, 1999). The ratings of the positive and negative situations were treated differently (*Table 1*).

Table 1. Ranking and classification of the situations of the ESPA29

	Situation*	Me	M	DT	Groups / Levels of needs
Positive situations	Situation 5	5	4.60	0.63	A
	Situation 23	5	4.47	0.74	A
	Situation 24	4	4.27	0.70	B
	Situation 22	4	4.07	1.03	B
	Situation 1	4	3.80	1.01	B
	Situation 16	4	3.80	1.08	B
	Situation 10	4	3.73	1.10	B
	Situation 3	4	3.60	1.18	B
	Situation 14	4	3.33	1.34	C
	Situation 18	3	3.40	1.18	C
	Situation 28	3	3.27	1.03	C
	Situation 7	3	2.93	0.96	C
	Situation 27	2	2.13	1.24	C
Negative situations	Situation 2	5	4.80	0.41	A
	Situation 13	5	4.73	0.46	A
	Situation 8	5	4.40	0.74	A
	Situation 15	5	4.33	0.90	A
	Situation 19	4	4.40	0.63	B
	Situation 9	4	4.33	0.72	B
	Situation 17	4	4.27	0.59	B
	Situation 29	4	4.27	0.70	B
	Situation 20	4	4.27	0.80	B
	Situation 11	4	3.87	0.99	B
	Situation 26	4	3.87	1.13	B
	Situation 6	4	3.73	0.96	B
	Situation 12	4	3.67	0.62	B
	Situation 8	4	3.67	0.82	B
	Situation 25	3	3.47	0.83	C
	Situation 21	3	2.80	1.21	C

A =High; B = Medium-high; C = Medium

*The number given to the situations is the same that Musitu and Garcia (2001) present in the original version of the instrument (ESPA 29)

With regard to the ranking, the results indicate that the negative situations required more important and immediate parental actions than the positive situations. Thus, the percentage of positive and negative situations with *Me* = 5 (maximum possible) was 15.38 and 25%, respectively. That is, 53.85% of the positive situations and 62.5% of the negative ones presented *Me* = 4, whereas *Me* = 3 was obtained by 23.08% of the positive situations and 12.5% of the negative ones. Only the situation 27 ("If I eat everything that is on the table") presented *Me* = 2, and parental action was not considered unnecessary in any situation (*Me* = 1). With regard to the nature of the situations, those that required a more immediate and intense response (*Me* = 5) were mainly related to the school setting (e.g., situation 5: "If I bring home my report card with good grades"), whereas the

moments of daily coexistence were at placed at the bottom of the ranking (e.g., situation 25: "If I am annoying at home or I don't let my parents watch news or sports").

The situations were also classified into groups as a function of the level of need for parental action. Initially, situations that obtained $Me = 5$ were considered high need (A), those that obtained $Me = 4$ were medium-high need (B), and those with $Me = 3$ were considered medium (C), and those with $Me = 2$ were considered medium-low need (D). Only the situation 27 ("If I eat everything that is on the table") obtained $Me = 2$, corresponded to the level of need D, but this situation was classified as Group C so it do not conform a one-item group.

Finally, the standard deviations of the situations with high variability were explored. The ninth positive situation (14 situation) with $Me = 4$ was switched from Group B to Group C by presenting an average nearly three (M = 3.33) and a heterogeneous deviation ($SD = 1.34$). The final results are presented in the third column of Table 1. Group A was made up of 6 situations (20.69% of the total), Group B had 16 situations (55.17%), and Group C included 7 situations (24.14%).

The findings of the second round showed that all the experts (100%) expressed total or partial agreement with results of the positive situations, and only one expert expressed partial disagreement with the results for the negative situations. These results reveal a high level of consensus in the group of experts, so we considered the ranking and classification presented in Table 1 as valid. This classification let a complementary scoring of ESPA29 taking into account the importance or need for parental intervention of the situations (A, B and C). The administration of this instrument to a sample of adolescents allowed the analysis of parental socialization considering these three levels of importance or need. Results from two major approaches to studying parental socialization, dimensional and typological, are presented according to the clustering of the situations of ESPA29.

Respect to dimensional approach, the comparison of the three groups of need in the two dimensions and the seven practices of parental socialization are presented in Table 2. Results obtained showed a decrease in the means of both dimensions (acceptance/involvement and strictness/imposition) as the degree of required parental action decreased. For each possible combination of the three groups in each dimension, contrasts for K related samples were performed. All these contrasts showed differences among all groups with a high effect size in all cases ($d > .80$). Likewise, a decrease in the scores of all the socialization practices was observed as the need for parental intervention decreased, except for those practices related to a low level of disposition or response in the mothers (indifference or detachment), in which case, the frequency of your use increased. The differences among the three levels of need for each parental practice were statistically significant in all the contrasts ($p < .005$), except for verbal scolding (BC)

and physical punishment (AB) whose contrasts presented a significance marginal ($p < .10$).

Table 2. Parenting dimensions and practices according to the need for parental intervention

M(SD)	Total	Groups/Levels of need			t
		A	B	C	
Acceptance/Involvement	2.98 (0.47)	3.46 (0.42)	2.99 (0.49)	2.66 (0.65)	AB: 20.99*** AC: 21.49*** BC: 12.40***
Affection	2.71 (0.69)	3.53 (0.67)	2.74 (0.75)	2.34 (0.84)	AB: 18.94*** AC: 22.36*** BC: 11.40***
Indifference	2.00 (0.69)	1.29 (0.56)	1.95 (0.72)	1.29 (0.56)	AB: -16.37*** AC: -18.61*** BC: -9.35***
Detachment	1.31 (0.31)	1.17 (0.31)	1.33 (0.35)	1.46 (0.63)	AB: -7.04*** AC: -7.05*** BC: -3.56***
Dialogue	2.51 (0.71)	2.79 (0.80)	2.48 (0.73)	2.08 (0.94)	AB: 9.98*** AC: 11.91*** BC: 8.25***
Strictness/Imposition	2.00 (0.41)	2.24 (0.46)	1.95 (0.42)	1.81 (0.50)	AB: 17.03*** AC: 14.60*** BC: 5.05***
Verbal Scolding	2.74 (0.58)	3.06 (0.64)	2.64 (0.63)	2.56 (0.80)	AB: 13.36*** AC: 10.37*** BC: 1.86#
Physical Punishment	1.15 (0.27)	1.18 (0.34)	1.15 (0.28)	1.10 (0.30)	AB: 1.84# AC: 4.03*** BC: 2.83**
Revoking Privileges	2.12 (0.65)	2.46 (0.78)	2.04 (0.66)	1.78 (0.85)	AB: 14.52*** AC: 12.83*** BC: 5.55***

***p < .001; **p <. 005; #p < .10

For typological approach, the 50th percentiles for acceptance/involvement and strictness/imposition obtained at each level of need were taken into account for the establishment of the typologies. The combination of both dimensions allowed classifying the mothers as neglectful, indulgent, authoritative or authoritarian at each level. The neglectful and indulgent styles were predominantly concentrated at level of need C, the authoritarian at level A, and the authoritative at level B (Table 3). Forty percent of the mothers obtained the same educational style at all three levels, with the extremes (neglectful and authoritative) showing greater consistency. However, 50.20% of the mothers combined two styles, one more predominant due to its presence at two of the three groups of needs. The most frequent combination was authoritative and authoritarian (13.78%), whereas

indulgent and authoritarian only appeared in 2.22% of the cases. Different styles were presented by 8.89% of the mothers at each level.

Table 3. Parenting style according to level of need for parental intervention

M (%)	Group/levels of need			The same style in the three levels	Combinated of two parental styles			
	A	B	C		With 1 negligent	With 1 indulgent	With 1 authoritarian	With 1 authoritative
Negligent	66 (29.33%)	65 (28.89%)	70 (31.11%)	29 (12.89%)		11 (4.89%)	12 (5.33%)	8 (3.55%)
Indulgent	47 (20.89%)	50 (22.22%)	52 (23.11%)	23 (10.22%)	15 (6.66%)		2 (0.89%)	8 (3.55%)
Authoritarian	58 (25.78%)	47 (20.89%)	42 (18.66%)	13 (5.78%)	13 (5.78%)	3 (1.33%)		13 (5.78%)
Authoritative	54 (24%)	63 (28%)	61 (27.11%)	25 (11.11%)	5 (2.22%)	5 (2.22%)	18 (8%)	

Discussion

The development of Delphi technique allowed a situated assessment of parental socialization with the ESPA29. The 29 situations were grouped by experts into three groups/levels according to the need for parental intervention, which are not very disparate. According to the experts, all these situations were relevant and important to assess the parents' educational actions, and only one situation ("If I eat everything that is on the table") was placed at a lower level of need than the rest. It would have been interesting to have had a more varied range of situations, contributing to a more heterogeneous classification, including situations that would require a low level of parental action.

Regarding the three levels of need, the negative situations predominated over the positive ones at the first two levels (A and B), whereas at the third level (C), positive situations were more frequently represented. Therefore, according to the experts, situations concerning transgression of rules require more and immediate parental action than do situations involving adaptive behavior. This result is partially consistent with the deficit model that has ruled the analysis of ado-lescence for a long time, considering intervention to be important mainly in problematic cases (Oliva et al., 2010). This has led to focusing on negative behaviors more than on positive ones, when the key to the prevention of negative behavior lies in the promotion of positive behavior, as proposed in the model of positive development (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). Regarding the content of the classification, the situations from groups A and B were mainly related to the school setting, whereas those from group C referred to issues of self-care and daily life. We underline that mothers not only conferred importance to academic issues of the school setting (to get good grades, not to do homework…) but also to issues of daily coexistence (to behave/misbehave in

class…). At the same time, some similarity between this grouping and the traditional distinction of moral and conventional rules (Turiel, 1983) could be suggested. In this regard, the A level of need was mainly made up of situations that described approval of or noncompliance with preferentially moral rules, whereas conventional rules were more predominant at level C. The importance conferred by the experts to moral rules versus conventional rules is consistent with the results of prior studies carried out with parents of adolescents (Critchley & Sanson, 2006). In spite of this result, we underline that all the types of situations were intermingled in the three defined groups.

With regard to the second objective of this work, the results revealed that there is variability in parenting across daily situations. Thus, the data provided by the adolescents showed a decreasing tendency towards acceptance/involvement and strictness/imposition as the need for educational intervention increased, indicating agreement between the experts' recommendations for parental education and the mothers' actions. These results are consistent with those found regarding parental educational practices. This coincidence may indicate that these parents are socializing their children adequately in terms of adapting their educational practices to the degree of the need for intervention in each kind of situation. Nevertheless, the fact that these mothers act more or less according to the need for some parental response should not be confused with their flexibility in the type of educational strategies they employ with their children in each situation.

Additionally, the fact that not even one half of the women presented the same educational style at all three levels of need assessed is remarkable. Although the literature supports the existence of global tendencies in parental behavior (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), calculation of the socializing styles by levels showed that these mothers not only adapted their educational strategies to the situation but also that they presented a different action pattern depending on the type of situations they were facing. The most consistent styles were neglectful and authoritative, precisely the ones that describe parents as being either at the positive or at the negative pole of the two dimensions of parental socialization. Nevertheless, style consistency was not typical of the majority of these mothers, because the combined use of styles was observed in more than one half of the sample. We underline that these results do not allow us to refer to the positive or negative effects of situational consistency in parental educational style. This topic requires deeper future studies. However, the fact that the experts confer more importance to parents' actions in certain situations indicates that the consequences of parental behavior for children's adjustment may also be different.

In general, the results reveal the importance of the situation in the assessment of parental socialization. Not taking these situations into account could be an important limitation for assessment in methodological terms. The situational analysis can help us to understand some of the inconsistencies found in the literature, as well as the scarce explained variance that some studies report when

relating parental socialization to specific indicators of adjustment (i.e., Hernando, Oliva & Pertegal, 2012). In the same way, the importance of designing or adapting instruments to provide situational information of adults' behavior should be noted, in the analysis of which situations play a leading role, incorporating a great variety of experiences, and focusing not only on their nature (school, familial, peers, and so forth) but also on the importance of the parental action required by the situations.

Conclusions

Results presented here support the convenience of improving the study of parental socialization by means of to incorporate a situational approach. This innovative perspective in research on family and adolescence has the potential to meaningfully contribute to the understanding of parental educational practices in particular and specific contexts. Although the dimensional and typological perspectives are theoretically and empirically well documented, to the best of our knowledge there are no prior studies taking both approaches into account while considering the particular situations in which parent behavior takes place. In the present study, both the nature of the situation (positive or negative) and the level of importance of the parent reaction (reinforce or control) have proved to be relevant characteristics of the educative situation, but other facets of adolescent-parent socializing relationship need to be examined in future researches.

In addition, the benefit of reviewing the methodological approach to parental socialization is also deduced of this study. A large number of tools (including ESPA29) consist of to propose different educational situations, so it is rather easy to analyze parents' reaction to each situation, that is, to complete the dimensional and/or typological nature of the scale with a situational read of the tool. Summing up, a (conceptual and methodological) situational analysis of parental socialization can contribute to the development of investigations and interventions addressing this topic in a more integrative and comprehensive way. Results presented and discussed in the present study show that there is an important variability in parenting across situations, highlighting the importance of parental education under daily situations employing a participative experiential methodology, to benefit a positive parenting during adolescence.

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