Parenting Styles and Self-esteem

Hamidreza Zakeria*, Maryam Karimpourb

aDepartment of Educational psychology, University of Shiraz, Shiraz, Iran
bThe University of Islamic Azad, Marvdasht, Iran and member of youth researchers Institute

Abstract

This study was examined the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem. Five-hundred-forty six Shiraz University students (240 girls and 306 boys) were participants of the study. Steinberg's Parenting Styles Scale (2005) and Coopersmith’s self-esteem scale (CSEI) were used as measures of the study. Simultaneous multiple regression of CSEI total score on the parenting styles subscales, revealed that the “acceptance-involvement” and “psychological autonomy-granting” styles were significant positive predictors of the self-esteem. Also, the results of analysis t-test showed that the mean score of girls was significantly greater than boys in the “behavioral strictness-supervision” style.

Keywords: Self-esteem; Parenting styles; Students.

1. Introduction

The concept of self-esteem is one that is difficult to clearly define. To some it is confidence in our ability to think; confidence in our ability to cope with basic challenges of life; confidence in our right to be successful and happy; feelings of being worthy, deserving, entitled to assert our needs and wants, achieve our values, and enjoy the benefits of our efforts (Hooks, 2003). Self-esteem encompasses all these characteristics. But it is most importantly a personal judgment of self and sense of worth primarily based upon externally imposed criteria (Alford, 1997). Externally imposed criteria include societal judgments or assumptions, family values, or perceived success and failures in various areas of life. Self-esteem is described as a personal evaluation that an individual makes of her or himself, their sense of their own worth, value, importance, or capabilities (Myers & Myers, 1992; Rosenberg & Rosenberg, 1978). It can encompass a positive or negative orientation toward oneself. Rosenberg (1965) described self-esteem as a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self. Self-esteem refers to an individual’s sense of his or her value or worth (Huit, 2004), or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1993). Self-esteem is generally defined as “a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself” (Coopersmith, 1967). According to

* Corresponding author. Tel: +98-711-6248485; fax: +98-711-6248485.
E-mail address: Hzakeri55@yahoo.com.
researches, family factors as one of the external factors influenced self-esteem. Therefore, the present study focused on parenting styles as an important external (family) factor.

Darling and Steinberg (1993) conceptualized the parenting styles as a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child, and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parents’ behaviours are expressed. According to Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling (1992) there are three styles of parenting including: “acceptance-involvement”, “psychological autonomy-granting” and “behavioral strictness-supervision”. Acceptance-involvement is based on one’s perception of amount of paying attention and responsiveness of parents; these parents are warm, firm, involved, and sensitive to their children’s changing needs, and set realistic standards and clear rules (Jaffe, 1998). Psychological autonomy-granting parenting styles refer to parent’s tolerance against children’s opinions, and they use democratic discipline in parent-child relationship also the parents don’t push their children to compliant the rules. In behavioral strictness-supervision style, parents shape, control and evaluate the behaviours and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set of standards of conduct, usually the absolute standards (Baumrind, 1996), and child is not allowed to express his opinions and there is little opportunity to think about situations or employ reasoning (Knight, et al., 2000).

Many studies suggest that the interaction between parents and children is related to children’s self-esteem (Growe, 1980; Buri, Kichner & Walsh, 1987; Felson & Zielinski, 1989; Gecas, 1971; Buri, 1989; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Klein et al., 1996). Studies suggest that parenting styles is related to self-esteem (Growe, 1980; Buri et al., 1987; Buri et al., 1988; Felson & Zielinski, 1989; Buri, 1989; Buri et al., 1992; oh, 2004). Previous studies suggested that children’s self-esteem would be positively related to permissive parenting styles (Buri et al., 1988; Buri, 1989; Kelein, et al., 1996; Park, et al., 2002). However, the results of the studies on parental authority or control and self-esteem were not consistent. While some studies found that parental control has no relationship (Gecas, 1971) or negative relationship (Growe, 1980) with self-esteem, other studies found that parental authority is positively related to self-esteem (Buri et al., 1988; Buri, 1989). Namely, DeHeart, Pelham, & Tennen (2006) examined relationship between parenting style and implicit self-esteem. The results showed that people who reported that their parents engaged in more caring behaviors would have higher implicit self-esteem and people who reported that their parents were more overprotective than most would have lower implicit self-esteem. In addition, they found that different aspects of parenting are differentially related to implicit and explicit self-esteem. Also, Growe (1980) examined the relationship between parental behavior and children’s self-esteem. Scholte et al., (2001) found that supportive parenting is positively related to self-esteem. Thus, self-esteem and parenting styles or parental behaviors are highly correlated.

The present study examined the effect of parenting styles on self-esteem. The main question of the study was which one of the parenting styles predicts the self-esteem? Also, the effect of gender variable in this relationship was examined.

2. Methods

Participants of this study were 546 Shiraz university students (240 girls and 306 boys) that selected by multi-stages cluster random sampling; from different colleges of Shiraz university. Means age of the students was 18.02 (SD=1.50).

2.1. Measures

2.1.1. Parenting style scale (Steinberg, 2005)

Steinberg’s Parenting Scale (2005) is comprised of 24 items scale and three subscales: "acceptance-involvement", "psychological autonomy-granting" and "strictness-supervision". The reliability of the measure examined by internal consistency Chronbach alpha method. Alpha coefficient for "acceptance-involvement" was 0.81, for "psychological autonomy-granting" was 0.70 and for "behavioral strictness-supervision" was 0.67. The
validity of the measure examined to factor analysis method. Result of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the validity of measure for use in Iran.

2.1.2. Coopersmith’s self-esteem scale (CSEI)

The CSEI is a 46 item scale developed by Coopersmith (1967) to measure self-esteem. It uses a five-point Likert response format ranging from one (“not true at all”) to five (“true nearly all the time”), with a total score range from 0 to 230 in present study Persian version of CSEI was used. The reliability of the measure examined by internal consistency Chronbach alpha method. Alpha coefficient for self-esteem total score was 0.89. The validity of the measure examined to factor analysis method. Result of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the validity of measure for use in Iran.

3. Results

The results revealed positive and significant correlations between "acceptance-involvement" and "psychological autonomy-granting" parenting styles and self-esteem (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Acceptance-involvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Psychological autonomy-granting</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Behavioral strictness-supervision</td>
<td>0.11**</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Self-esteem</td>
<td>0.53**</td>
<td>0.40**</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<0.05                ** p<0.001

Table1. Correlation matrix of self-esteem and parenting styles

Simultaneous multiple regression of self-esteem total score on the parenting styles subscales, revealed that the "acceptance-involvement" and "psychological autonomy-granting" styles were significant positive predictor of the self-esteem, whereas the "behavioral strictness-supervision" style didn't had a significant predict power for the self-esteem (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion Variable</th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prediction Variables</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance-involvement</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological autonomy-granting</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral strictness-supervision</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table2. Multiple regression of parenting styles on self-esteem

The results of analysis t-test showed that the mean score of girls was significantly greater than boys in the "behavioral strictness-supervision" style. However, there wasn’t significant difference between girls and boys in "acceptance-involvement" and "psychological autonomy-granting" parenting styles and self-esteem (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P&lt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance-involvement</td>
<td>25.56</td>
<td>25.04</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>N.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological autonomy-granting</td>
<td>30.44</td>
<td>30.43</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>N.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral strictness-supervision</td>
<td>14.52</td>
<td>13.12</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>134.52</td>
<td>135.42</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>N.S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table3. Comparison of girls and boys participants in study variables

4. Discussion

The results of this study support the general research pertaining to relationships between parenting style and self-esteem among adolescents (Growe, 1980; Felson & Zielinski, 1989; Buri et al., 1992; oh, 2004). Acceptance-
involvement and psychological autonomy-granting styles were significant positive predictors of the self-esteem. The parents who behave with their children based on more acceptance and less control, develop high self-esteem in their children. They are warm, supportive, and involved to their children. Hence, these parents provided to high personal evaluation and sense of self-worth in them. On the other hand, self-esteem is described as a personal evaluation that an individual makes of her or himself, their sense of their own worth, value, importance, or capabilities (Myers & Myers, 1992; Rosenberg & Rosenberg, 1978). Thus, the positive effects acceptance-involvement and psychology autonomy-granting styles on self-esteem are conformed. These findings are agreement with the researches Buri, et al., 1988; Buri, 1989; Scholte et al., 2001 and oh, 2004. In relation to gender differences, the results showed there was a significant difference between means scores of girls and boys in behavioral strictness-supervision, so that the means scores of girls is higher than boys in this style.

References


Steinberg, L. (July, 2005). Parenting Scale. Personal communication via e-mail.
