

The Influences of Parental Rearing Patterns on Psychological Entitlement among Undergraduates

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Abstracts Objective: To explore the status of undergraduates' parental rearing patterns and psychological entitlement, and analyze the relationship between the two. **Method:** Totally 768 undergraduates were selected by stratified random sampling from 5 colleges in Guangdong Province. They were investigated with the Short-Egma Minnen av Badndosna uppforstran Chinese Version (s-EMBU-C), Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES), and a self-compiled general personal information questionnaire. **Results:** The total average score of PES was (4.46±0.85), and the average scores of father's refusal, father's emotional warmth, father's overprotection, mother's refusal, mother's emotional warmth, and mother's overprotection were (1.49±0.52), (2.54±0.66), (1.96±0.45), (1.55±0.54), (2.37±0.52) and (2.35±0.55), respectively. The results of multiple linear stepwise regression analysis showed that the scores of father's overprotection, mother's refusal and mother's overprotection were positively correlated with the total score of PES ($\beta=0.134$ to 0.206 , all $P < .001$, $P < 0.001$). **Conclusion:** The psychological entitlement of college students is at a moderate level, with the father's rearing pattern that is warmer, more caring and encouraging exploration, while the mother's parenting pattern tends to be more caring, protective, and restrictive. Negative parenting patterns may be risk factors for psychological entitlement among college students.

Key Words: Undergraduates; Parental rearing patterns; Psychological entitlement; Influencing factors

I. Introduction

Psychological entitlement refers to a stable and universal subjective belief or perception of the right to receive more privileges and be exempted from social responsibility, which can manifest in different fields such as academic privilege, consumer privilege, and workplace privilege [1]. Psychological entitlement is the manifestation of a sense of power in the field of psychology, emphasizing its pathological nature, specifically referring to a subjective cognition where the benefits an individual wants to obtain are significantly higher than their actual conditions and identity. Therefore, psychological entitlement is often associated with negative outcomes. For example, in personality psychology and psychiatry, psychological entitlement is seen as one of

the characteristics of narcissism [2-3]; In social psychology and science of organizational behavior, psychological entitlement is closely related to various negative psychology and behaviors: People with high level of psychological privilege are more likely to perceive unfairness [4], are more likely to be dissatisfied with life [5], work, and salary [6], and are more likely to have a willingness to resign [7]. In addition, psychological entitlement can reduce an individual's sense of social responsibility [8-9], loyalty to their partner, and empathy [1]. It can also make individuals more inclined to engage in selfish and aggressive behavior [9], making vicious competitive choices in social dilemmas [1], and more likely to trigger interpersonal conflicts [10].

Research abroad has found that people's level of psychological entitlement is increasing year by year [11]. Compared to previous college students and young employees, the psychological entitlement level of contemporary college students and young employees has significantly increased [10, 12], indicating that contemporary youth are more likely to have some negative traits and are more likely to engage in socially maladaptive behaviors. This phenomenon has attracted the attention of researchers in fields such as psychology, sociology, ethics, and law abroad, while there is not much research on psychological entitlement in China [13-14], and empirical research is even less [15-16].

Psychological entitlement is not a natural characteristic. As an irrational belief, it is closely related to an individual's life experience. It is during the process of personal growth that individuals are given special status (such as the core position of the family) and authority (as they please, what they think is what they get). This treatment is gradually internalized by the individuals, forming a strong and deep, even subconscious concept that automatically determines the individual's thoughts and actions. Parental upbringing refers to the educational concepts, attitudes, and all language and behavior exhibited by parents when educating and nurturing their children. As a fundamental situational element and one of the important growth experiences, parental upbringing has a broad and profound impact on a child's personality and social adaptation.

In summary, we can speculate that parental parenting style has some influence on children's psychological entitlement, but there are not many related studies, and most of them use psychological entitlement as a mediating variable between parental parenting style and certain outcome variables [2, 17]. There is very little research on the mechanism of parental parenting style's effect on psychological entitlement. This study aims to explore the specific impact of parental parenting styles on psychological entitlement among college students.

II. Objects and Methods

2.1 Objects

A stratified random sampling was used to select undergraduates from one comprehensive university, one medical university, one science and engineering university, one normal university, and one junior college. A total of 820 questionnaires were distributed, and 768 valid questionnaires were collected, with an effective response rate of 93.66%. Among them, there are 355 males and 413 females; 105 students from the comprehensive university, 288 from the medical college, 166 from the science and engineering college, 77 from the normal college, and 132 from the vocational college.

2.2 Tools

2.2.1 Short-Egna Minnenav Barndoms Uppfostran, S-EMBU-C

S-EMBU-C is compiled by C Perris et al. [18], and revised by Jiang J et al. (2010) [19] into the simplified Chinese version. It is divided into father's version and mother's subscale, each containing 21 items and 3 dimensions. Therefore, the full scale is divided into 6 dimensions: Father's Rejection (FR), Father's Emotional Warmth (FEW), Father's Overprotection (FO), Mother's Rejection (MR), Mother's Emotional Warmth (MEW), and Mother's Overprotection (MO). The Likert 4-point scoring method is used to score from 1 to 4 points corresponding to "never" to "always", with question 17 being a reverse scoring. The higher the score, the more inclined parents are to adopt this type of parenting style. The highest score on a certain dimension of the father's or mother's questionnaire indicates which parenting style the individual belongs to. The parenting styles of the father and mother can be the same or different. In this study, the Cronbach's α coefficients of FR, FEW, FO, MR, MEW, MO are 0.75, 0.84, 0.87, 0.78, 0.83, and 0.90, respectively.

2.2.2 Psychological Entitlement Scale, PES

PES is compiled by Campbell et al. (2004) [1], revised by Liu Guangjian et al. [20] into Chinese version, consisting of 9 items with a single dimensional structure, used to measure the degree to which people believe they deserve more than others. The Likert 7-point scoring method is adopted to score from 1 to 7 points from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", with the 5th question scoring in reverse. The higher the total score, the higher the level of psychological entitlement. In this study, the Cronbach's α coefficient of this scale is 0.84.

2.2.3 Self-compiled general personal information questionnaire

It includes 16 items, including gender, grade, place of origin, only child status, school type, and so on.

2.3 Data processing

SPSS 20.0 software is used for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics are used to calculate the average score and standard deviation of each scale, and multiple linear stepwise regression is used to analyze the impact of parental rearing patterns on the psychological entitlement.

III. Results

3.1 Descriptive statistics

As shown in Table 1, the total score of PES, and scores of FEW, MEW, and MO in this group are at a moderate level, while those of FR, FO, and MR are at a low level [19].

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of S-EMBU-C and PES scores (n=768)

Dimension	Min	Max	M	SD	Item number	M of item	SD of item
FR	6	24	8.93	3.14	6	1.49	0.52
FEW	7	28	17.91	4.62	7	2.54	0.66
FO	8	32	15.68	3.56	6	1.96	0.45
MR	6	24	9.30	3.21	6	1.55	0.54
MEW	7	28	16.56	3.64	6	2.37	0.52
MO	8	32	18.83	4.41	6	2.35	0.55
PES	15	61	40.13	7.61	60	4.46	0.85

3.2 Analysis of the correlation between parental parenting styles and psychological entitlement

As shown in Table 2, the total score of PES in this group is significantly positively correlated with the scores of various dimensions of S-EMBU-C ($|r|=0.108$ to 0.305 , all $P<0.01$).

Table 2 Correlation between S-EMBU-C and PES scores (r)

Dimension	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.FR	1						
2.FEW	-0.216**	1					
3.FO	0.587**	-0.203**	1				
4.MR	0.799**	-0.216**	0.514**	1			
5.MEW	-0.492**	0.074*	-0.764**	-0.628**	1		
6.MO	0.220**	-0.802**	0.103**	0.272**	-0.108**	1	
7.PES	0.246**	-0.108**	0.305**	0.236**	0.280**	0.109**	1

Notes: * $P<0.05$, ** $P<0.01$

3.3 Multiple linear stepwise regression analysis of the impact of parental parenting styles on psychological entitlement

Taking the total score of PES as the dependent variable and the scores of the six dimensions of S-EMBU-C as the independent variables, a multiple linear stepwise regression was performed within a 95% confidence interval, and the results are shown in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, the scores of three dimensions in s-EMBU-C, like father's overprotection, mother's refusal, and mother's overprotection were positively correlated with the total score of PES ($\beta=.134\sim.206$, all $P<.001$).

Table 3 Multiple linear stepwise regression analysis of the impact of s-EMBU-C scores on the total score of PES

Dependent variable	Independent variables	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
PES	Constant	2.804	0.183		15.284	<0.001
	FO	0.390	0.079	0.206	4.959	<0.001
	MR	0.264	0.068	0.167	3.899	<0.001
	MO	0.205	0.057	0.134	3.612	<0.001

IV. Discussion

The scores of FEW, MEW, and MO in this group are at a moderate level, while those of FR, FO, and MR were at a low level; The scores of FR and MR were significantly higher than those of *Populus alba* [21], while the scores of FEW, MEW, FO, and MO were significantly lower than those of *Populus alba* [21] and Wang Yadan [17], which may be due to different sampling. The results of this study suggest that the parenting style of fathers is more warm, caring, and encouraging exploration, while the parenting style of mothers tends to be more caring, protective, and accommodating.

The total score of PES in this group is at the same level as the results of previous literature, but there is a trend of increasing year by year [21-23]. Compared with middle and high school students of the same period, there is also a significant increase, and there is a trend of improvement with grade [24]. The comparison of the above research results shows that the psychological entitlement of current adolescents and young students shows a trend of increasing levels of peer groups over time, while the level of non-peer groups during the same period increases with grade. This is consistent with the results of a large number of foreign studies [10, 12], indicating that there are gradually increasing obstacles to the social development of contemporary adolescents. They are more likely to have some negative traits and are more likely to engage in socially maladaptive behaviors.

The results of multiple linear stepwise regression showed that, as shown in Table 3, the scores of father's overprotection, mother's refusal, and mother's overprotection in S-EMBU-C are positively correlated with the total score of PES, consistent with the results of previous literature [25], suggesting that multiple dimensions of parental parenting styles are independent predictors of psychological entitlement in college students.

As mentioned earlier, psychological entitlement has the following characteristics. The first is believing that one should have good resources, the second is feeling that one can avoid adverse outcomes, and the third is to belittle the needs of others while elevating one's own needs and hold exaggerated expectations that will not be rewarded. These unrealistic beliefs are based on the high self-concept of "I am the best and most valuable person, and I must hold supreme status", which can be seen from the highly correlated relationship between psychological entitlement and narcissism [26]. Inappropriate parenting styles such as refusal and excessive protection can contribute to the formation of this irrational perception and enhance the level of psychological

entitlement. First, excessive parental protection can easily lead to children's excessive sense of self-worth, believing that "others need to protect me at all costs", thus generating psychological entitlement [27]. Second, if parents adopt a rejection parenting style, children are prone to not feeling the support and encouragement from their parents, the need to be respected and loved is ignored and suppressed, and unfulfilled expectations make individuals feel disappointed, self-threatening, and unfair. These negative perceptions then pose a significant threat to an individual's self-concept, enhancing their defensive self and enhancing their psychological entitlement [3]. However, this study found that only mother's refusal to enter the regression equation, while father's refusal not to enter the regression equation. The reason for this is that the mother's refusal plays a completely mediating role between the father's refusal and the psychological entitlement of college students.

Finally, a warm emotional parenting style allows children to fully feel the care from their parents, and the needs for love and a sense of belonging are largely met. At the same time, they also unconsciously internalize their parents' care and understanding as their own personality traits, empathize with others' situation, thoughts, and needs and express their warmth and care in a reasonable way, and then form a correct self-concept through reasonable interpersonal comparison. In this way, they feel less unfair treatment. So, there is no urgent need to "get another chance" or "get more", and the level of psychological entitlement is also lower. According to this reason, the emotional warmth of parents should negatively predict the psychological entitlement of college students. However, this study found that parental emotional warmth is not an independent predictor of psychological entitlement among college students. There may be a completely mediating variable between the emotional warmth of parents and the psychological entitlement, and this speculation needs further research to confirm.

V. Conclusion

This study preliminarily explores the impact of parental upbringing on the psychological entitlement of college students, and proves that "negative parental upbringing is a positive predictor of psychological entitlement for college students", providing useful reference for fields such as family upbringing and mental health education. The limitation of this study is that it is a cross-sectional study that can only prove the correlation between parental parenting styles and psychological entitlement. In the future, we need to add data from longitudinal or randomized controlled studies to reveal the causal relationship between parental parenting styles and psychological entitlement.

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