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Relationships between adolescents' memory of parental rearing styles, social values and socialisation behavior traits

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Abstract

This study explores the relationships between memories of parental-rearing (measured through the EMBU), social values and socialised behaviour traits in an adolescent population, and also the psychometric properties of a measure of social values in the adolescent population. Four hundred and eight boys and 424 girls from the general population constituted the sample. Social values were assessed by a new self-report questionnaire composed of 30 items. A previous analysis of this measure revealed a three factor structure (Benevolence, Social power, and Security) with good psychometric properties. Behaviour traits were assessed by the participants' teachers. Results show that aggressive subjects remember their parents as more rejecting, overprotective, favouring, and less warm. On the contrary, benevolent subjects were more responsible, sensitive, sociable, and their parent-rearing style was seen as warmer. Social values were moderately predicted by Emotional Warmth and Rejection.

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Keywords: Social values; Socialisation; Adolescents; Parental rearing styles; EMBU

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1. Introduction

Since the late seventies, the role of parent-rearing styles on the socialisation process has been widely investigated. Longitudinal studies by Baumrind (1968, 1971, 1991) showed that well-adjusted children were associated with a consistent, firm, warm and supportive parental style. The EMBU (Egna Minnen av Barndoms Uppfostran—My memories of upbringing; Perris, Jacobsson, Lindström, Von Knorring, & Perris, 1980) is a Swedish self-report measure of the perceptions about the rearing behaviour of parents. Arrindell, Emmelkamp, Brilman, and Monsma (1983) developed a 64-item version of the EMBU. This version had four sub-scales: Rejection, Emotional warmth, Overprotection, and Favouring subject. Different studies have shown its cross-cultural stability (Arrindell & Van der Ende, 1984; Arrindell et al., 1988; Arrindell et al., 1992). More recently, shorter versions excluding the Favouring subject scale have been adapted in several languages (Aluja, del Barrio, & García, *in press*; Arrindell et al., 1999; Winefield, Tiggemann, & Winefield, 1994).

Smith, Pope, Sanders, Allred, and O’Keeffe (1988) found relationships between parents’ beliefs and the process of socialisation in a student sample. Hostile subjects described their families as conflictive and less united. In this sense, the family environment could account for differences in hostility (Woodall & Mathews, 1989, 1993). A parental style defined by punishments and excessive control could help to develop a pattern of hostility and a lack of socialisation in children (Houston & Vavak, 1991). In this line, Meesters, Muris, and Esselink (1995) found that high hostile subjects perceived more Rejection and Overprotection, and less Emotional Warmth than low hostile subjects. Rejection was the strongest predictor of hostility. More recent studies have shown that male offenders perceived their fathers as being more rejecting than non-offenders (Palmer & Hollin, 1999). Furthermore, Palmer and Hollin (2000) stated that perceived parental Rejection and Emotional Warmth, moral reasoning and attribution of intent were significantly related to levels of self-reported delinquency among offenders. The strongest predictors of self-report delinquency scores among offenders were age, perceived paternal Emotional Warmth, and incorrect attribution of hostility among offenders. For non-offenders, self-reported delinquency was related to attribution of intent, and incorrect attribution of hostility. Delinquents with a positive family history of alcohol abuse also reported more Rejection and less Emotional Warmth (Ruchkin, Kuposov, Eisemann, & Häggelöf, 2002). Altogether, these results related parent-rearing styles with children’s socialisation processes and behaviour in adulthood.

The EMBU has been linked to Eysenck’s personality model in different countries. Rejection usually correlates positively with Neuroticism, and negatively with Extraversion. Emotional Warmth is positively related to Extraversion and negatively to Psychoticism, the contrary pattern depicted for Overprotection (Arrindell et al., 1999; Arrindell et al., 2005; Weina & Gonglin, 2002). In short, parents who are warmer and less likely to resort to punishment would bring up more emotional stable, extraverted, sociable and empathic children.

Eysenck’s personality dimensions have also been related to social values. Furnham (1984) found that extraverted subjects tend to value excitement more than introverts. Neurotics value independence, freedom from conflict, and self-esteem more than non-neurotics. Rim (1984) stated that people with higher Neuroticism scores assigned more importance to social recognition and self-respect values, while those scoring low on Neuroticism found greater value in adjectives such as ‘ambitious’ and ‘capable’. These values were also highly valued by extraverts. Introverts at-

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