

Development and Aging

Parental authority, nurturance, and two-dimensional self-esteem

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This study examined the relations of parental permissiveness, authoritarianism, and nurturance with two dimensions of self-esteem – self-liking and self-competence. In a sample of 207 two-parent families, university students and both their parents provided independent reports on all the above variables. Covariance structure analysis was used to eliminate reporter-specific bias and unreliability in predicting student self-esteem from parenting behavior. The results revealed highly redundant positive associations of mothers' and fathers' authoritarianism and nurturance with both self-liking and self-competence. The pattern of these associations suggests that the significance of parental authoritarianism for the child's self-esteem is due mainly to the nurturance it provides. Contrary to expectation, mothers' and fathers' authoritarianism was also positively associated with self-liking. As discussed, however, this is likely to be an artifact of the specific measures and testing methods used.

Key words: Parent-child relations, self-esteem, parental authority, nurturance.

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INTRODUCTION

The influence of parent-child dynamics on the development of self-esteem has long been a focus in personality research. In an early study of Connecticut preadolescents, Coopersmith (1967) found that high self-esteem was associated with "total or nearly total acceptance of the children by their parents, clearly defined and enforced limits, and the respect and latitude for individual action that exists within those defined limits" (p. 236). Rosenberg's (1965) large-scale study of New York high school students led him to the complementary conclusion that paternal indifference or lack of interest in the child was more predictive than punitiveness of low adolescent self-esteem. Around the same time, Baumrind (1966) introduced her influential typological framework for understanding parent-child relationships. Although Baumrind's original focus was on matching patterns of child behavior with those of parental authority, the *permissive*, *authoritative*, *authoritarian* (and, later, *neglectful* or *unengaged*) parenting styles she identified and explored over time have been interpreted as composites of two fundamental dimensions referred to synonymously as *acceptance/support* and *control*, *nurturance* and *discipline*, and *responsiveness* and *demandingness* (Baumrind, 1996; Locke & Prinz, 2002; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). According to Baumrind (1968, 1971, 1996), permissive parents are responsive (warm, reciprocally engaged, communicative, and affectionately attached) but not demanding (duly confrontational, monitoring, consistently and contingently disciplinary). They place few, if any, limits on their children's behavior, make minimal demands, and leave it up to children to regulate themselves. At the same time, they openly express approval and acceptance of their children, support their needs and aims, and cater to their desires and impulses. Authoritative parents are both responsive and demanding. This is reflected in the use of inductive rather than coercive control, consistent and rational rule-setting and discipline, and accommodation of the child's autonomy needs within clearly defined, communicated, and enforced limits; all within the context

of a loving and affirming attachment. Authoritarian parents are demanding but not responsive. They are forceful and punitive in imposing curbs and constraints on their children's behavior with little concern for communicating the logic of their demands. Rather, they expect an unquestioning, reflexive, and total respect for parental authority in the family and exert control over all aspects of the child's behavior. This is often communicated in a peremptory fashion that implicitly devalues the child as powerless, insignificant, burdensome, and in need of correction. Finally, neglectful or unengaged parents are neither responsive nor demanding. They are psychologically disconnected from their children's lives. This last pattern of parenting is associated with fractured, deeply dysfunctional parent-child relationships (Mandara, 2003; Shucksmith, Hendry & Glendinning, 1995) and is relatively uncommon among middle-class, two-parent families.

Baumrind's early work revealed that authoritative parenting was associated with competent and well-adjusted children. More recently, parenting defined as both responsive and demanding has been linked to secure attachment in children (Karavasilis, Doyle & Markiewicz, 2003). This points to the importance of parental authority and nurturance in the development of healthy parent-child attachment. The present study was conducted to clarify the association of parenting style with a key aspect of psychological adjustment, self-esteem. Clarification on this point is critical for understanding both the antecedents of self-esteem and the psychosocial consequences of different child-rearing practices. Of the four patterns defined above, we focused in this study on the three that have been most extensively studied and discussed and are most prevalent in the general population – permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian. The association of these parenting patterns with the child's self-esteem has been examined in a number of published studies. In those studies, authoritative parenting was found to be positively related and authoritarian parenting negatively related to self-esteem in children and adolescents (Avenevoli, Sessa & Steinberg, 1999; Bartle, Anderson & Sabatelli, 1989; Buri, 1989; Buri, Louiselle, Misukanis & Mueller, 1988;

Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991; McClun & Merrell, 1998). Two limitations of this past work, however, suggest that the issue is worth re-examining.

The first limitation relates to the almost exclusive reliance on respondents' current or retrospective perceptions of the behavior of their parents. This strategy inevitably conflates objective aspects of parenting with children's attributions and interpretations of family dynamics and revision of their narrative history. Insofar as the intentions and actions of others, including parents, are understood in a manner that is congruent with self-esteem (Tafarodi, 1998; Tafarodi, Marshall & Milne, 2003), the resulting association between child-reported parenting and self-esteem may be inflated due to reverse causality. Consistent with this reasoning, assessments of parenting style based on parent rather than child reports have been more weakly predictive of the child's self-esteem (Barber, 1990; Barber, Chadwick & Oerter, 1992; Buri, 1989; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986). Of course, this difference may be due as much to invalidity of parent as child reports, where invalidity is defined as departure from systematic and objective extra-familial assessment. A multiple-indicator approach that utilizes the commonality of child and parent reports would provide a marked advantage in this context. Such an approach would not safeguard against sources of invalidity shared by members of the same family, but would eliminate the unique bias and fallibility of each family member. This would be of great benefit to researchers interested primarily in the intersubjective significance of parental *behavior*.

The second limitation pertains to the conceptualization and measurement of self-esteem. With a few notable exceptions (Barber, 1990; Barber, Chadwick, and Oerter 1992; Gecas, 1971, 1972; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1986; Openshaw, Thomas & Rollins, 1984), researchers exploring the relation of parental support and control to child adjustment have interpreted self-esteem as a unidimensional, undifferentiated construct. This is unfortunate, as the benefits of recognizing global self-esteem as a composite of moral and agentic value are becoming increasingly apparent in social and personality psychology. This two-dimensional approach to self-esteem (Tafarodi & Ho, 2006; Tafarodi & Milne, 2002; Tafarodi & Swann, 1995, 2001) is premised on the duality of persons as both social objects and agents. As social objects, we hold moral significance to ourselves and others; as agents, we exert influence upon the world according to our intentions. Moral consideration pertains to character or disposition and trades on discriminations of good and bad, credit and blame, virtue and defect, attraction and repulsion. The immediate self-value that derives from agency, in contrast, does not require moral reflection. Rather, it extends from the biologically rooted satisfaction of successful action, and generates the inherently positive experience of oneself as strong, healthy, effective, powerful, and competent (White, 1959). Empirical investigation of these two interdependent dimensions of self-esteem – *self-liking* and *self-competence* (Tafarodi & Swann, 1995) – has revealed divergent as well as symmetrical associations, highlighting the importance of distinguishing them in theory and research (see Tafarodi & Ho, 2006). These findings point to the need for a clarified account of parenting patterns and self-esteem that speaks separately to both dimensions.

In the present study, we addressed the above concerns by measuring parental permissiveness, authoritativeness, authoritarianism,

and nurturance (i.e., support, acceptance, responsiveness) in triadic fashion, collecting independent but parallel retrospective reports about the behavior of mothers and fathers from university students and both their parents. Similarly, the students' self-esteem – differentiated as self-liking and self-competence – was independently reported by all three family members. This multiple-indicator approach permitted the testing of latent-structure associations of parenting patterns with self-esteem. These associations were effectively corrected for reporter-specific bias and unreliability.

The fourth parenting dimension, nurturance, was included to examine its degree of redundancy with the three authority patterns in the prediction of self-esteem. This allowed us to address the possibility that one or more authority patterns were associated with self-esteem only because of the amount of emotional warmth, approval, and support implicit in their definition. Recall that authority patterns have been conceived as composites of nurturance and discipline. Few today would dispute the claim that the nurturance of loving parents promotes the self-esteem of their children. To confirm the importance of the disciplinary component of parental authority patterns for self-esteem, it is necessary to find a predictive association while controlling for simple nurturance.

Baumrind's long-sustained arguments concerning the benefits of authoritative parenting for the development of autonomy, individuation, self-reliance, and efficacy in childhood and adolescence suggest a positive association with self-competence. The stifling of the same by authoritarian parenting suggests a negative association. On the other hand, the approval and interest that is partly defining of authoritative parenting, and the devaluation and rejection of the child that too often goes along with authoritarian parenting, suggest positive and negative associations, respectively, with self-liking. Thus, both dimensions of self-esteem are implicated in Baumrind's account, and in parallel fashion. The form and strength of these expected relations were examined in this research. The significance of permissiveness for self-esteem was also examined, despite the lack of any clear-cut theoretical relation between the two constructs.

Overview

A sample of university students and their parents provided separate reports of the student's self-esteem and each parent's style of authority and level of nurturance while the student was growing up at home. The three independent reports (child, mother, father) were modeled as multiple indicators of self-liking, self-competence, permissiveness, authoritativeness, authoritarianism, and nurturance to gauge the associations among the latent constructs.

METHOD

Participants

Participants in the study were 446 students (257 women and 189 men) and their parents. The students were enrolled in an introductory psychology course at the University of Toronto. The modal age was 19 with a range of 17 to 24. We sought to include only those parents who knew their children well enough to provide meaningful reports of the latter's self-esteem. Furthermore, we decided to limit the study to those families where *both* parents were present during the child's formative years and therefore had full opportunity to influence the child's self-esteem.

Accordingly, recruitment was restricted to students who had lived with both parents from 4 to 16 years of age (childhood to mid-adolescence). The composition of the sample in terms of ethnic origins was 56% European, 21% East and Southeast Asian, 7% South Asian, and <3% for all other categories.¹

Students participated in exchange for course credit. Credit was granted irrespective of the parents' willingness to participate without compensation. Student participants were tested in small groups of 2-10. They completed a number of self-report measures, three of which are relevant here.

Measures

Self-Liking/Self-Competence Scale-Revised (SLCS-R; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). The SLCS-R is a 16-item self-report measure of self-liking (SL) and self-competence (SC) designed as an alternative to unidimensional measures such as Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale (see Tafarodi & Ho, 2006; Tafarodi & Milne, 2002). The instrument consists of simple first-person statements reflecting high and low SL (e.g., *I am secure in my sense of self-worth; I do not have enough respect for myself*) and SC (e.g., *I am highly effective at the things I do; I wish I were more skillful in my activities*). Respondents indicate their agreement with the statements using a five-point Likert scale anchored with *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*. Ratings are summed to produce separate SL and SC scores. The scores are moderately correlated ($r = 0.58$), consistent with the theoretical interdependence of the two dimensions. Despite this overlap, the two dimensions have shown divergent patterns of unique relations to memory (Tafarodi et al., 2003), negative life events (Tafarodi & Milne, 2002), word recognition (Tafarodi & Milne, 2002), and cultural background (Tafarodi, Lang & Smith, 1999; Tafarodi & Swann, 1996; Tafarodi & Walters, 1999). These findings demonstrate the heuristic advantage of distinguishing the two dimensions in theory and measurement. Notably, SL and SC account for virtually all the true-score variance of Rosenberg's SES ($R^2 = 0.83$, uncorrected for reliability), with each dimension *independently* accounting for a sizable share (Tafarodi & Milne, 2002). This pattern reinforces our claim that the SES is inadvertently measuring two substantively distinct aspects of self-esteem. The SLCS-R is psychometrically sound, with adequate reliability and discriminant and convergent validity (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001).

Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, Louiselle, Misukanis, and Mueller 1988). The PAQ is a 30-item measure of parental authority or control based closely on Baumrind's (1966, 1968, 1971) three original patterns or types – permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian. Each pattern is represented by ten first-person statements describing behavioral tendencies that reflect that style of exercising parental control. The statements refer to past behavior, forcing respondents to retrospect on their parents' behavior "when I was growing up" (specified in the present study as 4–16 years of age). Respondents indicate their agreement with the statements using a five-point Likert scale anchored with *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*. The series of statements appears twice, once in reference to the respondent's mother and again in reference to the respondent's father. Ratings are summed to produce separate permissiveness (P), authoritativeness (Av), and authoritarianism (Ar) scores for each parent. Sample statements are: *As I was growing up, my mother/father allowed me to decide most things for myself* (permissive); *My mother/father always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable* (authoritative); and *As I was growing up, my mother/father did not allow me to question decisions she/he had made* (authoritarian). The reliability and validity of the PAQ have been shown to be adequate (Buri, 1991; Reitman, Rhode, Hupp & Altobello, 2002). Inter-score correlations are -0.48 and -0.52 for mothers and fathers, respectively, for authoritativeness and authoritarianism, and -0.38 and -0.50 for permissiveness and authoritarianism. Permissiveness and authoritativeness are not significantly correlated for either parent (Buri, 1991).

Parental Nurture Scale (PNS; Buri, 1989). The PNS is a 24-item measure that is parallel in format to the PAQ, but focuses instead on

maternal and paternal nurturance (N), represented as expressions of warmth, caring, and support for the child. Sample statements are: *My mother/father expressed her warmth and affection for me; My mother/father was generally cold and removed when I was with her/him* (reverse-scored). The retrospective period was specified as above. The reliability and validity of the PNS have been shown to be satisfactory (Buri, 1989).

Procedure

After completing the measures, participants provided their parents' mailing addresses. Materials were mailed to mothers and fathers, inviting them to participate in a study of parent-child relations. Those who chose to do so were instructed to fill out the questionnaire *independent* of both their spouse and their child (the student). Parents' measures were parallel to those completed by the students, but with the SLCS-R items modified to refer to the student (e.g., *My child is secure in his/her sense of self-worth*) and the PAQ and PNS modified to refer to parents and their spouses (e.g., *As my child was growing up, I allowed him/her to decide most things for himself/herself; As my child was growing up, my husband/wife allowed him/her to decide most things for himself/herself*). The decision to employ parents as reporters of their child's self-esteem was justified by the intimate knowledge they can be assumed to have of their child's self-identity. Self-esteem is expressed as much in patterns of task engagement and social behavior as in public statements and private judgments of personal worth. Parents are ideally situated to observe these patterns and interpret the intentionality behind them. The alternative of relying solely on self-reported self-esteem would have done nothing to control the performative distortions that corrupt the reporting of socially desirable personal characteristics (Paulhus, 2002).

The retrospective period for the parents' questionnaire was specified as it had been for students. Anonymity was ensured through use of numerical coding rather than identifying information to match student and parent responses. Postage-paid return envelopes were included and reminder letters were mailed out to encourage participation.

RESULTS

Preliminary analyses

Fully completed packages were returned by 52% of mothers and 50% of fathers. Mother-father-child matching produced complete data for 207 families (117 female and 90 male students), or 46% of the original sample. The response rate was similar for male and female students, $\chi^2(1) = 0.19, p = 0.66$. The sample was screened for univariate outliers on the variables analyzed below. None were found.

Although the complete return rate was respectable for a study of this kind, we examined the possibility of differential response patterns for students whose parents did versus did not both respond. A return (yes vs. no) \times gender MANOVA was conducted on the student's SL, SC, P-mother, Av-mother, Ar-mother, N-mother, P-father, Av-father, Ar-father, and N-father scores. The multivariate main effect for return was small but significant ($\alpha = 0.05$), Wilks's $\Lambda = 0.95, F(10, 433) = 2.23, p = 0.02$, and did not interact with gender, $p = 0.48$. Univariate analyses revealed that the effect was due to the tendency of students with non-responding parents to rate their fathers as slightly more authoritarian than did students with responding parents (average item agreement of 2.86 vs. 2.63 on the five-point scale), $F(1, 442) = 10.00, p = 0.002$. No other variables contributed significantly to the multivariate effect. The observed difference suggests, unsurprisingly, that authoritarian fathers were somewhat more

reluctant to participate in the study. However, the small magnitude of the difference and its singularity in the analysis provides support for the broader representativeness of the final sample.

The internal consistency of the ten scales was examined separately for students', mothers', and fathers' responses. Cronbach's (1951) α ranged from 0.76 to 0.97 for students, 0.77 to 0.95 for mothers, and 0.70 to 0.93 for fathers, indicating acceptable reliability for all scales.

A minimal prerequisite for defining multiple reports of the same dimension as congeneric indicators in a measurement model is that the reports correlate significantly with each other. All three intercorrelations were significantly positive for all ten dimensions: SL ($r_s = 0.33-0.52$), SC (0.37-0.52), P-mother (0.20-0.37), Av-mother (0.22-0.29), Ar-mother (0.32-0.45), N-mother (0.41-0.43), P-father (0.24-0.47), Av-father (0.15-0.49), Ar-father (0.23-0.46), and N-father (0.40-0.45). This justified specification and testing of the models described below.

Modeling strategy

Model testing was conducted in two steps. First, measurement models were specified to confirm the validity of (a) our multiple-reporter approach to gauging parental authority and nurturance, and (b) our decision to distinguish self-liking and self-competence in the analyses that followed. Second, structural models were specified to examine the associations of parental authority and nurturance with self-liking and self-competence. As part of this structural analysis, various paths were eliminated to create modified models that served to clarify the association of a specific parental authority variable with self-liking or self-competence. At both steps – measurement and structural modeling – separate models were specified for mothers and fathers to accommodate the possibility of distinct associated profiles for each parent.

Measurement models

The adequacy of the three-reporter measurement models was gauged separately for mother's authority and nurturance, father's authority and nurturance, and child's self-esteem. Marsh and Bailey (1991) have recommended the use of correlated errors rather than explicit factors to represent method factors in multitrait-multimethod models due to the tendency of the former to produce fewer improper solutions and more accurate parameter estimates.² Method (reporter) factors were therefore represented in all models as correlated errors across child's reports, mother's reports, and father's reports of the various latent dimensions.

The sample distributions were clearly non-normal (i.e., $|\text{skewness}| > 1$ and/or $\text{kurtosis} > 1$) for one or more indicators of SL,

N-mother, N-father, and Av-mother. We therefore relied on maximum-likelihood (ML) estimation with Satorra-Bentler (1994) "robust" statistics. The Satorra-Bentler statistics are adjusted in proportion to sample non-normality and appear to perform nearly as well in moderate-size samples as do newer test statistics based on either ML or Browne's (1984) asymptotically distribution-free (ADF) estimator (Bentler & Yuan, 1999; Yuan & Bentler, 1998, 1999). Model specification and testing was conducted using EQS 6.1. The model fit indices were: the χ^2 test statistic, Satorra-Bentler's scaled (non-normality-adjusted) χ^2 (S-B χ^2), the robust Comparative Fit Index (RCFI; Bentler, 1995), the Root Mean Squared Error Approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1990), and the consistent version of Akaike's (1987) information criterion (CAIC; Bozdogan, 1987). Lower values indicate better fit for all indices other than RCFI, where higher values indicate better fit. One observation (family) was eliminated from the sample due to a discontinuously large contribution to multivariate kurtosis across the models tested below.

For the measurement model of mother's authority and nurturance, P-mother, Av-mother, Ar-mother, N-mother were specified as latent variables with three indicators each (child's, father's, and mother's reports). All 6 covariances among the latent variables were freely estimated as were all 18 error covariances for indicators from the same reporter. The model showed very good fit with the data (RCFI = 0.99; see Table 1 for other indices). All factor loadings were positive and significant, as expected. Only two factor intercorrelations were significant: Av-mother and N-mother = 0.73; Ar-mother and N-mother = -0.24). The first of these was high enough to warrant testing of discriminant validity at factor level. This was conducted by constraining the correlation to unity and testing the resulting decrement in fit using the Lagrange multiplier method. The decrement was clearly significant, $\chi^2(1) = 18.62$, $p < 0.0001$, indicating that the high correlation of authoritativeness and nurturance in the model reflects only partial redundancy. In other words, consistent with its typological formulation, authoritativeness is more than high nurturance. As to the reporter (method) factors, 8 of the 18 error covariances were not significant and were therefore eliminated from the model along with the 4 non-significant factor intercorrelations. The reduced measurement model and final parameter estimates appear in Fig. 1. The five negative error covariances all involved authoritarianism, the only clearly negative dimension in the model. This suggests that reporter-specific bias in the rating of authoritarianism is inversely associated with bias in rating the three more positive dimensions, as would be expected.

A parallel measurement model was specified for father's authority and nurturance. Again, the model fit the data very well (RCFI = 0.98; see Table 1 for other indices). All factor loadings

Table 1. Goodness-of-fit for measurement models

Model	df	χ^2	S-B χ^2	RCFI	RMSEA	CAIC
Mother's authority and nurturance	30	38	38	0.99	0.04 (0.00-0.07)	-152
Father's authority and nurturance	30	41	42	0.98	0.05 (0.00-0.07)	-147
Child's self-esteem	5	2	2	0.99	0.00 (0.00-0.04)	-30

Notes: S-B χ^2 = Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 ; RCFI = robust Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Squared Error Approximation (90% confidence interval appears in parentheses); CAIC = consistent version of Akaike's Information Criterion.

were positive and significant. Four of the six factor intercorrelations were significant: Av-father and N-father = 0.78; Ar-father and N-father = -0.48; Av-father and Ar-father = -0.53; P-father and Ar-father = -0.35. Of these, only the first was high enough to warrant testing of discriminant validity. As before, constraining the correlation to unity decreased fit significantly, Lagrange multiplier $\chi^2(1) = 32.30$, $p < 0.0001$. This result again indicates only partial redundancy and supports the separation of authoritative-ness and nurturance in the model. Eleven of the eighteen error covariances were not significant and were therefore eliminated from the model along with the two non-significant factor intercorrelations. The reduced measurement model and final parameter estimates appear in Fig. 2. As before, all negative error covariances involved authoritarianism.

Finally, a self-esteem measurement model was specified with SL and SC as correlated latent variables with three indicators each (child's, father's, and mother's reports). The three same-reporter error covariances were freely estimated to represent method (reporter) factors. This model provided excellent fit with the data (RCFI = 0.99; see Table 1 for other indices) with all parameter estimates positive and significant (Fig. 3). Consistent with theory and previous results (Tafarodi & Milne, 2002; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001), the latent factor intercorrelation was quite high at 0.88. Again, however, constraint testing confirmed that the shared variance reflected only partial redundancy, Lagrange multiplier $\chi^2(1) = 22.33$, $p < 0.0001$. This result supported the differentiation of global self-esteem in the model.

Structural models

Because latent SL and SC were so highly correlated, their associations with the parenting variables were examined separately using four parallel structural models. In the first, the SL portion of the self-esteem measurement model was incorporated into the final

measurement model for mother's authority and nurturance. Twelve same-reporter error covariances were added to extend the method factors across indicators of SL and mother's parenting. SL was redefined as an endogenous variable simultaneously predicted by latent P-mother, Av-mother, Ar-mother, and N-mother. Estimation of this model revealed that seven of the new error covariances were not significant. These were dropped from the model. Only one of the remaining five was negative and it involved authoritarianism as expected. The purpose of model estimation here was not to gauge overall fit, which was reflected in the measurement models already tested. Rather, we were exclusively interested in the significance of the four predictors. The results revealed that only Ar-mother was significantly associated with SL independent of the three other dimensions (see Fig. 4a for path estimates). The path from Ar-mother was positive, contrary to expectation. We were concerned that the high correlation of Av-mother and N-mother might have left both these latent variables with too little residualized, unique variance to contribute to simultaneous prediction despite their considerable common or shared association with SL. To examine this possibility, the path from N-mother to SL was dropped from the model to eliminate the former's predictive redundancy with Av-mother. As suspected, Av-mother now emerged as a significant positive predictor of SL (standardized path coefficient = 0.43) alongside Ar-mother. Likewise, when the path from Av-mother, instead of N-mother, was dropped from the model, N-mother emerged as a significant positive predictor (0.41) alongside Ar-mother. This pattern of results suggests that the association of mother's authoritative-ness with self-liking is due mainly to the nurturance component of the former. (It would make much less sense to argue that simple nurturance entails authoritative-ness than to recognize that the composite of authoritative-ness is defined in part by nurturance.)

The second structural model was created by substituting SC for SL in the first model. The results revealed that 9 of the 12 error

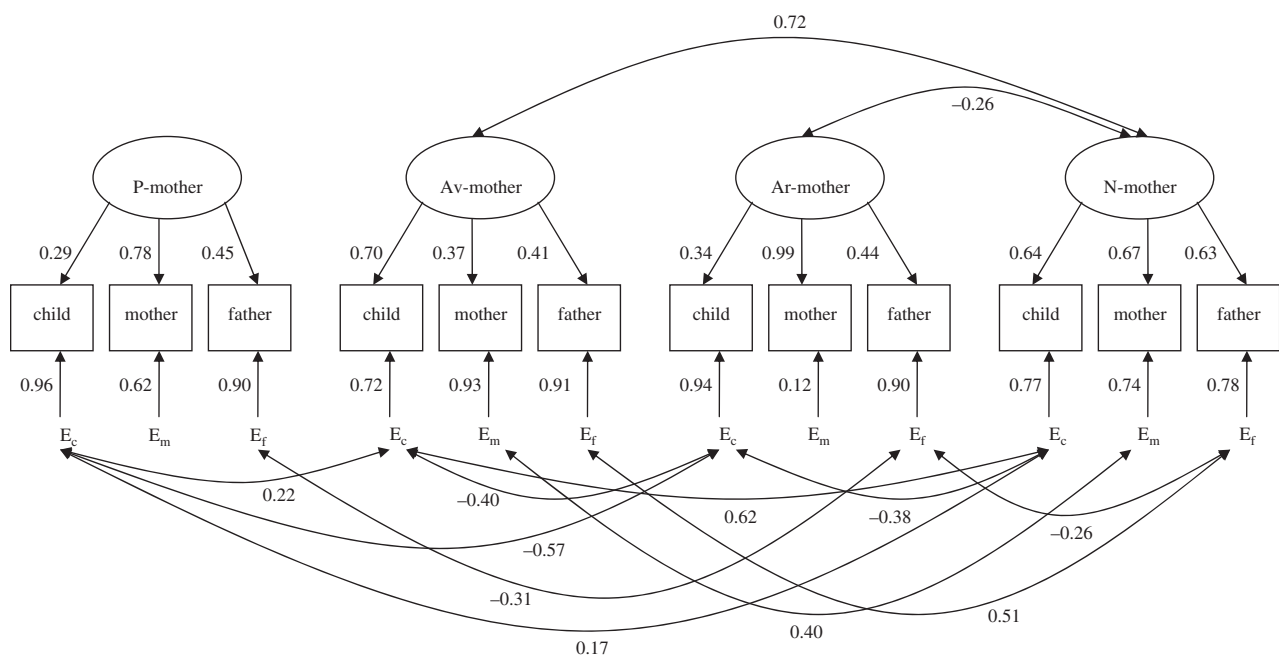


Fig. 1. Final measurement model for mother's authority and nurturance. P = permissiveness; Av = authoritative-ness; Ar = authoritarianism; N = nurturance; E = error/unique-ness. Parameter estimates are standardized. All factor loadings and covariances are significant at $p < 0.05$.

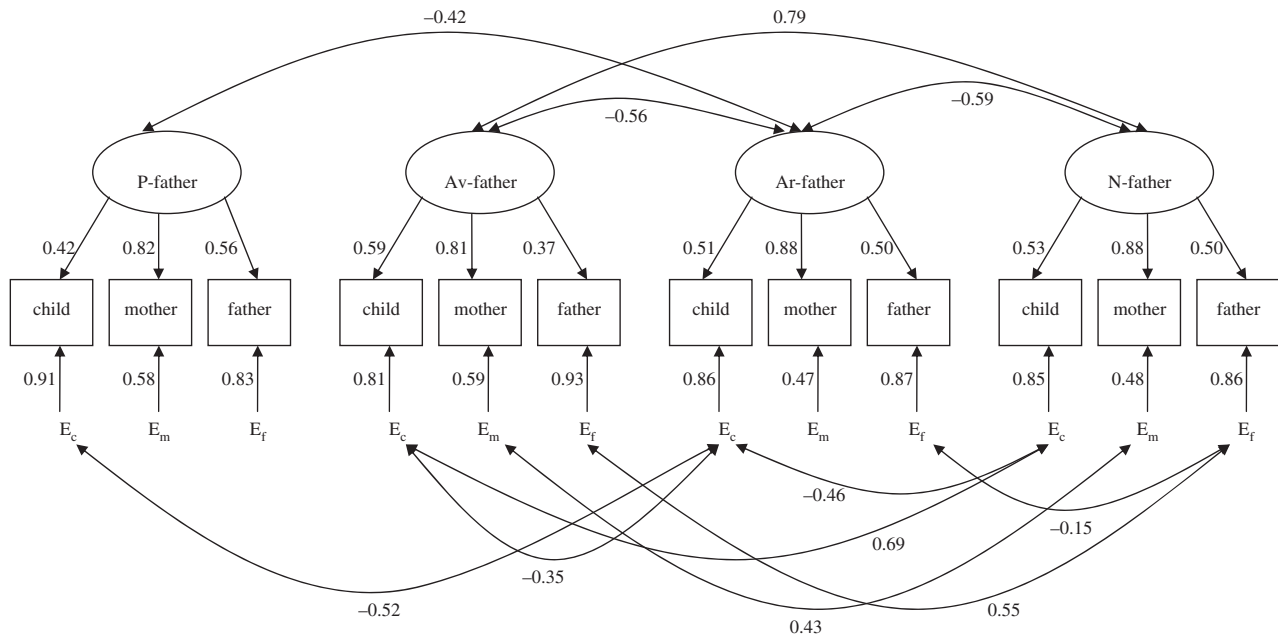


Fig. 2. Final measurement model for father's authority and nurturance. P = permissiveness; Av = authoritativeness; Ar = authoritarianism; N = nurturance; E = error/uniqueness. Parameter estimates are standardized. All factor loadings and covariances are significant at $p < 0.05$.

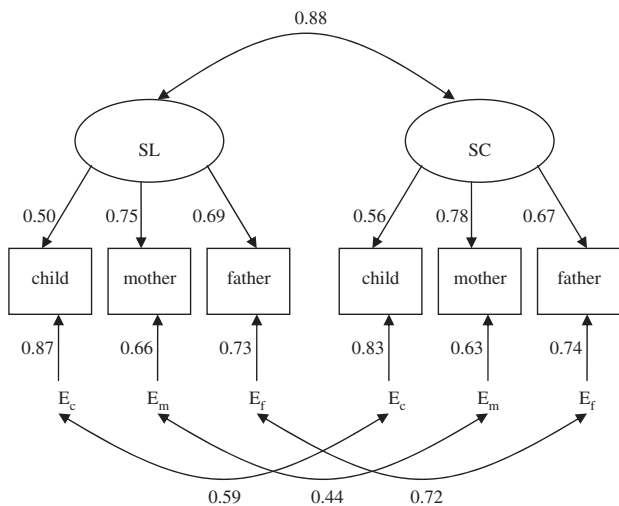


Fig. 3. Final measurement model for child's self-esteem. SL = self-liking; SC = self-competence; E = error/uniqueness. Parameter estimates are standardized. All factor loadings and covariances are significant at $p < 0.05$.

covariances added to extend the method factors across indicators of SC and mother's parenting were not significant. These were dropped. The remaining three did not involve authoritarianism and were all positive as expected. None of the four parenting dimensions was independently associated with SC (Fig. 4b). As before, however, eliminating the path from N-mother to SC transformed Av-mother into a significant positive predictor (0.33). Similarly, N-mother became a significant positive predictor (0.31) when the path from Av-mother was dropped instead. Echoing the results for self-liking, this pattern suggests an association of mother's authoritativeness with self-competence that is based mainly on nurturance.

Parallel structural models were tested to examine the association of father's authority and nurturance with self-esteem. For the SL model, 6 of the 12 added error covariances were dropped because of non-significance. Only one of the remaining six was negative and it was the only one involving authoritarianism. When P-father, Av-father, Ar-father, and N-father were modeled as simultaneous predictors of SL, only the paths from Ar-father and N-father were significant (Fig. 4c). Both paths were positive. When the path from N-father was dropped from the model, the positive path from Av-father rose to significance (0.49) alongside Ar-father. The asymmetry in this pattern, with the partial redundancy of father's authoritativeness and nurturance reducing the former but not the latter to non-significance in their simultaneous prediction of SL, supports the inference that the association of parental authoritativeness with the child's self-esteem is due primarily to the nurturance provided by authoritativeness.

With SC instead of SL in the model, 7 of the 12 added error covariances were dropped because of non-significance. Only one of the remaining five was negative and it was the only one involving authoritarianism. Mirroring the results for mother's parenting, none of the four father's variables was independently significant in simultaneous prediction (Fig. 4d). However, Av-father emerged as significant (0.35) when the path from N-father was dropped, and vice versa (0.39), again highlighting the central importance of nurturance for the relation of authoritativeness with self-esteem.

Across models, the four dimensions jointly accounted for more variance in SL than SC: $R^2 = 0.23$ and 0.19 for mother's and father's parenting predicting SL, and $R^2 = 0.13$ and 0.14 for mother's and father's parenting predicting SC.

Finally, we examined the possibility that the paths from parenting to self-esteem differed for male and female students. This was accomplished by conducting multi-group analyses with imposed equality constraints across male and female sub-samples.

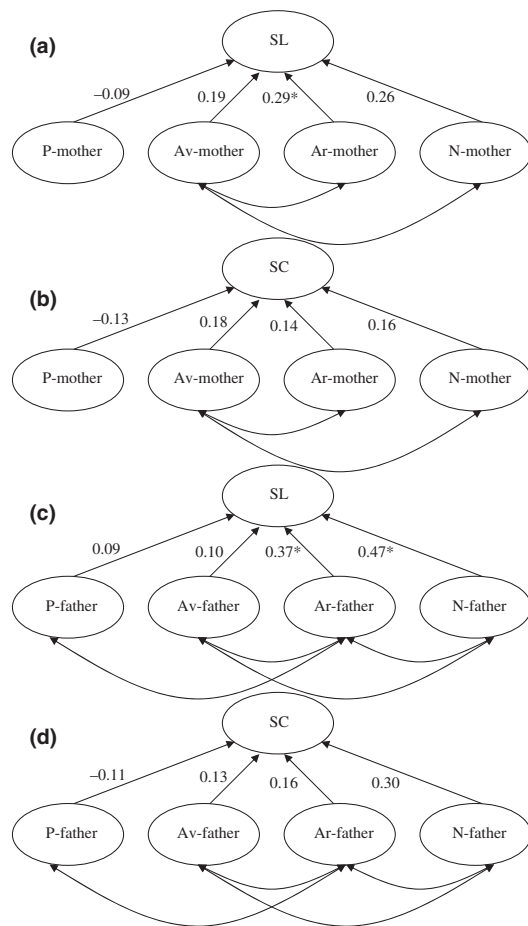


Fig. 4. Structural models for mother's and father's authority and nurturance predicting child's self-liking and self-competence. SL = self-liking; SC = self-competence; P = permissiveness; Av = authoritarianism; Ar = authoritarianism; N = nurturance. Path coefficients are standardized; paths significant at $p < 0.05$ are marked with an asterisk.

Lagrange multiplier tests revealed no significant gender differences for any of the four paths in any of the four structural models.

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to clarify the associations of permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian parenting with the self-esteem of young adults (university students). The inherent fallibility of retrospection and other sources of measurement bias and unreliability were minimized by "triangulating" on the past behavior of parents and the self-esteem of their children. This was accomplished through the use of multiple reports and analysis of latent structure. The correlations across child, mother, and father reports of the same dimensions were consistently significant but modest overall. This highlights the divergent perspectives of each member of the family triad and points to the corresponding need for enhanced measurement validity. Parental nurturance was measured alongside the three patterns of parental authority to help interpret the associations of the latter with self-esteem. Finally, global self-esteem was differentiated as self-liking and self-competence to permit a more refined, "unpacked" structural analysis.

The measurement models for child's self-esteem and mother's and father's parenting supported the validity of the multi-reporter framework and confirmed the discriminability of all ten dimensions included in the models. Tests of structural paths revealed that mother's and father's authoritarianism, authoritativeness, and nurturance were all positively associated with the child's self-liking. However, in the case of mother's parenting, the considerable redundancy of authoritativeness and nurturance reduced their independent associations to non-significance when both were included as predictors in the same model. In the case of father's parenting, the association of nurturance was significant independent of authoritativeness, but not vice versa. Whereas the association of parental authoritativeness was expected, the *positive* association of both mother's and father's authoritarianism was rather surprising. Might this have been the result of residualization on the other predictors (Tzelgov & Henik, 1991)? In the case of mother's parenting, no. Supplementary model testing revealed that the positive path from mother's authoritarianism remained significant even when paths from the three other parenting dimensions were all dropped from the model. In the case of father's parenting, however, authoritarianism was not significant as a sole predictor. Nor was it significant alongside only permissiveness. These additional results reveal that the significant negative correlations of father's authoritarianism with authoritativeness and nurturance were responsible for the emergence of father's authoritarianism as a positive predictor of self-liking. That is, father's authoritarianism was associated with self-liking only when either authoritativeness or nurturance was effectively held constant. Given ample indications that the nurturance component of authoritativeness was responsible for its association with self-liking, the combined pattern of results suggests that only that part of father's authoritarianism that is unrelated to lack of nurturance is positively associated with the child's self-liking. This part is interpretable as harsh and uncompromising control that is (somehow) not rejecting or contemptuous of the child. If so, this renders the positive association somewhat less puzzling. Still, the same reasoning cannot be extended to mother's authoritarianism, which was a significant positive predictor even on its own.

There is further justification for not taking the positive association of authoritarianism with self-liking at face value. The absolute level of this pattern of parental authority in the sample was quite low. Specifically, the mean item rating, averaged across reporters, was 2.60 for mother's authoritarianism and 2.62 for father's authoritarianism, both clearly below the midpoint of the five-point agreement scale. Thus, the continuous association of authoritarianism with self-liking emerged within an overall range of "weak" authoritarianism. Such an association cannot be safely extrapolated to higher and potentially more damaging levels of authoritarianism. In this regard, it is perhaps important to differentiate forms of authoritarian control and their consequences. Barber (2002; Barber & Harmon, 2002) has recently reprised the distinction between *behavioral* and *psychological* control in parent-child relations (Schaefer, 1965; Steinberg, 1990). Behavioral control involves regulation of the child's actions. Psychological control, on the other hand, is defined as "intrusive" parenting that impedes normal identity development by constraining what the child can feel, believe, and take an interest in. Hostility often underlies psychological control, which is typically measured as

the frequency and intensity of behaviors such as teasing and derogation, guilt induction, shaming, invalidation of feelings, constraining of expression, and love withdrawal (Walling, Mills & Freeman, 2007). Barber's comprehensive review of the literature suggests that psychological but not behavioral control is associated with negative child outcomes, and, further, that authoritarian parenting is deleterious insofar as it involves psychological rather than behavioral control. This helps shed light on the present findings. A close examination of the ten PAQ authoritarianism items used here reveals that six refer to expecting the child to act as the parent asks, three to the use of punishment, and one to respect for the parent's authority. None clearly describes the use of psychological control, which might therefore explain the absence of negative association with self-liking. Furthermore, insofar as PAQ-measured authoritarianism reduces to harsh behavioral control or demandingness, its *positive* association with self-liking would not be especially puzzling in light of Baumrind's (1996) arguments about the negative developmental consequences of low demandingness. By failing to reflect the darker side of authoritarianism, identified by Barber as coercive psychological control, the PAQ may have produced a spuriously positive relation of this dimension with self-liking.

The pattern of associations of parenting with self-competence differed somewhat from the results for self-liking. This underscores the importance of distinguishing the two aspects of self-esteem in examining their correlates. Most notably, authoritarianism was not associated with self-competence. Only mother's and father's authoritative and nurturance were positively associated with this dimension of the child's self-esteem. However, the mutual redundancy of the two variables in simultaneous prediction points to nurturance as the operative dimension of authoritative parenting for self-competence. This would suggest that it is the warmth, support, affirmation, and interest shown in the child by authoritative parents that contributes to the child's evaluative sense of being a capable and efficacious agent, just as it does for the child's sense of social worth. The mediators of this link, which are likely to differ for the two dimensions of self-esteem, remain to be explored.

The relevance of parenting patterns for self-esteem, although clearly confirmed in this study, should not be overstated. Recall that the four-dimension parenting profile examined here accounted for a maximum of 23% (mother's parenting predicting self-liking) and a minimum of 13% (mother's parenting predicting self-competence) of variance on either dimension of self-esteem. That leaves most of both unexplained. Clearly, there is much that determines self-esteem beyond the authority style and nurturance of parents. Furthermore, the self-esteem of the child may elicit and encourage particular parenting practices as much or more than it is determined by them (Felson & Zielinski, 1989; Maccoby, 2002). This potential reciprocity demands due restraint in drawing causal significance from these correlational findings without longitudinal clarification.

The findings are also sure to reflect the ethnocultural characteristics of the participants. Most of the Canadian sample was of European ethnic origin, leaving open the possibility of dissimilar associations for other populations. Chao (2001), for example, found that authoritative parenting does not hold the same benefits for Asian Americans as for European Americans. Such differences

caution against making broad inferences that refer beyond the ethnic and cultural profile of the families examined.

Finally, it should be noted that roughly similar associations with self-esteem were found for mother's and father's parenting in this study. This was true in relation to both the pattern and the magnitude of associations. An even closer symmetry held in comparing the results for male and female students in the sample. Insofar as these associations are shown in further research to correspond to temporally traceable parental influences on the emergence and development of self-esteem, they suggest that fathers are as important as mothers in shaping their children's sense of personal value, and as much for their daughters as their sons. Such parity would indicate both equal power and equal responsibility.

In summary, the findings of this study are consistent with the claim that authoritative parenting supports the growth of both dimensions of self-esteem. The findings also indicate that the benefits of authoritative parenting for the child's self-esteem may be due mainly to the nurturance it provides. Surprisingly, authoritarian parenting also emerged as a positive predictor of the self-liking dimension of self-esteem. However, the limitations of how authoritarianism was measured and tested alongside other variables in this study invite further investigation before any clear inferences can be drawn about the significance of this parenting style for self-esteem.

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NOTES

¹ Due to changes in standard demographic data collected from students across academic terms, ethnic origins data were available for only half the sample.

² Marsh (1993) further recommends the use of two-tiered factor models in assessing multitrait-multimethod data. Specifically, trait-method units are defined as first-order factors, each with multiple indicators (scale items or item parcels). Traits and methods are then defined as second-order factors inferred from the first-order factors. In application to multiple-reporter data, this strategy improves assessment of convergent validity by accounting for autocorrelated error variances across reporters for the same items or item parcels. We therefore conducted supplementary, two-tiered model testing for all three measurement models, using three item parcels to represent each trait-method unit. Very few estimated autocorrelations were significant in any of the models, suggesting little advantage of this approach for these particular data. Given the hazards of estimating complex models in samples of modest size, the general lack of autocorrelation justified reliance on the standard, single-tiered factor structure (Widaman, 1985).

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