Perceived influence of parenting styles on the body esteem of male students at the University of the Witwatersrand

By
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A research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MA by coursework and Research Report in the field of Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2010.
Declaration

“I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university”

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Z. DUBAZANA

------------ Day of -------------------------, 2010
Abstract

This study set out to examine the perceived influence of parenting styles on the body esteem of male students at the University of the Witwatersrand. Ninety eight first year male students in the age range of 18-22 years, from the medical faculty at the University of the Witwatersrand enrolled in psychology participated in the study. Four scales were administered: a demographic questionnaire, the Body Esteem Scale, the Parental Authority Questionnaire, and Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale. The results indicate that there is no significant correlation between perceived paternal and maternal parenting styles and the body esteem and self-esteem, respectively of the male students. There are no self-esteem and body esteem differences according to race. The tripartite theory suggests that a combination of peers, parents and media have some level of influence on body esteem and self esteem perceptions (Shroff & Thompson, 2005). The theory suggests that tripartite influential factors play a different role at different times of an individual’s life (Thompson, Coovert & Storner, 1999). Parents play a crucial role at the pre-adolescent stage; peers are more influential at the adolescent stage and the media is more influential at the early adulthood stage (Levine & Harrison, 2004). Vygotsky’s socio cultural theory indicates that the child’s learning development is affected by the culture in which he or she is raised (Vygotsky, 1981). According to Vygotsky’s perspective, the community at large, specifically adults and peers, are lifelong role players that serve as guides to support cognitive growth (Vygotsky, 1986). These theories bring the variables discussed in this study into theoretical perspective and bring out the relevance of socialisation and identity formation (Vygotsky, 1981). The study concludes that there are many factors that can influence males at different stages of their lives; parents do not appear to be the leading influential factor at the stage in this study.
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Table of contents

Declaration……………………………………………………………………………………………ii
Abstract……………………………………………………………………………………………iii
Acknowledgements………………………………………………………………………………iv
Table of content…………………………………………………………………………………v
List of tables……………………………………………………………………………………vi

1. Introduction……………………………………………………………………………………1
   1.1 Primary research aim……………………………………………………………………2
   1.2 Secondary research aim………………………………………………………………..2

2. Men and body esteem perception…………………………………………………………4
   2.1 Introduction………………………………………………………………………………4
   2.2 Definition of perception………………………………………………………………5
   2.3 Body image and body esteem…………………………………………………………6
      2.3.1. Definitions of body image and body esteem…………………………………6
      2.3.2. Males and body esteem…………………………………………………………7
      2.3.3. Muscular body……………………………………………………………………8
      2.3.4. Surrounding influences of body esteem……………………………………10
      2.3.5. Tripartite model…………………………………………………………………11
      2.3.6. Body esteem distortion…………………………………………………………12
      2.3.7. Men and eating disorders………………………………………………………13

3. Awareness and internalisation……………………………………………………………16
   3.1 Self concept………………………………………………………………………………16
      3.1.1. Cognitive self concept…………………………………………………………..16
      3.1.2. Behavioural self concept…………………………………………………………17
      3.1.3. Evaluative self concept…………………………………………………………18
   3.2 Self-esteem………………………………………………………………………………19
4. The parenting styles relationship to male body-esteem and self esteem perception...21

4.1 Parenting styles.................................................................21

4.1.1 Types of parenting styles..............................................22
  4.1.1.1 The indulgent parent...........................................22
  4.1.1.2 The Authoritarian parent...................................22
  4.1.1.3 The Authoritative parent.....................................23
  4.1.1.4 The Permissive parent.........................................24

4.2 The relationship between body esteem and parental involvement...............25
4.3 Relationship between parental styles and self esteem.................................26
4.4 Parenting styles and race .......................................................................27

5. The socio-cultural perspective..........................................................29
5.1 Introduction ...............................................................................29
5.2 Vygotsky’s socio-cultural perspective...........................................30
  5.2.1 Social sources of development.....................................32
  5.2.2 Semiotic Mediation....................................................33
  5.2.3 Cognitive pluralism....................................................34
  5.2.4 Genetic analysis..........................................................35
5.3 Research Question........................................................................37

6. Methods.......................................................................................39
6.1 Introduction ...............................................................................39
6.2 Research rational...........................................................................39
6.3 Sample and Sampling .....................................................................41
6.4 Research procedure.........................................................................43
6.5 Instruments....................................................................................44
  6.5.1 The demographic questionnaire....................................44
  6.5.2 Body esteem scale..........................................................45
  6.5.3 The parental Authority Questionnaire..............................46
8.5 Final conclusion........................................................................................................78
Reference list..................................................................................................................81
Appendices....................................................................................................................99
Appendix A: Information sheet
Appendix B: Demographic questionnaire
Appendix C: Body esteem scale
Appendix D: Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale
Appendix E: Maternal PAQ
Appendix F: Paternal PAQ
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sample description</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Frequency table</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Summary table</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reliability of scales</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Spearman correlation coefficient (F/PAQ)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pearson correlation coefficient (M/PAQ)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Spearman correlation coefficient (M/PAQ)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pearson correlation coefficient (F/PAQ)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Test of homogeneity of variances (SESTotal)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Test of homogeneity of variances (BESTotal)</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kruskal-Wallis Test</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Levene’s test for homogeneity of BESTotal variance</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>