Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI)


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In order to examine the relationships between parenting styles and personality traits over generations, across-sectional questionnaire study was conducted for fathers and mothers of school-age children of grades 5–9. The parenting styles measured by the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) and the personality traits measured by the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) were correlated within and between the consecutive generations (the grandparents and the parents for the PBI and the parents and the children for the TCI). A series of structural equation modeling showed that (1) while the parenting styles were transmitted directly from the grandparents to the parents, it was partly mediated by the fathers’ Co-operativeness (C) but not so for the mothers, (2) while the personality traits were transmitted directly from the parents to the children, it was only the fathers’ parenting styles that mediated C, and (3) the parents’ parenting styles had independent effects upon the children’s personality traits.

Tanaka, M., Kitamura, T., Chen, Z., Murakami, M., and Goto, Y.: Do parents rear their children as they were reared themselves? Intergenerational transmission of parental styles (warmth and control) and possible mediation by personality traits. Open Family Studies Journal, 2; 82-90, 2009.

In order to examine the intergenerational transmission of reported parenting styles (warmth and control) and their mediation by personality traits, a cross-sectional questionnaire study was conducted of 396 fathers and 733 mothers of children from less than 1 to 10 years of age. The participants used the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) to measure their own and their partner’s current rearing styles as well as to assess their perception of the parenting they had received before age 16. Parents’ personality traits were measured using the Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI). In both fathers and mothers, the correlation of the grandparents’ perceived parenting styles were correlated with the current parenting styles reported by parents themselves greater than with the current parenting styles reported by spouse. Thus, we speculated the shared observer bias and used the spouse-report for further analyses. In the fathers, (1) paternal Care was correlated with the grandmothers’ Care and grandparents’ low Overprotection; and paternal Overprotection was correlated with the grandfathers’ Overprotection; (2) Novelty Seeking was correlated with the grandparents’ Overprotection and low Care; Harm Avoidance was correlated with the grandparents’ Over-
protection; Reward Dependence, Self-directedness, and Co-operativeness were correlated with the grandparents’ Care and low Overprotection; and Persistence was correlated with the grandparents’ Care; (3) Overprotection was correlated with Harm Avoidance and low Self-directedness. In the mothers, (1) maternal Care was correlated with the grandmothers’ Care; (2) Novelty Seeking was correlated with the grandmothers’ low Care; Harm Avoidance was correlated with the grandfathers’ low Care and the grandparents’ Overprotection; Reward Dependence, Self-directedness, and Co-operativeness were correlated with the grandparents’ Care and low Overprotection; and Self-transcendence was correlated with the grandfathers’ Care; (3) maternal Care was correlated with Reward Dependence, Persistence, and Co-operativeness; and maternal Overprotection was correlated with low Self-directedness. The transmission of Overprotection of fathers and Care of mothers from the grandparent generations was found to be mediated by personality traits.


A total of 946 Japanese children in the 5th to 9th grades and their parents were studied in order to investigate the extent to which parenting characteristics (measured by the Parental Bonding Instrument) and the personality of the child (measured by the junior version of the Temperament and Character Inventory) would be associated with the two aspects of the externalizing problems — aggression and delinquency — of the child (measured by the Child Behavior Checklist). A series of regression analyses demonstrated that (1) aggressive children were higher in Novelty Seeking, and delinquent children were higher in Novelty Seeking and lower in Harm Avoidance, and (2) both aggressive and delinquent children were characterised by low maternal care, paternal over-protection, and low maternal overprotection. A structural equation model confirmed these findings except for the link between the two externalising behaviour scores and the maternal care. Moreover, it was suggested that Novelty seeking of the child would be predicted by low parental care and low paternal and high maternal overprotection. The children's aggression and delinquency could, to some extent, be explainable by their temperament patterns and parental characteristics.