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Construction of the Modified Parenting Practices Questionnaire with the Disengaged Parenting Style Scale²

Extended summary

Diana Baumrind's typology of parenting styles constitutes the theoretical basis of this research, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to assessing parenting. The Parenting Practices Questionnaire (PPQ) is a widely used instrument, based on Diana Baumrind's theory of parenting styles, which originally included scales for three parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. However, the PPQ does not include the scales for the disengaged (uninvolved/neglectful) parenting style identified in Baumrind's studies. The aim of this paper is to develop a modified version of the PPQ, which includes a scale for the disengaged parenting style, and to determine its factor structure and reliability among the parents of preschool children in Serbia. Previous adaptations of the PPQ did not include disengaged parenting, a style characterized by the neglect or minimal involvement in the child's life. By filling this gap, our research aims to improve the understanding of the parenting styles and contribute to the development of a culturally sensitive instrument.

The research included a sample of 438 parents of preschool children in Serbia, aged three to seven years. The item set from the original Parent Questionnaire (PQ) was expanded to include items designed to measure disengaged parenting, reflecting Baumrind's theoretical

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framework. Items for all parenting styles, including the newly developed disengaged parenting style items, were culturally screened, refined through content validation, and pilot-tested with parents to ensure clarity and appropriateness. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to determine the factor structure, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The following factors were identified in the research: uninvolvement, warmth and involvement, directiveness and hostility, democratic participation and reasoning, non-reasoning and punitive strategies, indulgence and neglect/indulgence. The disengaged parenting style is represented by two factors: uninvolvement and neglect/indulgence. The uninvolvement factor reflects a stable characteristic of the disengaged parenting style, while neglect/indulgence can vary depending on parental stress or life circumstances.

The factors associated with authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles partially overlap with the original PPQ questionnaire, but also reveal new subdimensions, reflecting the complexity of parental behavior. The items related to the permissive style are arranged into three different factors: uninvolvement, which encompasses a lack of involvement; neglect/indulgence, indicating inconsistency in demands; and permissiveness, which represents temporary restrictions. These findings highlight cultural variations in parenting styles and suggest that the permissive style may be multidimensional.

The goal of constructing a scale for the disengaged parenting style, as a part of the modified version of the PPQ questionnaire, was achieved in this research. The dimensions uninvolvement and neglect/indulgence, identified in our findings, represent the subdimensions of this parenting style. Reliability analyses showed good internal consistency for all factors, except for the subdimensions of indulgence and non-reasoning/punitive strategies, where the limited number of items could have led to a lower reliability.

The modified PPQ represents a more comprehensive tool for assessing parenting styles and provides the first empirical evidence of its psychometric properties among the parents of the preschool children in Serbia. It can be used in research, educational settings, and family counseling, allowing professionals to identify parenting practices and tailor interventions accordingly. The research results highlight cross-cultural differences in the expression of parenting styles, which indicates the need for culturally sensitive measures. Further research is needed to refine the measurements, especially for the permissive parenting style. Comparative studies across cultures could further clarify commonalities and cultural differences among parenting styles, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the expression of these styles.

Keywords: parenting styles, The Parenting Practices Questionnaire, Baumrind's theory, disengaged parenting style, preschoolers

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