Exploring the links from perceived childhood parenting and childhood parent-child relation to Chinese adults' current psychological distress: Impacts of family-of-origin?

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Introduction

Current studies:
Parenting styles and parent-child relation are important factors influencing adolescents' psychological distress (Huang et al., 2009; Parker & Benson, 2004)

Few studies focused on the influence of perceived parenting style and childhood parent-child relation on adults' current psychological distress, especially in the content of China

Purpose:
This research aims to explore the links from perceived childhood parenting and childhood parent-child relation to Chinese adults' current psychological distress

Hypothesis:
Positive parenting styles and close parent-child relation will decrease the likelihood of psychological distress when the children grow up

Method

Sample:
501 Chinese adults (age of 18 ~ 45 years, with 252 men) were recruited from the internet by using Credamo (a reliable online survey platform)

Measurements:
s-EMBU (Li et al., 2012): Recollection of childhood parenting styles
Quality of parent-child relations scale: Recollection of childhood parent-child relationship
6-item Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6): current psychological distress

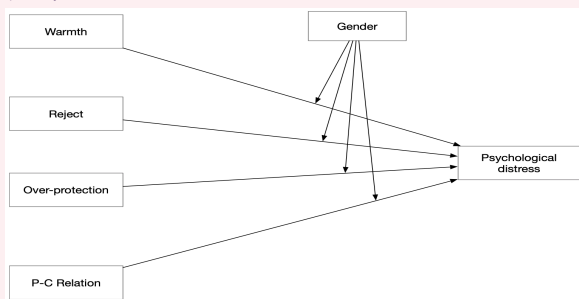**Statistical analyses:**
Correlation and regression analyses.

Model:

Figure 1: Relationship between variables

Results

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Warmth		1	-0.414***	0.046	0.736***	-0.318***	0.211**	-0.215**
2. Reject		-0.426***	1	0.341***	-0.366***	0.388***	0.003	0.147*
3. Overprotection		0.014	0.410***	1	0.011	0.074	0.117	0.121
4. Relation		0.731***	-0.492***	0.006	1	-0.225***	0.170**	-0.203**
5. Distress		-0.294***	0.455***	0.159*	-0.360*	1	-0.208**	0.059
6. Age		0.028	0.081	0.036	-0.022	-0.034	1	0.258***
7. BMI		0.094	0.037	0.091	0.015	-0.027	0.069	1
Male	M:	3.11	1.44	2.30	4.15	10.67	29.24	22.57
	SD:	0.53	0.37	0.39	0.56	2.81	5.50	2.36
Female	M:	3.12	1.34	2.22	4.15	11.26	27.86	19.98
	SD:	0.56	0.32	0.44	0.54	3.49	5.17	2.31

Figure 2: Correlations between variables
Note: Female's correlations are on the top diagonals, and male's correlations are on the bottom diagonals. *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001

Variable	Model 1 β	Model 1 SE	Model 2 β	Model 2 SE	Model 3 β	Model 3 SE
Constant	-0.065	0.035	-0.106*	0.050	-0.025	0.051
Warmth	-0.066	0.054	0.035	0.076	-0.120	0.077
Reject	0.371***	0.044	0.364***	0.063	0.373***	0.065
Overprotection	-0.010	0.039	0.011	0.060	-0.021	0.053
Relation	-0.022	0.053	-0.220*	0.092	0.127	0.090
Gender	0.111**	0.035				
Age	-0.064	0.037	-0.011	0.050	-0.120*	0.056
Ethnicity	0.088*	0.035	0.033	0.050	0.122*	0.051
Residence	0.160	0.040	0.165**	0.058	0.169**	0.057
Education	-0.075	0.044	-0.009	0.062	-0.148*	0.066
Income	-0.069	0.040	-0.084	0.057	-0.054	0.057

Figure 3: Robust regression
Note: *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001

Variable	β	SE
Constant	-0.056	0.036
Warmth	-0.062	0.055
Reject	0.358***	0.045
Overprotection	-0.003	0.040
Relation	-0.026	0.054
Gender	0.115**	0.036
Age	-0.062	0.037
Ethnicity	0.093**	0.035
Residence	0.161***	0.040
Education	-0.073	0.045
Income	-0.073	0.040
Age*Warmth	-0.107*	0.053
Age * Reject	0.036	0.045
Age * Overprotection	-0.004	0.040
Age * Relation	0.123*	0.053

Figure 4: Moderating role of age
Note: *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001

Results

Childhood warmth (women: $r = -.32$, $p < .001$; men: $r = -.29$, $p < .001$) and childhood parent-child relation (women: $r = -.22$, $p < .001$; men: $r = -.36$, $p < .001$) were significantly and negatively associated with current psychological distress (Figure 2)

Childhood rejection (women: $r = .39$, $p < .001$; men: $r = .46$, $p < .001$) was significantly and positively correlated with current psychological distress

Childhood overprotection($r = .16$, $p = .011$) was significantly and positively correlated with psychological distress in Chinese men

With multiple regression analyses by controlling for all covariates (e.g., gender and age), rejection was the only significant and positive predictor of psychological distress($β = 0.37$, $p < .001$) , and the whole model could explain 26.8% of the total variance of current psychological distress (Figure 3)

Discussion

Results confirmed our hypothesis that positive parenting styles (eg. warmth) and close parent-child relation will decrease the likelihood of psychological distress after the children grow up

The relationship between perceived parenting styles, parent-child relation and adults' current psychological distress are similar to the relationship between those two factors and adolescents' psychological distress, which suggest the long-term effect of family environments

Limitation:
The recall method may not be that accurate

Further Research:
Research on relationship between perceived grandparents' parenting styles and adults' psychological distress, since "big family" Is a common situation in China

Conclusion

These findings suggest the interactions between parents and children in adults' childhood may have an important impact on adults' current mental health, highlighting the potential existence of "impacts of family-of-origin"

References

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