

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF ASSOCIATIONS AMONG PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING, PARENTING STYLES AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this review was to explore the associations between and among psychological well being, parenting styles and mental health during adolescence and directed content analysis was made to reach conclusion. To achieve this objective, the present researchers systematically reviewed about twenty research articles that were done in different countries and various cultures (the USA, Kuwait, India, and Ethiopia) at different times. All of the research reports showed that parenting styles, psychological well being, and mental health are positively related i.e. good parenting lead to high psychological well-being and high psychological well-being leads improved mental health/results in good mental health. More specifically, the reports revealed that psychological well-being, and authoritative parenting styles were strongly related with mental health; also, authoritative/decent parenting style has a strong positive relationship with mental health. Furthermore, the regression analysis of the various studies in different cultures indicated that mental health is predictable by psychological well-being and parenting styles. Good parenting and high level of psychological well-being help in developing a positive relationship with others and establishes better adjustment with an environment; this in turn, promotes good mental health.

KEYWORDS: *Mental Health, Parenting Styles, Psychological Well-Being, Adolescence*

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is defined as the successful performance of mental function, which results in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people and the capacity to adjust to changes and cope with difficulties and hardships (Patel, et al, 2008; Sheldon and King, 2001). From early childhood until late life, mental health is considered the springboard of thinking and communication skills, learning, emotional growth, resilience for recovering quick and self-esteem. Mental Health is the balanced development of the total personality which enables one to interact creatively and harmoniously with society. Mental Health as a state of mind characterized by emotional well being, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms and a capacity to establish constructive relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life (Frojd, 2008). A person's mental health is subject to any variety of changes in life, either from genetic causes to environmental stressors, or physical changes that may occur during their life-time (WHO, cited in FDRE Ministry of Health, 2006).

Mental health problems affect 10 to 20% of children and adolescents worldwide. Despite their relevance as a leading cause of health-related disability in this age group and their long-lasting effects throughout life, the mental health needs of children and adolescents are neglected, especially in low-income and middle-income countries (FDRE Ministry of Health, 2006; Patel, et al, 2008). Different reports revealed that about 12.5 per cent and 10 percent of children and adolescents were suffering from mental and behavioral health problems in India and Ethiopia respectively (Tiwari and Verma, 2015; Yeshashwork, 2010). These figures could be underestimated since anxiety among a large number of children and adolescents goes undiagnosed owing to the internalized nature of its symptoms. Similarly, in other regions like the western and non-western (e.g. USA and Kuwait) children and adolescents are exposed to various mental health problems (Abdel and Lester, 2013).

Thus, mental health issues have occupied the minds of many experts in various fields, due to their impacts on the various functions of human communication. According to the perspective of positive psychology, mental health is including the ability to enjoy life and to create a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological flexibility. At the core of positive psychology, there is a psychological well being with various dimensions.

Psychological well-being is composed of six factors: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, a sense of independence, having a purpose in life, a sense of personal growth, and environmental mastery (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Ryff further emphasized that health is more than the absence of disease, so she suggested that psychological well-being refers to what a person needs to welfare. Scholars, further clarified psychological well being in general and the sub-components in particular, affect the mental health of lifespan development including the period of adolescence (Ryff, 2014; Hurppert, 2009). In addition to psychological well being other factors like the social environments, especially family environment and peers affect the mental health of boys and girls. The main focus of this review is the influence of family through parenting style and its impact on mental health. Parenting style as a tool of socialization and agent of personality development affects the mental health of children and adolescents.

Research findings regard to the totality of interactions and relationships parent-child and child-rearing practices reported as one of the most important factors of mental health. Many studies have shown that parent-child interactions and relationships and parenting style can affect mental health (Chao, 2001; Anjum & Kausar, 2009). Some research results also indicated that parenting style in connection with psychological well being has direct and indirect effects on adolescents' mental health. Hence, the main purpose of this systematic review is to single out the associations between and among parenting style, psychological well being and mental health of adolescents. Specifically, the objectives of this systematic review were:-

- To examine the associations between and among psychological well being, parenting styles and mental health,
- To identify the main components of psychological well being that contributes to good mental health, and
- To identify the types of parenting styles that contributes to good mental health.

In order to achieve the above-formulated objectives, the present researchers tried to critically and systematically review research reports of different countries and various cultures in relation to adolescent mental health and psychological well being and parenting style. The countries that were included in the review were the USA from the Western and individualized region, Ethiopia from Africa, Kuwait and India from Asia, all from a collectivist culture.

Method and Materials

The research is qualitative in its nature. The research reports of twenty articles were systematically reviewed and the findings were narrated and described in words and the research method is directed content analysis.

The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Psychological Well Being

Parenting style and its effect on overall development is a well-researched topic among researchers. Parenting style represents the strategies that parents use in their child-rearing. Researchers on parenting identified three basic styles of child rearing: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative (Chao, 2001). The three parenting styles differ in two dimensions of parenting: the amount of warmth a child receives from parents and the extent to which a child's activities and behaviors are controlled by parents (Anjum & Kausar, 2009; Aemro, 2015; Abesha, 2012).

Parents who display authoritarian style restrict the autonomy of children and expect children to follow their orders without asking any questions. Permissive parents encourage their children's autonomy and do not impose any authority on their children. Authoritative parents tend to foster autonomy among children and employ moderate parental control. Children reared in this style are not completely restricted but have room for expressing their autonomy to a certain extent and consequently, this parenting style enables children to make their own decisions and regulate their own activities (Anjum & Kausar, 2009; Aemro, 2015; Abesha, 2012).

Aemro (2015) reported that the perceived decent/authoritative parenting style contributed to higher levels of psychological well being in general and its dimensions (self-acceptance, autonomy, positive relation, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth) in particular than the authoritarian parenting style. Similarly, Abesha (2012) found that authoritative parenting style has a positive impact on academic self-efficacy and achievement motivation among boys and girls compared to non-authoritative parents. Children of authoritative parents have a high level of autonomy/independence and tend to be self-reliant, self-controlled, secure, and curious than youth having authoritarian or permissive parents (Anjum & Kausar, 2009; Aemro, 2015; Abesha, 2012; Forjd, 2008). Warmth, supporting, and child-centered parenting style associated with the development of self-acceptance, positive relation with others and purpose in life (Forjd, 2008).

In general, the different studies being reviewed revealed that, Indian, American and Ethiopian adolescents who perceive their parents as high on authoritarian dimension display lower level of psychological well being and its dimensions while those perceive their parents as high on authoritative score higher on psychological well being and its dimensions. Interestingly, the different studies have also revealed that freedom is only effective in developing positive psychological well being among adolescents in the context of higher parental concern.

The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Mental Health

Some Indian, American and Ethiopian studies reported that greater acceptance of parents among adolescents may prevent anxiety. Research reports of other countries also indicated that parental support and encouragement of children's autonomy and independence may enhance children's perceptions of mastery over the environment, leading to anxiety reduction. Conversely, lack of parental support decrease the child's feelings, undermine the child's emotion regulation and increase their sensitivity to emotional health problems such as anxiety and depression (Tiwari and Verma, 2015; Anjum & Kausar, 2009; Yeshashwork, 2010; Griess, 2010).

Further, the study results in all of the four countries (the USA, Kuwait, India, and Ethiopia) showed that authoritative parenting style reduces mental disorders and promotes mental health. It also reduces adolescent behavior problems, alcohol consumption and the run away from school (Abdel – Khalek and Lester, 2006; Anjum and Kausar, 2009; Abesha, 2012; Aemro, 2015); furthermore, it minimizes the negative impact of stress on health and operates as a predictor of academic grades; also is associated with higher educational attainment.

The Relationship between Psychological Well Being and Mental Health

Well-Being literature accepts that there are two basic perspectives regarding well-being. First is the concept of the hedonic approach, which focuses on happiness and defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance; and the second is eudemonic approach, which focuses on meaning and self-realization and defines well-being in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryan and Deci, 2001; Abdel, 2011a).

Subjective well-being generally refers to happiness, relief, and relatively lack of problems. On the other hand, psychological well-being is defined as the challenge, making effort, personal development and striving to grow (Abdel, 2011a). According to psychological well-being theory, an individual's psychological health depends on his/her positive functioning in certain aspects of his/her life. Individuals should be in a positive relationship with others, be dominant over the environment, accept himself and his/her past have a goal and meaning in his/her life, have personal development and the ability to make his/her own decisions (Ryff and Keyes, 1995; Ryan and Deci, 2001).

Studies conducted to assess the relationship between the mental health and psychological well-being of adolescents revealed that high psychological well-being resulting in good/positive mental health. Different research reports found out as there is a strong positive correlation between mental health and psychological well-being among American, Indian, and Ethiopian adolescents (Anjum & Kausar, 2009; Yeshashwork, 210; Abdel, 2011a). Further, the research reports stated that the different dimensions of psychological well being (self acceptance, positive relation with others, purpose in life, environmental mastery and personal growth) have strong positive correlation with positive mental health and strong negative correlation with negative components of mental health (such as, anxiety, depression and stress) (Anjum & Kausar, 2009; Yeshashwork, 210; Abdel, 2011a).

The Relationship among Psychological Well Being, Parenting Styles, and Mental Health

In this part of the review the association/correlation among psychological well being, parenting styles, and mental health were discussed in detail. Various researches done in different countries and cultures of America, India, Kuwait, and Ethiopia revealed that all the three constructs (psychological well being, parenting style and mental health) are intertwined. One affects the other and vice versa. For example the research reports from America and India showed that psychological well being affects adolescents' mental health and in turn mental health affects adolescents' psychological well being (Anjum & Kausar, 2009; Abdel, 2011a; Khodabakhsh, Kiani and Ahmedbookani, 2015; Repetti and Taylor, 2002; Sharma and Yadava, 2011).

Regarding the relationship among parenting styles, psychological well being and mental health, the research reports revealed that both psychological well being and mental health are affected by the parenting style of parents practiced at home in the relationship between adolescents and their parents (Anjum & Kausar, 2009; Repetti and Taylor, 2002; Zaharakar, 2008). For example, the results indicated that the autocratic parenting style has a negative correlation with

mental health and authoritative and permissive parenting styles have positive correlations with mental health. The research reports also showed that there is a negative correlation between psychological well-being and mental health problems. For instance, the reports revealed that there is a negative correlation between dimensions of psychological well-being (e.g. self-acceptance and dimensions of somatic symptoms, anxiety, insomnia, and depression) (Anjum & Kausar, 2009; Abdel, 2011a; Johal, and Pooja, 2016). Autonomy positively correlated with social functioning and negatively correlated with depression. And no relationship was found between autonomy with somatic symptoms, anxiety, and insomnia.

In addition, the research reports stated that environmental mastery negatively correlated with dimensions of anxiety, insomnia, depression, and positively correlated with social functioning component (Sheldon and King, 2001; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Petersen, et al, 2010). There is also a negative correlation between purpose in life and depression component. Moreover, the studies found that the predictive power of mental health by psychological well-being is approximately 20% (Anjum & Kausar, 2009; Abdel, 2011a; Johal, and Pooja, 2016). In other words, psychological well-being is highly predicting mental health. On the other hand, all the three parenting styles permissive, authoritarian and authoritative are important in explaining the mental health of adolescents (Anjum & Kausar, 2009; Johal, and Pooja, 2016).

In general, the two independent variables and their subcomponents; parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) and psychological well-being (autonomy, positive relations, self-acceptance) have strong effects and contributions for the mental health development of adolescents. Good parenting styles and high psychological well-being resulting in good mental health and on the contrary, despotic parenting and low psychological well-being result in mental health problems like anxiety, depression, and somatic disorders.

Finally, based on the systematic review conducted, the present researchers developed the following theoretical model that shows the relationship between and among mental health, psychological well-being and parenting style.

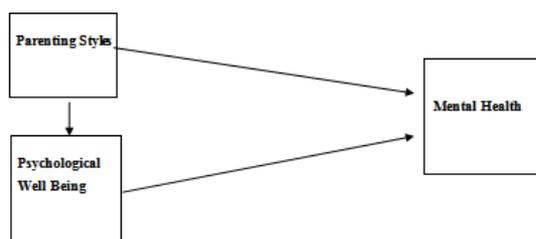


Figure 1: The Relationship between Parenting Styles, Psychological Well Being, and Mental Health

From the above theoretical model, it is possible to understand that psychological well-being and parenting styles were directly related to mental health. Further, it is also possible to see that parenting style has both direct and indirect effects on adolescents' mental health; parenting style directly affects mental health and it also affects mental health indirectly through psychological well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

Mental health is a multi-dimensional concept, but mental health experts have mainly emphasized the negative aspects of it. Nowadays, the desire to study the positive aspects of mental health has increased in parallel with the negative aspects.

The main purpose of this systematic review was to examine the associations between and among psychological well being, parenting styles, and adolescence mental health. Psychological well-being and its dimensions (self-acceptance, positive relation with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth) have strong positive relations with positive mental health and strong negative correlation with mental health problems (anxiety, depression, stress, insomnia, and other behavioral-emotional problems). This means that with an increase in psychological well-being, mental health is also increasing. So can be said that these two variables are related to each other and change one of the variables will be accompanied by a change in other variables.

The research reports also indicated that parenting style affects both psychological well being and mental health. For instance, the authoritative parenting style has a negative relation with the components of mental health problems (anxiety, physical symptoms, and depression) and it has a positive relation with social functioning. The autocratic parenting style has a positive relation with the components of mental health (anxiety, physical symptoms, and depression) and the permissive style has positive relation only with the component depression. As much the parents are more mighty and democratic, the physical symptoms, anxiety, and depression of their children will reduce and the children will show more normal behavior. Also, it can be said that the more the parents are despotic, anxiety, depression and social malfunction will increase and the children will show more abnormal behavior.

To put it in a net shell, all the three variables/constructs such as psychological well being, parenting styles, and mental health have strong relations. That means when parents practice good, warmth and supportive parenting there will be high psychological well being and this in turn, results in good mental health.

Implications

As discussed earlier in detail, the research reports in various countries and cultures indicated that psychological well-being and parenting styles were related to mental health of adolescents. Thus, regardless of culture; warmth and supportive parenting promote psychological well being and this in turn, promotes positive mental health. From this, it is possible to imagine that by practicing warmth and supportive parenting and by promoting psychological well being it is possible to minimize and avoid the occurrence of mental health problems.

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