The Relationship between Parenting Style and Mental Health: The Mediating Role of Psychological Resilience

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Abstract. Adolescent’s mental health is a hot topic of research in the field of mental health, which is related to the healthy growth of adolescent individuals. There are many factors affecting adolescent’s mental health. The present study looks at two aspects of family parenting styles and psychological resilience to analyse the relationship between family parenting styles, psychological resilience and adolescent’s mental health. The purpose of this paper it to supplement the gaps in previous studies and provide a basis for improving the level of adolescent mental health. This paper is analysed through the method of literature review, and the conclusions of the study are as follows: parenting style is an important factor in the formation of adolescents' high level of psychological resilience ability. Different parenting styles will have different impacts on adolescent mental health. Psychological resilience significantly affects adolescents' mental health, and psychological resilience partially mediates the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' mental health.

1 Introduction

With the development of society, people's attention to health has increased and they have come to realise that health is not only physical health, but mental health is also an important manifestation of health. In recent years, researchers have paid more attention to the study of mental health, in which two factors that cannot be ignored are family parenting style and psychological resilience. Adolescents are the future of the motherland, and the mental health status of the adolescent group has been a hot issue in recent years with a high degree of concern. Adolescence is an important period in the physical and mental development of an individual, and it is the period when adolescents have the strongest plasticity and the fastest change in the process of socialisation, the formation of behavioural habits, and the beginning of the development of the self, so that the psychological health and harmony at this time is particularly important for the overall development of the individual [1]. Since the 20th century, positive psychology has gradually emerged, and people have begun to pay attention to the important role of positive psychological qualities of human beings on mental health, in which the psychological resilience of adolescents plays an important role in mental health. In actual surveys, the mental health of adolescents is worrying, and the causes of mental health problems among adolescents show a certain degree of complexity. The family plays an irreplaceable role as the basic unit of the individual in the process of socialisation. According to research, family factors are the primary factors affecting adolescents' mental health, and family structure indirectly affects adolescents' mental health through mediating variables such as parental care, parenting style, and parent-child relationship [2]. Parents' inappropriate parenting styles are an important factor in the development of poor personality traits in their children and a risk factor for the development of mental illness in children [3]. Therefore, this paper will explore the relationship between family parenting styles, psychological resilience and adolescent mental health, aiming to further improve parents' understanding of and attention to their children's mental health status and to promote mental health education in schools.

2 Family parenting styles

In recent years, researchers have generally accepted the definition of family parenting styles as the concepts, attitudes and methods of parents in the process of parenting, as well as behavioural patterns that have stability in parenting behaviour. Some studies have found that family parenting style is a key element in predicting the healthy development of an individual's psychology and behaviour. The study of family parenting styles is a gradual and in-depth exploration from theory to empirical research. At the end of the 19th century, Freud put forward the theoretical view that parents play different roles in the process of child rearing, with fathers responsible for providing rules and discipline and mothers responsible for providing love and warmth. After the 1940s, parenting styles appeared to be quantified, and the content of the research mainly focused on the inherent structural differences in the parenting styles, and the effects of different family parenting styles on the individual's psychological development and its impact on several aspects of the family parenting styles. Several aspects of parenting styles have been studied [4]. Cox
showed that children raised by depressed mothers had poorer quality of interactions because mothers suffering from depression were more likely to ignore their children’s demands and were more likely to use controlling tactics [4]. In addition to this, scholars have been progressively categorising family parenting styles. Baumrind categorised family parenting styles into three types through a series of studies on parent-child interactions: authoritarian, spolit, authoritative (democratic), after which Maccoby and Martin further classified parenting styles into four categories based on their classification: authoritative (democratic), authoritarian, spolit and neglectful [5]. Chinese scholar Lin Xiaofeng, according to the China Youth and Adolescent Research Centre, through a number of national surveys on children and adolescents, found that the parenting styles of contemporary urban one-child families were broadly classified into six types: spolit, overprotective, interfering, permissive, denying and democratic [6].

Measurement on family parenting styles began in the mid-twentieth century, Schaefer weaved a calibrated style questionnaire (CRPBI) applicable to children based on their characteristics from the family education situation and classified family parenting styles into three dimensions, namely, harshness and indulgence, acceptance and rejection, and psychological autonomy and psychological self-control. C. Perris of Sweden prepared the Evaluation of Parenting Styles Scale (EMBU), and Chinese scholars Yue Dongmei and others revised the Family Parenting Styles (EMBUE) to take into account the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, and it was widely used. In addition to this, Parker et al. compiled the Parenting Behaviour Questionnaire (PBI), which contains the dimensions of overprotection and caring. Chinese scholar Gong Yihua compiled the Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ), which includes five dimensions: authoritarian, trusting, emotional warmth, spoiling, and neglecting.

3 Mental health

In 1948, the World Health Organisation (WHO) proposed that health is a state of being in which a person is in good health, physically, mentally and socially. Therefore, health includes not only physical health, but also mental health. Mental health means that an individual is free from the existence of mental diseases or mental disorders and possesses good physical and mental adaptability. In today's society, the competition and pressure faced by adolescents are becoming more and more intense and frequent, and the psychological pressure is also increasing sharply, even seriously affecting adolescents' learning and life, and the issue of psychological health is receiving more and more attention.

Currently, one of the commonly used questionnaires for studying mental health problems is the Symptom Check List 90 (SCL-90), which consists of 9 dimensions of somatisation, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobia, paranoia, and psychotism, as well as additional items. The other is the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-20) developed by Goldberg, which consists of three dimensions: self-affirmation, depression, and anxiety.

4 Psychological resilience

Psychological resilience has been the focus of research in the field of positive psychology in recent years. A common modern definition of psychological resilience is that psychological resilience refers to an individual's ability to remain well-adjusted in the face of adversity, setbacks, or threats, and to face such difficulties or stresses positively with a good psychological state.

In the mid-1970s, Anthony followed children from families with mentally ill parents. It was found that some of the children suffered from the same illnesses as their parents, while others were well-adjusted and grew into adulthood. Since then, research has focused on well-adjusted children and adolescents exposed to high-risk environments, exploring the reasons that enable them to avoid crises of physical and mental disorders in stressful or frustrating situations.

After the 1980s, researchers stopped seeing psychological resilience as static and focused more on the process by which psychological resilience positively contributes to an individual’s adaptation to adversity. According to Rutter, there are protective factors in psychological resilience, commonly known as personality factors and environmental factors, which have also been systematically classified by scholars into three dimensions, namely personal factors, family factors, and factors outside the family [7]. These factors influence individuals to adjust, improve or modify their responses to risky situations in order to prevent maladaptation.

At this stage, widely used psychological resilience measurement scales include the Connor-Davidson Psychological Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) developed using Connor and Davidson, the Self-Resilience Scale (ERS) by Block and Kremen, the Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA) by Rutter, and the Questionnaire for Rating the Resilience of Healthy Adolescents (QRHA) by Constantine et al [8].

5 The relationship between family parenting styles and psychological resilience

A large body of early research has found that family parenting styles are important predictors of children's social adjustment and psychological resilience, and that children with positive family parenting styles are better socially adjusted and more psychologically resilient [5]. Positive family parenting style is associated with better social adjustment and greater psychological resilience in children. In a survey of adolescents in Lanzhou, China, Chinese scholar Yang Shangru found that psychological resilience was significantly positively correlated with mother's emotional warmth and father's emotional warmth, and negatively correlated with mother's interference, mother's favouritism and father's rejection [5]. It was also significantly negatively correlated with maternal interference, maternal favouritism and paternal rejection. This also shows that when parents show higher emotional warmth, understanding and compassion for their children in parenting, adolescents are in a better psychological state and are more active in life.
According to a large number of studies, psychological resilience is a result of the development of protective factors, both internal and external, with the family environment being the main external factor in the development of psychological resilience [9]. Positive parenting style helps adolescents to develop positive self-perceptions, enabling them to develop adaptive personality traits as they grow up, and make it easier to build emotional connections with others. In addition, adolescents show more positive attitudes in the face of negative life events, are good at searching for their inner strengths, explore their own resources and mobilise external resources to face difficulties, and develop psychological resilience. Therefore, parenting style is an important factor in the development of high levels of psychological resilience in adolescents.

6 The relationship between mental health and parenting styles

A caring parenting style is conducive to greater self-confidence and efficacy in children, enabling them to explore themselves and challenge difficulties [10]. Erikson and Becker showed that children of warm, accepting and loving parents are more likely to be self-accepting, happy and emotionally stable. On the other hand, parents with rejecting, cold, controlling attitudes will result in children with low self-esteem, anxiety, withdrawal, excessive conformity, insecurity, aggression or antisocial behaviour [11].

In Maccoby's study of aggression in adolescents of different genders, it was found that there was a close relationship between aggressive behaviour in adolescents and harsh parental punishment. It was found that children who were accepted by their parents generally showed socially desirable behaviours such as emotional stability, wide range of interests, and empathy, while most of the children who were rejected by their parents were apathetic, stubborn, and rebellious. Parker's study demonstrated that there was a correlation between obsessive-compulsive parental behaviours, over-control, and lower levels of psychological well-being in adolescents. The above studies have proved that parenting styles have a significant impact on the mental health aspects of children, which is reflected at all stages of an individual's development [12].

Chinese scholar Ma Li's research shows that the family care factor has the most obvious influence on the psychological problems of adolescents, and there is a significant positive correlation between the care factor and all factors of individual psychological health [13]. The caring factor has a significant positive correlation with all factors of individual psychological health. The research of Chinese scholar Jiang also proved that parenting style had a close relationship with children's psychological health. If parents give their children more warmth and love, it will reduce the possibility of their children's behavioural problems, on the contrary, if parents too much punishment, interference and over-protection of their own children, it will give the children's behavioural problems increased chances.

Taken together, family parenting styles directly or indirectly affect the level of mental health of individuals in different ways, with positive and affirmative parenting styles playing a positive role in children's personality traits, social interactions, and self-evaluation, while negative, and rejectionist parenting styles negatively affect the level of mental health of individuals at some level.

7 The relationship between mental health and psychological resilience

A study by Friborg et al. found that individuals with higher levels of psychological resilience showed higher levels of psychological well-being than those with low psychological resilience when faced with the same stressful event. In recent years, studies have shown that psychological resilience has a significant positive correlation with extraversion and social support, and a significant negative correlation with neuroticism, life events [14]. Psychological resilience is also considered as an important predictor of post-stress neuropsychiatric disorders in individuals.

According to a number of research studies, psychological resilience is a significant positive predictor of mental health, and students with higher psychological resilience have higher levels of mental health [15]. Zou Changhua et al., in exploring the correlation between mental health and psychological resilience, pointed out that individuals with high psychological resilience were more adaptable when facing pressure and difficulties, and were able to call upon their own positive emotions in a timely manner to cope with pressure and adversity with a positive mindset, in order to maintain a healthy mind [16]. It is inferred that an increase in the level of adolescents' psychological resilience is conducive to the prevention and resolution of adolescents' psychological problems, and achieves the goal of improving their mental health [15]. Therefore, psychological resilience significantly and positively affects adolescent mental health.

8 Mediating effects: the mediating role of psychological resilience

Positive parenting is an important factor in the healthy development of children. Previous research has shown that psychological resilience is a mediating variable between stressors, stressful events and psychological well-being, positively predicting an individual's social adjustment and psychological well-being, and negatively predicting their psychological symptoms [17]. Children will be more resilient if their parents provide them with an environment of emotional warmth, understanding, and sensible love. Individuals with high levels of psychological resilience experience more positive than negative emotions and are less likely to experience psychological problems.

From an individual developmental perspective, the relationship between mental health and psychological resilience remains closely related to family factors. The results of established studies have shown that only children have more severe psychological problems compared to non-only children [18]. The possible reason for this is that compared to non-only children, only children are more perfectionist under the high expectations of their parents,
and therefore less psychologically resilient and more likely to exhibit psychological symptoms [19].

According to the results of the above studies and related theories, parenting style is an important factor that affects adolescents' psychological resilience and mental health (see Figure 1). This also means that parenting style may directly affect mental health and at the same time may indirectly affect individual mental health through psychological resilience. It can be inferred that parenting styles may affect college students' mental health through the mediating role of psychological resilience.

In summary, this paper draws the following paths regarding the close relationship between the three variables of family parenting style, psychological resilience, and mental health.

![Diagram](image)

**Fig 1.** Relationship between family parenting style, psychological resilience and mental health (Photo/Picture credit: Original)

### 9 Suggestion

According to previous studies, this study has the following suggestions in the process of implementation. At the first stage, the subject group of this study is adolescents, in order to avoid unrepresentative samples, researchers should choose to expand the sample size and collect samples from the whole country. At the next stage, the previous study used cross sectional data, which can only reflect the content information of a single point in time, and cannot make long-term predictions. If conditions permit, panel data should be used, which can reflect the content information more comprehensively, and thus draw more accurate conclusions. At last, the researcher's subjectivity should be avoided in the receipt of data, and the random sampling method should be used to combine multiple factors for questionnaire collection to enhance randomness.

### 10 Conclusion

Based on the results of the above studies and related theories, this paper proposes the following conclusions. (1) Parenting styles have a direct effect on mental health. Positive parenting styles are significantly positively associated with adolescent mental health, while negative parenting styles are significantly negatively associated with adolescent mental health. (2) Family parenting styles significantly predicted psychological resilience and mental health. Psychological resilience partially mediated the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent mental health.

This paper has some limitations. Firstly, this paper is limited by the fact that it relies on a large body of literature to speculate on the relationship between the three variables and does not conduct an empirical analysis. Secondly, this paper does not explore in detail demographic variables such as gender, grade level, only child, divorced, and place of birth. Third, this paper only explored the existence of psychological resilience as a partial mediator in family parenting styles and mental health, while other mediating or moderating variables may exist. Therefore, in the course of future research, more mediating variables that exist in the relation between family parenting styles and mental health can be explored, or there may be a chain of certain mediating variables that together affect the relationship between family parenting styles and mental health. The in-depth study of these mechanisms can provide relevant theoretical guidance for adolescent mental health education, which can positively help and inspire the mental health of adolescent children.

### References
