

The Mental Health of College Students and the Role of Parental Authority

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Introduction

- ❖ Stress and depression have been shown to impact relationships and school performance, and lower self esteem (Brougham, 2009)
- ❖ Parental authority has also been shown to be related to higher stress levels, particularly in women with permissive parenting (Barton, 2012).
- ❖ No significant relationship existed between parental autonomy support and the student's stress, GPA, or academic motivation (Pedersen, 2017).

Hypotheses

Correlational Hypotheses

- ❖ Stress and depressive symptoms will be positively correlated
- ❖ Depressive symptoms and self-esteem will be negatively correlated
- ❖ Stress and self esteem will be negatively correlated
- ❖ Grade Point Average (GPA) will be positively correlated with self-esteem and negatively correlated with depressive symptoms and stress.
- ❖ Parental authority will be significantly correlated with all variables

Group Differences Hypotheses

- ❖ There will be significant differences in reported stress, depression, self-esteem, and 90-day drug use between participants with different parenting styles in childhood.
- ❖ There will be significant differences in stress, depression, self-esteem, and different parenting styles based on whether or not a participant has used any illegal drugs in the past 90 days
- ❖ There will be significant differences in 90-day drug use, and different parenting styles based on high vs low to normal levels of stress, low vs high to normal levels of self esteem, or depression vs. no depression.

Intercorrelations Between Study Variables for all Participants

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale- (RSES)	-	-.690	-.624	.414	-.388	-.069	-.082
2. Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D)		-	.623	-.444	.196	.160	-.018
3. College Student Stress Scale (CSS)			-	-.606	.402	.206	.072
4. Current Grade Point Average (GPA)				-	-.210	-.229	.004
5. Permissive Parenting Style					-	-.187	.249
6. Authoritarian Parenting Style						-	-.440
7. Authoritative Parenting Style							-

Variable Means and Standard Deviations

Variables	Mean (Standard Deviation)
CESD	19.81 (10.78)
RSES	19.38 (4.64)
CSS	35.74 (10.28)
Authoritative	24.69 (7.661)
Authoritarian	23.00 (7.113)
Permissive	13.56 (5.725)
GPA	3.22 (.540)

Results

Correlations

- ❖ Significant positive correlation between college stress and symptoms of depression
- ❖ Significant negative correlation between symptoms of depression and self esteem
- ❖ Significant negative correlation between college stress and self esteem
- ❖ Significant positive correlation between GPA, self esteem, and depression
- ❖ Significant negative correlation between GPA and college stress

Differences Between Groups

- ❖ People with low self-esteem reported significantly more symptoms of depression, $t(40) = 4.271, p < .05$, and college stress, $t(37) = 2.921, p < .05$.
- ❖ People with high stress reported significantly more symptoms of depression, $t(40) = -2.626, p < .05$, and people with normal or low stress had significantly higher self esteem, $t(40) = 3.468, p < .05$.
- ❖ People with more symptoms of depression reported significantly higher college stress, $t(26.677) = -4.750, p < .05$, and people without symptoms of depression reported significantly higher self-esteem, $t(40) = 4.866, p < .05$.
- ❖ There were no significant differences in any variables based on different parenting styles in childhood.
- ❖ There were no significant differences in any variables based on 90-day drug use.

Measures

Participants: 42 total participants

- ❖ **Age Range:** 18 to 44 years, average age 22.
- ❖ **Gender:** 32 Female, 10 Male
- ❖ **Ethnicity:** 30 Caucasian/White, 9 African American/Black, 1 Western Asian/Middle Eastern, and 2 were Bi/Multiracial.
- ❖ **GPA:** Average: 3.22, with the high being 4.0 and the low being 2.0, and a standard deviation of 0.54.

Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression: (CES-D; Radloff, 1977)

College Student Stress Scale: (CSS; Feldt, 2008)

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: (RSE; Rosenberg, 1965).

Parental Authority Questionnaire: (PAQ; Alkharusi, 2011)

Discussion

Study Limitations

- ❖ Sample size
- ❖ Demographics
- ❖ Self-report style of survey

Comparison to Research

- ❖ Stress and depression were both correlated with lower self esteem
- ❖ Supports the lack of significance from Pedersen's research
- ❖ Due to the lack of permissive parenting styles, it cannot be compared to Barton's research

Future Directions

- ❖ Further investigate the relationships between these variables
- ❖ Understanding these relationships is essential to making college a more healthy place to learn.

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