

The Longitudinal Effect of Parent-Child Temperament Perceptual Match on Adolescents' Psychological Adaptation: A Multiple Mediation Model based on Emotional Expression and Self-Esteem

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Abstract: Adolescence is a time when there are many changes in psychology, emotions and socialisation, and the family life provides a good environment for all-round development of young people. A concept of the multi-mediation model is put forward in this paper to study how parental-adolescent congruence in temperament perception affects the psychological adjustment of adolescents through emotional expression and self-esteem. According to the goodness-of-fit framework, it is assumed in the proposed model that a high degree of consistency between parents' views on the temperament of adolescents and adolescents' self-perceptions will provide stronger support in the family microsystem. A relatively high degree of perception congruence can help to regulate the emotions of young people and provide stable social references to enhance their self-esteem. Therefore, the above steps will help to avoid the problems of internalisation and externalisation. Early perceptual congruence between parents and adolescents can affect the psychological health of young adults later in life. Help us better understand the temperament characteristics of our children and meet their emotional needs with more sensitivity in the system.

Keywords: Temperament Perceptual Match, Psychological Adaptation, Emotional Expression, Self-Esteem, Longitudinal Multiple Mediation, Adolescence.

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a time for all-round development of young people. At this time, young people are forming their own ideas of the world, wanting more independence, and developing various peer groups. People at different stages of life may experience stress and are thus more susceptible to depression, anxiety and other behavioural problems. Therefore, developmental research has started to study the protective roles of context and relationships on the mental health of adolescents. Although the influence of peers is gradually increasing in adolescence, the foundation for emotional safety and regulation is still provided by the relationship between parents and children.

A person's character provides the basis for their behaviour and relationships in the whole of the family's small environment. Temperament is a person's relatively stable difference in mood and self-regulation. Temperamental traits with a biological basis are manifested in and changed by the social environment. How the main caregiver thinks about and understands these traits will also affect how the child develops. Another important attribute of parent-adolescent relations is the extent to which parents' views on their children's temperaments align with the children's own perceptions. Temperament perceptual congruence in this paper refers to the agreement between parents' ratings and adolescents' self-assessments of the same temperamental traits, not agreement on a particular mood state or problem behaviour. Prolonged perceptual incongruity may make young people feel that they are not understood; thus, it could lead to reduced communication with parents and, in turn, poorer psychological development.

Although previous studies have explored the connection between temperament and parenting, how parents' sensitivity

to children's moods affects the mental health of young people has not been studied yet. Therefore, a longitudinal multiple-mediation model will be employed in this paper to study how emotional expression and self-esteem mediate the effect of early perceptual congruence on later internalisation and externalisation. Under different academic, family and cultural expectations, young people today develop and may therefore be regarded differently by their parents. Therefore, the proposed framework is a boundary condition and does not assume that perceptual congruence will have the same meaning or effect in all places. The demand for autonomy, emotional repression, family duties and school studies may change the definition of temperament and alter the psychological weight of parental agreement with children. In terms of the research progress of multi-wave dyads and culturally sensitive family interventions, a system has been built to clarify time order, reciprocal effects, etc.

2. The Theoretical Paradigm of Temperament Perceptual Match

Congruence between parents' and adolescents' temperament perception refers to how much the ratings of parents of children's temperament by parents differ from those given by the children themselves. Recent multi-informant studies have found that the agreement of temperament ratings varies with different informants and different dimensions of temperament, and marked disagreement may be associated with children's emotional and behavioural problems [13]. This perception congruence is needed because the parents' caregiving behaviour is not directly due to the children's behaviour but rather the parents' interpretation of it. For instance, if a young person is in a bad mood and does not talk to their friends, a caring parent may know that it is due to emotional distress rather than defiance or disinterest in

socialising. Precise interpretation can help support the all-around growth of young people according to their own self-regulation [9].

Differences in perception will harm the quality of life of young people. When a parent believes that a teenager's strong emotions are "abnormal" and the teen thinks that they are "normal reactions to life", there is no emotional connection. The reasons for this may be that their parents are more strict or lack emotional support, and as a result, adolescents feel misunderstood [7]. With time, this continuous discrepancy will be one of the reasons for anxiety in these young people and reduce their sense of security, thus increasing their risk of developing internalising problems. Therefore, the enhancement of perceptual congruence will help to construct an effective support system for the child at home. Parents are responding to the behaviour of their children and also to their own interpretations of that behaviour. Therefore, parents' anxiety, expectations and cultural beliefs may affect how they perceive their children's temperament at different ages and thus lead to inconsistencies in parent-adolescent reports. Therefore, the goodness of fit can be considered a two-way perception that is influenced by the psychological flexibility and reflection ability of caregivers. Given this subjectivity, we need to know why some families can handle children with bad temperaments better than others in the face of relatively small stress. One important source of such variation is the cultural context, which shapes how parents interpret adolescents' temperament and how adolescents understand parental responses.

The significance and effects of temperament perceptual congruence may be influenced by cultural ideals for autonomy, emotional control, family responsibility, parents' authority, etc., and what is regarded as appropriate behaviour for teenagers. Cross-cultural evidence shows that the expression of family emotions is not associated with adolescents' emotional experiences in America and China in the same way [5]. It can be seen that perceptual congruence is not culture-free. Given that there is relatively close interaction among family members, parents' evaluation of a child's temperament may be motivated by their expectations for self-discipline, study and life planning; consequently, adolescents may feel that these expectations are both encouragement and pressure or restriction. Therefore, apparent agreement may sometimes be conformity rather than genuine consensus, and disagreement is a normal phenomenon of adolescent independence development rather than a defect in the family. Therefore, the development value of congruence is not only based on the degree of agreement but also on the content and relational meaning of that agreement. In the above framework, culture can influence people's attitudes towards temperaments, how parents react to differences in temperament, and how strongly people believe that they fit well and adjust psychologically.

3. The Mediating Role of Emotional Expression

The first mechanism put forward for the effect of perceptual congruence on the psychological adjustment of adolescents is emotional expression in the family. The family environment is the first place children learn about emotions in their early years, and here they learn how to feel, express and manage their feelings. A high degree of perceptual consistency can be accepted and supported by the family

emotionally. When parents know what makes their children happy and unhappy at home, they will be more willing to let their children show their emotions freely and positively [2]. Therefore, these young people are more willing to express their emotions openly, both good and bad, without the fear of punishment or exclusion.

More times will give the adolescents an opportunity to express themselves and talk about their emotions. Parents who are perceptually congruent can feel changes in their children's moods, and instead of reacting negatively, they may help their children understand why they feel that way by learning to reframe and manage their emotions [6]. Parents can help their children learn more ways to deal with emotions by talking openly and setting a good example. The teenager learns that bad moods are relatively short-lived and can be controlled; they are not very serious or long-lasting.

Problems with expressing and regulating emotions are general risk factors for all types of psychological and behavioural problems. Teenagers who are unable to express their emotions freely in a supportive family environment may feel empty inside and thus experience depression or anxiety; at the same time, problems in emotional regulation can lead to outward behaviour such as aggression and delinquency [8]. Congruence and discrepancy between parents and adolescents in their perceptions of emotional socialisation for anger and sadness have been associated with depressed mood in adolescents [14]. Discrepancies in the reports by parents and adolescents about the emotional expression of their parents have also been associated with loneliness and depression among adolescents [1]. Based on the above results, it is suggested that the adjustment of teenagers may not only be influenced by the objective emotional environment at home but also by how parents and children perceive that environment. Parents can provide a safe place for their children to talk and learn to control their emotions, thus helping the child develop better.

4. The Mediating Role of Adolescent Self-Esteem

The second proposed mediator is self-esteem; it is likely to change significantly in young adulthood and affect a person's mental health at that time [10]. Based on the basic theories of the development of self-concept, the self is not an independent cognitive system but has been shaped by extended socialisation. Based on the "looking-glass self" theory, a person's sense of self is formed by perceiving how others, particularly parents, view and evaluate them; therefore, in early life, parents are often one of the first "mirrors" for self-perception [3].

When there is a high degree of temperament perception matching, the feedback adolescents receive from their parents is in line with their own inner world. If a teenager thinks that they are very persistent but slow to get started, and their parents respond in kind, the teenager can integrate this trait into their self-concept positively and consistently. As a result, they may begin to think that their temperamental traits are normal and better fit the construction of their own self-concept. According to the developmental theory of self-concept, feedback from close relatives is very important; over the long term, however, it has been observed that self-esteem is positively associated with one's adaptation after experiencing parental behaviour [3, 4]. To be accepted by one's parents will make one feel comfortable and help to form

a stable self-concept.

Perceptual mismatch may cause young people to be in a state of cognitive dissonance for some time. If a child with high sensory sensitivity is repeatedly told by their parents that it is a "weakness" or "overreaction", the child will learn to believe that they are wrong. Therefore, these young people have started to feel a sense of helplessness and a lack of purpose. According to a study in the previous decade, with the changes in teenagers' self-esteem, their mental health has also changed, and thus the impact of parents' love and attention may be different [4]. A more stable and positive self-concept can help teenagers better handle other people's disapproval and poor school performance. Longitudinal studies show that self-esteem may be a reason why some people feel bad after being praised by their parents [4]. Therefore, how well parents understand and accept their children's temperaments may be associated with the children's self-esteem and, as a result, their psychological adaptation.

5. The Multiple Mediation Mechanism in a Longitudinal Context

Cross-sectional studies can only show the correlations among temperament perceptual congruence, emotional expression, self-esteem and psychological adjustment, but they cannot determine which one precedes the others in the proposed mediation model. A single measurement point cannot show whether perceptual congruence occurs before an increase in emotional expression and self-esteem; that is to say, are psychologically healthy adolescents more inclined to agree with their parents, and do these processes affect one another? Therefore, the estimates of cross-sectional mediation can only show that there is an indirect effect, and they cannot determine whether the proposed mediator changes before the later changes in psychological adjustment. A long-term design can be used to separate the early perceptual congruence, the subsequent development of the mediator, and the adjustment results at a later stage; at the same time, it is possible to explore whether there are any possible effects from parents and adolescents [12]. Perceptual congruence in the parent-child relationship is likely to change as a result, so it should not be considered an immutable feature that needs to be assessed at one time.

Temperament perceptual congruence will be evaluated at Time 1 in the above longitudinal model. A relatively high initial concordance can promote the formation of a good emotional environment in the family over time. After experiencing multiple times that they have been understood and supported correctly, adolescents will be more willing and capable of expressing and managing their emotions. The same experience can also give them a sense of self-worth by showing that their temperament is normal and fine. At Time 2, emotional expression and self-esteem will be evaluated, and then psychological adjustment will take place at Time 3. The order of time is not causality; based on observation, one can only infer that a modification to the proposed mediator is correlated with later changes in the original construct.

The parallel-mediation specification is kept because emotional expression and self-esteem are in different conceptual areas. Emotional expression relates to how teenagers show their emotions and regulate them in family life; self-esteem is about their general feeling of self-worth. However, the two mediators should not be assumed to be independent. Openly express your emotions and be

understood by your parents; this can increase your self-esteem, reduce the fear of rejection, and make you more willing to share your feelings. Therefore, the proposed model should be able to link the two mediators and compare the main parallel model with an alternative sequential path of emotional expression to self-esteem. As the present paper is theoretical, neither of the structures needs to be based on experiments.

Therefore, it is assumed that emotional expression and self-esteem at Time 2 will predict psychological adjustment at Time 3 after controlling for their own previous levels and relevant family and adolescent factors. Given the above time order, it is expected that the protective effect of perceptual congruence will develop gradually rather than occurring instantaneously or automatically. Moodiness can be a type of temperamentally reactive behaviour. Meta-analysis shows that the degree and direction of children's sensitivity to parenting differ according to temperament; at the same time, this moderation varies across different temperamental traits and adjustment outcomes [11]. Therefore, adolescents with a highly reactive temperament are more likely to feel that they have not been properly understood by their parents and will be particularly upset if their temperamental demands are consistently ignored. Therefore, the proposed framework is based on the combination of the mediation view and the individual difference view; although there is an initial perceptual incongruence between parents and adolescents, it will alter how they express emotions and their sense of self-worth, but the strength of this path will differ among different teenagers.

The culture of the place will be different at each stage of this study. Cross-cultural differences in the emotional expression of families may be the reason why the same family situations have different meanings and emotional effects for American and Chinese teenagers [5]. Firstly, cultural expectations may affect the criteria parents and teenagers use to judge temperament; thus, there will be different definitions and measurement levels of perceptual congruence. Second, they may change the parents' response to the mismatch. For example, what is considered good autonomy in one place may be considered a lack of self-discipline or unwillingness to cooperate with family members elsewhere. Thirdly, culture can also alter the pathways of mediation; that is to say, although some families may feel emotional suppression in their adaptive self-regulation, others will feel that it is a suppression and invalidation, and how much self-esteem depends on one's own will and how much on relational approval also varies. Therefore, in the future, one can study whether there is measurement equivalence among different cultures and explore whether cultural values affect the path from perceptual congruence to emotional expression, self-esteem, etc., in psychological adaptation.

6. Conclusion

The concept system of this paper will explore how congruence in the perceptions of temperament by parents and teenagers may affect the mental health development of teenagers. According to the concept of good-of-fit, it is proposed that emotional expression and self-esteem may be mediating links between early perceptual congruence and later internalisation and externalisation results. A higher degree of fit can create a more supportive emotional environment at home and give young people a stronger sense of self.

The two mediators are conceptually separate but may also

have some connections. Adolescents' emotional expression may increase self-esteem after they have communicated their emotions and received understanding and acceptance; thus, they may be more willing to speak out freely when their self-esteem is stable. Therefore, in the long term, parallel and sequential mediation models should be compared to study the reciprocal effects of parents and adolescents.

The new Paths should be understood in the background of culture and history, not assumed to apply everywhere. Cultural expectations for autonomy, emotional restraint, family responsibility, parental authority and academic performance may alter the way temperament is judged; thus, even if there is agreement, it may be due to compliance rather than genuine mutual understanding, and perceptual congruence can affect emotional expression and self-esteem. Since this framework has not been tested in an empirical study yet, many researchers will use multi-wave dyadic data, culturally appropriate measures and tests of measurement equivalence in the future to determine whether the proposed direct, indirect, mediated and reciprocal paths are the same in different cultures.

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