

Analysis between the parental bonding styles and emotional intelligence of student nurses

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Abstract. This study determined if parental bonding styles affect the development of emotional intelligence of student nurses. A descriptive-correlational research design was used. The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) developed by Parker et.al. (1979) was utilized to determine the bonding styles of the respondents' parents interpreted as Neglectful Parenting, Affectionless Control, Optimal Parenting and Affectionate Control. The Emotional Intelligence (EI) questionnaire adapted from Weisinger's EQ test instrument (1998) was also employed to measure the respondents' EI in terms of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. To analyze the data gathered, Frequency and Percentage distribution, Chi-Square Test, and Pearson Correlational Coefficient were utilized. Results show that majority of the respondents perceived their fathers to have Affectionless Control parenting which corresponds to high protection and low care and their mothers to have Neglectful Parenting which corresponds to low care and low protection. It was found out that the parental bonding style of the respondents' fathers has an effect only to their level of motivation and empathy. On the other hand, the parental bonding style of the respondents' mothers affects the respondents' EI as to self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Despite poor parenting, most of the respondents have moderately high to high level of EI which implies that there could be other factors that may contribute to the development of a student nurse's EI other than parental bonding style.

Key words: parental bonding styles, emotional intelligence, student nurses.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, use, understand, and manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict. Emotional intelligence impacts many different aspects of daily life, such as the way one behaves and interacts with others. If an individual has high emotional intelligence he is able to recognize his own emotional state and the emotional states of others, and engage with people in a way that draws them to him. He can use this understanding of emotions to relate better to other people, form healthier relationships, achieve greater success at work, and lead a more fulfilling life (Segal, et.al. 2013).

Parenting has always been an essential factor on what a child will be when he grows up as an adult. In the process of development of a child, majority of the parents would say that the adolescence stage is the most difficult time of the nurturing where there is heightened emotionality, that they feel their emotions in a stronger and more persistent manner (Biradar, 2006). The youth's transition to adulthood can be a smooth process aided by the guidance of securing, nurturing and understanding of parents in an emotionally conducive environment (Erickson, 1968). According to Johnson (2009), by increasing the emotional quotients, the adolescents can become equally productive and successful at what

they do and they can also help others to become more productive and successful. In the Nursing profession, according to the American Society of Registered Nurses (2007), nurses must interact with their patients, as it is the pulse of the nursing practice. This interactive process is complex which involves nurse perception, understanding of the patient's emotions and utilization of the perceptions to manage patient situations towards the goal of effective patient care.

And with this, the researchers wanted to determine how great is the impact of the unique types of parenting to the emotional intelligence of the selected fourth year student nurses of Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan City, Philippines. There may be other factors that contribute to the development of a healthy emotional intelligence but the researchers focused on the effects of parental bonding styles since family upbringing has always been a foundation of what a person becomes when he grows up.

This study utilized the Attachment Theory, put forth by Psychologist John Bowlby in 1969 describing attachment as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings". This theory has led to a new understanding of child development that they cultivate different styles of attachment based on experiences and interactions with their parents. Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory was also applied which has concepts that are personal or social in nature in measuring the level of emotional intelligence. These are self-awareness, understanding your emotions; self-regulation, controlling your emotions; motivation, motivating yourself; empathy, recognizing and understanding other's emotions; and, social skills, managing relationships.

This study was conceptualized to specifically explore the relationship between the bonding style of the respondents' parents and their emotional intelligence. There are two variables in this study. The first is the independent variable which is the parental bonding style which can be Neglectful Parenting, Affectionless Control, Optimal Parenting or Affectionate Control. The second is the dependent variable, which is the level of the respondents' Emotional Intelligence as to self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.

Materials and Methods

Research design

The descriptive-correlational survey research design was adopted to describe the independent and dependent variables and measure their relationship with each other.

Population and sample

The target population of the study consisted of 83 student nurses of the College of Nursing, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute Technology, Iligan City, Philippines for the academic year 2012-2013 selected through systematic random sampling.

Instrument

The instrument used for the study was a modified standard questionnaire which consisted of items from the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) by Parker, et.al. (1979) and Emotional Intelligence (EI) questionnaire from Weisinger’s EQ test instrument (1998).

Procedure

The respondents were given a 2-part questionnaire. Part 1 contained items that determined the respondents’ perceptions to the bonding styles rendered to them by their fathers and mothers utilizing the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI). The respondents were asked to recollect their parents’ behaviors and attitudes experienced while growing up and rate each parent separately. Using a Likert scale of 1-4, there were 12 items of the “care” scale and 13 items for “control” scale. This part determined the fundamental parental bonding styles namely Neglectful Parenting (low care and low control), Affectionless Control (high control and low care), Optimal Parenting (high care and low control) and Affectionate Control (high care and high control). Part 2 involved items to measure the respondents’ level of emotional intelligence as to self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.

Data analysis

To analyze the data gathered, Frequency and Percentage distribution, Chi-Square Test, and Pearson Correlational Coefficient were utilized.

Results and Discussion

Research question 1: What is the parental bonding style of the respondents’ fathers?

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents (49.4%) described their fathers’ parental bonding style as Affectionless Control which is described as showing low care and high control or demandingness to the children. This finding supports the book of McKinney (2008) which states that fathers are significantly less caring and are more likely to display affectionless control parenting style. On the other hand, Childers (2010), found out in his study that among 20 respondents, only 5% perceived their fathers’ parental bonding style as affectionless control.

Table 1. Parental Bonding Style of the Respondents’ Fathers (N=83)

Response	Number of responses (%)	
Neglectful Parenting	36	(43.4)
Affectionless Control	41	(49.4)
Optimal Parenting	5	(6.0)
Affectionate Control	1	(1.2)

Research question 2: What is the parental bonding style of the respondents' mothers?

Table 2. Parental Bonding Style of the Respondents' Mothers (N=83)

Response	Number of responses (%)	
Neglectful Parenting	47	(56.63)
Affectionless Control	25	(30.12)
Optimal Parenting	5	(6.02)
Affectionate Control	6	(7.23)

Table 2 depicts that majority of the respondents described their mothers' parental bonding style as Neglectful Parenting which is defined as providing low care and showing low control to their children. Out of 83 respondents, 47 of them or 56.63 % described their mothers to have Neglectful Parenting and only 5 respondents or 6.02 % perceived their mothers to have Optimal Parenting. Neglectful parents, as described by Polansky et.al. (2008) are indeed psychologically immature and childlike in their inabilities to consider the needs of others and to invest themselves emotionally in another person. They are also defined to have deficiencies in social skills.

Research question 3: What is the level of Emotional Intelligence of the respondents as to self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills?

Table 3. The respondents' level of Emotional Intelligence as to self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (N=83)

	Low	Moderately High	High	Very High
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Self-awareness	8 (9.60)	27 (32.50)	35 (42.20)	13 (15.70)
Self-regulation	5 (6.02)	47 (56.63)	30 (36.14)	1 (1.21)
Motivation	1 (1.21)	30 (36.14)	42 (50.60)	10 (12.05)
Empathy	2 (2.40)	34 (41.00)	40 (48.20)	7 (8.40)
Social skills	2 (2.40)	38 (45.80)	35 (42.20)	8 (9.60)

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents have high level of EI as to self-awareness, motivation and empathy and have moderately high level of EI as to self-regulation and social skills. This finding agrees with Benson et.al.(2010) that undergraduate nursing students have EI scores within the emotionally and socially effective functioning capacity, identifying them as being able to establish satisfying interpersonal relationships, and work well under pressure. The attributes of EI are important for overall well-being and influence our ability to succeed in life. Together with cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence forms an important part of general intelligence; it develops over time, changes throughout life, and can be improved through training as well as therapeutic techniques (Bar-On et al., 2007).

Research question 4: Is there a significant relationship between the parental bonding styles of the father and mother and the respondents' level of emotional intelligence?

To test the significant relationship between the respondents' parental bonding styles and their level of EI, the Contingency Correlation Coefficient was utilized.

Table 4. Relationship Between the Parental Bonding Style of the Respondents' Fathers and their level of Emotional Intelligence (N=83)

Fathers' Parental Bonding Style Versus	Computed Contingency Correlation Coefficient	P-Value	Remark
Self-awareness	0.363	0.180	Not Significant
Self-regulation	0.240	0.830	Not Significant
Motivation	0.719	0.000	Significant
Empathy	0.597	0.000	Significant
Social Skills	0.277	0.647	Not Significant

Legend: If P-value is less than $\alpha = 0.05$ (level of significance), then the test is significant (i.e., there is a significant relationship); otherwise, if the test is not significant (i.e., there is no significant relationship).

The computed value of the correlation coefficient at 0.363, 0.240, 0.719, 0.597 and 0.277 entails that the fathers' parental bonding style (overall) does not affect the level of the respondents' EI as to self-awareness, self-regulation, and social skills but has a significance to their level of motivation and empathy. This implies that the respondents' ability to understand own emotions, control emotions and manage relationships are not affected by their paternal bonding style which is Affectionless Control described as showing high control/demandingness and low care. But the respondents' abilities of self motivation and recognizing and understanding other's emotions are affected by this paternal bonding style. This finding agrees with Kopko (2007) that a cooperative, motivated, and responsible

teen may be more likely to have parents who exercise an authoritative parenting style. But according to the study of Valiente et.al.(2006), children’s empathy-related responses were clearly related to their effortful control but were weakly directly related to their parents’ expressivity.

Table 5. Relationship Between the Parental Bonding Style of the Respondents’ Mothers and their level of Emotional Intelligence (N=83)

Mothers’ Parental Bonding Style Versus	Computed Contingency Correlation Coefficient	P-Value	Remark
Self Awareness	0.444	0.016	Significant
Self Regulation	0.474	0.004	Significant
Motivation	0.417	0.042	Significant
Empathy	0.462	0.007	Significant
Social Skills	0.449	0.013	Significant

The computed value of the correlation coefficient at 0.444, 0.474, 0.417, 0.462 and 0.449 implies that there is a significant relationship between the mothers’ parental bonding style (overall) and the level of EI as to self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills of the respondents. It implies that the bonding style of the respondents’ mothers which is Neglectful Parenting described as showing low care and low control affects the respondents’ moderately high to high level of EI. Neglectful parenting, also called uninvolved parenting, is a style characterized by a lack of responsiveness to a child's needs. The parent is both unresponsive and undemanding and usually psychologically unavailable to the child. Uninvolved parents make few to no demands of their children and they are often indifferent, dismissive or even completely neglectful. These parents have little emotional involvement with their kids. While they provide for basic needs like food and shelter, they are uninvolved in their children's lives. But there are some positive characteristics of children raised by neglectful parent which are learning to provide for themselves and having fear of becoming dependent on other people, thus having developed independence (Kendra, 2013).

Conclusion

The parental bonding style of the respondents’ fathers (Affectionless Control) affects the respondents’ level of EI as to motivation and empathy but showed no association to self-awareness, self-regulation and social skills. Meanwhile, the parental bonding style of the respondents’ mothers (Neglectful Parenting) affects all the five aspects of EI. But despite poor parenting, the respondents were found to have moderately high to high level of EI which is possibly attributed by other factors such as environment, peers and related

learning experiences of nursing practice which allowed the student nurses to interact with patients and clients with different cultures and behaviors.

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