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Perceived parental behaviour, self-esteem and happiness

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Abstract *Background*: This study set out to determine to what extent recalled parental rearing styles (authoritarian, authoritativeness, permissiveness), personality (extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism, lie), and self-esteem predicted self-rated happiness in a normal, non-clinical, population of young people in their late teens and early 20s. *Methods*: Each participant completed a few questionnaires: the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (revised), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Parental Authority Questionnaire and the Oxford Happiness Inventory. It was predicted that sex, extraversion, neuroticism, self-esteem and both maternal and paternal authoritativeness would be significant predictors of happiness. *Results*: Regressional and path analysis showed self-esteem to be the most dominant and powerful predictor of happiness. The effect of sex on happiness was moderated by neuroticism, which related to self-esteem, which directly influenced happiness. Stability, extraversion and maternal authoritativeness were significant predictors of self-esteem accounting for one-third of the variance. *Conclusion*: The results are considered in terms of the distinct literature on the relation between personality and happiness and on the relation between parental styles and self-esteem. Self-esteem was both a direct and a moderator variable for young people's self-reported happiness. Extraversion had both direct and indirect predictive power of happiness, whereas neuroticism predicted happiness mediating through self-esteem. Maternal authoritativeness was the only direct predictor of happiness when paternal and maternal rearing styles were examined together, suggesting that a reasonable discipline exercised by mothers towards their children was particularly beneficial in enhancing the offsprings' self-esteem.

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Introduction

A vast quantity of research has concentrated on the effects of actual parenting and perceived parenting (that which is recalled by an individual) on self-esteem (Buri 1989) and self-criticism (Brewin et al. 1992, 1996). Some studies have concentrated on the links between parenting styles and depression (Burback and Borduin 1986; Gerlsma 1990). Others have examined the consequences of different parental styles (Becker 1964; Eiser et al. 1991; Ferrari and Olivetti 1993; Jackson et al. 1994; Klein et al. 1996; Lewis 1981; Paretti and Staturm 1984; Parker 1979, 1993; Schwartz and Getter 1980; Wright 1982). This study set out to examine the relationship between specific parental styles and personality traits on the self-esteem and the self-reported happiness of adolescents. Whereas there have been various previous studies on personality and happiness (Furnham and Brewin 1990; Furnham and Cheng 1997, 1999), few have considered the effects of parental style on happiness, with self-esteem as a possible mediating variable. There seems to be quite distinct literature on personality and demographic correlates of happiness on the one hand and demographic and parental style correlates of self-esteem on the other. This study attempts to "marry" this literature, focusing on self-reported happiness as the major outcome variable. It contrasts with the fairly extensive literature on the more negative consequences of parenting style.

Parenting style

Various studies have looked at parental rearing styles and their correlates among adolescents. Hunt (1974) found that, in a population of over five hundred under-graduates, perceived laissez-faire parent-child relations led to high marijuana usage, while autocratic (authoritarian) relations led to medium usage. Low usage was associated with democratic (authoritative)

relations. In their more recent study of minor psychiatric morbidity, Kitamura and Suziki (1993) found that the total score on the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) was higher among those people recording high maternal protection than among those with low maternal protection (using the Parental Bonding Instrument); however, only anxiety and insomnia subscales retained this relationship with perceived rearing experiences.

Two dimensions of parental rearing styles emerge consistently from the various methods employed to study parenting patterns: the first separates parents that are controlling and demanding from those that are not demanding; the second differentiates between parents that are child-centred, accepting and responsive and those that are parent-centred, rejecting and unresponsive (Parker et al. 1979). Baumrind (1968, 1971, 1982; Baumrind and Brown 1967) carried out a large scale study on the different patterns of parental authority employed in raising children. She conducted extensive analyses of these dimensions, and revealed three types of parenting (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) behaviours that have empirically been associated with different outcomes for the children. Authoritative parents are viewed as ideal for child development, as they combine control and acceptance with child-centred involvement. They are strict and expect appropriate levels of discipline and behaviour, but are willing to explain the reasons behind rules and punishments, and will often value the child's point of view. These parents are perceived by their children as warm and nurturant. The children in turn tend to be: independent, assertive, cooperative with adults, friendly with peers, intellectually successful; enjoy life and possess a strong motivation to achieve.

Authoritarian parents are typically more dictatorial in their dealings with their children. They have an absolute set of standards, to which children must conform. They are perceived to be not particularly warm or affectionate. This style of parenting supposedly tends to produce children low on self-reliance, responsibility and achievement motivation. Permissive parenting is characterised by accepting, responsive, child-centred, non-punitive parents, who place few demands on their children, leaving them to exercise as much control as possible over their own activities. Children of this parenting style tend to be very positive in their moods and possess more vitality than those of authoritarian parents. Their behaviour, however, is less mature due to low impulse control, responsibility and self-reliance. Having defined these characteristic parenting patterns, one should note that most parents use a combination of all three styles, calling on a particular style as and when it is appropriate.

Baumrind (1971) suggested that permissive parents tended to make fewer demands on their children than do other parents, allowing them to regulate their own activities as much as possible. Thus, permissive parents are generally less controlling, and tend to use a minimum of punishment with their children. Authoritarian parents tend to be highly directive with their children, and expect unquestioning obedience in their exercise of authority over their children. She argues that authoritarian parents discourage verbal give-and-take with their children, favouring instead punitive measures to control their children's behaviour. Baumrind saw parental style as a spectrum, with permissive and authoritarian parents at either end, and authoritative parents falling somewhere in between these extremes. She saw authoritative parents as providing clear and firm direction for their children, but also warmth, reason and verbal exchange.

Buri (1991) developed the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) to measure Baumrind's (1971) parental authority prototypes. Buri et al. (1988) hypothesized and demonstrated that a parental authoritarian style would be negatively correlated with self-esteem, whereas the relationship would be positive for parental authoritativeness. They argue that "the healthy exercise of authority within the home may be of greater significance in the development of self-esteem in daughters than in sons" (p 281). Other studies have related the PAQ to self-esteem. Using psychoanalytic ideas, Watson et al. (1992) found perceived parental authoritativeness was associated with less narcissistic tendencies; permissiveness was associated with immature grandiosity; and an authoritarian style with inadequate idealization.

This study not only re-examines the relationship between parental style and self-esteem, but considers how personality traits and demographic variables affect this relationship, and how all four factors – demography, personality, perceived parental rearing style and self-esteem – predict happiness.

Parental authority has been linked to levels of self-esteem in the child, yet investigations into this area have yielded contradictory results. Sears (1970) and later Backman (1982) found that strong disciplinary practices by parents have a deleterious effect upon self-esteem in boys. However, Coopersmith (1967) reported higher levels of self-esteem in boys where parental discipline is firm and demanding, with clear set limits of behaviour. While Baumrind (1971, 1982), herself, reported authoritative parenting as more likely to result in self-reliant, independent, achievement-orientated and self-controlled children than either permissive parenting or authoritarian parenting, she went further, to suggest that authoritarian parenting was deleterious to the development of personality and behavioural correlates of self-esteem. Buri et al. (1988) concluded that parental authority may have either a negative or a positive effect upon self-esteem, depending upon the type of authority exercised. They found a strong positive relationship between parental authoritativeness and adolescent self-esteem, and a strong inverse relationship between parental authoritarianism and adolescent self-esteem. No significant relationship was found between parental permissive-

ness and self-esteem, consistent with Baumrind's (1971, 1982) findings.

Recent research has shown a clear positive relationship between parental nurturance and self-worth. Hopkins and Klein (1995) found a greater proportion of women's global self-worth was accounted for by the parental nurturance score. In another study Klein et al. (1996) found authoritative parental styles were generally correlated to positive (late adolescent) self-perceptions and authoritarian style to negative self-perceptions. Authoritarian parental styles in the mother seemed particularly associated with low self-worth, while authoritative styles seemed particularly related to children feeling good about themselves. Herz and Gullone (1999) argued that the quality of the parent-child relationship has a significant impact on the confidence, resilience and well-being of individuals. They believe the literature highlights two orthogonal but salient dimensions: firstly, parental warmth, nurturance, acceptance/responsivity and secondly, the amount of control, structure, involvement, or demandingness.

Further, despite belief of discontinuity of parental influence in the adolescent years, the data suggest parental attitudes and behaviours have an enduring effect. Herz and Gullone (1999) looked at the relationship between personality (EPQ), self-esteem and parenting in two cultures, and found both personality and parenting style significantly correlated with self-esteem. It appears to be the case that nearly all studies have demonstrated a significant relationship between parenting style and self-esteem, irrespective of the measures used, the age of the participants, or the culture of the group. Whilst the finding is clearly robust, it is not clear what other factors may moderate this relationship or, indeed, what the consequences of self-esteem may be.

There are criticisms of all parental styles questionnaires. Retrospective studies, in which adolescent/adult reports of their parent's childrearing style are correlated with a measure of adult personality may be subject to a number of biases. The first bias is "retrospective bias", described by McCrae and Costa (1993). In a review of retrospective reports including longitudinal data where children as young as 7 years reported on their parental styles, and did so again 28 years later, McCrae and Costa concluded that retrospective methods are neither entirely trustworthy nor useless. They argue that the data from true prospective studies do suggest that loving parents have better adjusted children, but that the association is very weak.

A second widely recognised bias is that the behaviour of the parents may be elicited by the characteristics of the child (Plomin et al. 1977). They argued that a child high in neuroticism, and thus more prone to anxiety, irritability and impulsivity, may be more difficult to love than a well-adjusted child. Therefore, any association between the parent-child relationship and adult neuroticism may reflect the impact of the child's personality on the parent-child relations rather than the reverse. We know, for instance, that adoptive siblings show little similarity in personality, despite being raised in the same household. A third bias may result from a subject's concern for social desirability. It is plausible to anticipate that a strong desire to be socially acceptable may induce subjects to be less self-critical and to minimise their reports of any adverse parenting experiences. This last bias may be minimised by assuring total anonymity to the subjects, reducing their need to be considered socially acceptable.

This study looked in part at the relationship between parental styles and self-esteem. Based on the previous literature, it was predicted that maternal and paternal authoritativeness would be positively correlated with high self-esteem.

Happiness

It was not until comparatively recently that psychologists have looked at the correlates, definitions and predictors of happiness (Argyle 1987; Eysenck 1990). Furnham and Brewin (1990) looked at the correlates of happiness, and reported a positive correlation for scores on happiness with those on extraversion, and a negative correlation with those on neuroticism. Argyle and Lu (1990) also found that scores on happiness were correlated with those on extraversion and enjoyment, and on participation in social activities. Headey and Wearing (1990), in a repeated panel study of 600 Australians in 1981, 1983 and 1985, found high scores on extraversion predisposed people to have favourable life events which, in turn, led to high scores on positive well-being and to increases in scores on extraversion; however, this still does not explain why extraverts choose such activities. Brebner et al. (1995) found scores on extraversion and neuroticism accounted for 42% of the variance in predicting happiness.

Most of the previous studies with happiness as the dependent variable used Eysenckian measures of personality. Furnham and Cheng (1997) used the Costa and McCrae (1989) NEO-FFI (NEO Personality Five Factor Inventory). All correlations between scores on subscales of the two measures were highly significant, happiness scores were correlated with those on agreeableness ($r = 0.39$), conscientiousness ($r = 0.31$), extraversion ($r = 0.39$), neuroticism ($r = -0.44$) and openness to experience ($r = 0.26$). Further, when the five factor scores were entered into a hierarchical regression along with sex and age, using happiness scores as the dependent variable, it was found that these various factors accounted for 43% of the variance. In all, three factors were significant: neuroticism ($\beta = -0.30$, $t = 2.73$), extraversion ($\beta = 0.25$, $t = 2.33$), and conscientiousness ($\beta = 0.23$, $t = 2.22$).

A recent cross-cultural study by Francis et al. (1998) also compared the responses of students from the English-speaking world: America, Australia, Britain and Canada. Happiness correlated extraversion at between $r = 0.41$ and $r = 0.49$, and with neuroticism at $r =$

−0.39 and $r = -0.57$. They note: "The findings confirm the internal reliability of the Oxford Happiness Inventory and support the view that happiness could be called stable extraversion" (p 167). However, Furnham and Cheng (1999) looked at personality as a predictor of happiness and mental health in the East and West, specifically in China, Japan, and Great Britain. The results of regressional analysis for Britain and China were similar, with extraversion and neuroticism being the major predictors of happiness, accounting for up to half of the variance. However, it was only extraversion and not neuroticism that predicted happiness in Japan.

In this study, happiness is the dependent variable. It was predicted that:

1. Extraversion and neuroticism would be significantly correlated with happiness.
2. Parental permissiveness and authoritarian parenting would be negatively and parental authoritativeness positively correlated with self-esteem.
3. Self-esteem would be a mediator between parental rearing styles and young people's self-reported happiness.

Subjects and methods

Participants

In total, 406 young people participated in this study (179 males and 225 females). They ranged in age from 14 to 28, and the mean age was 20.31 (SD = 2.4). They were senior pupils of various schools in the United Kingdom and undergraduate students of the University of London. Of the 406 participants, 66.8% were aged between 16 and 19 and were predominantly final-year secondary school pupils. A further 21.6% were aged between 20 and 24, and were first- and second-year university students.

Measures

Eysenck Personality Questionnaire

The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (revised) (Eysenck et al. 1985) is a 48-item version of the "yes/no" questionnaire, which measures extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism, and lie. All scales have been demonstrated to have Cronbach reliabilities of around 0.80. This shortened version of the EPQ is now widely used.

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale

The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg 1965) was designed to measure adolescents' global feeling of self-worth or self-acceptance. It has claimed a test-retest reliability of 0.85 and an α of 0.88.

Parental Authority Questionnaire

The Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri 1989) was designed to measure adolescents' assessments of parental nurturance and authority (as perceived by adolescents). It contains three distinct parental rearing styles, "permissiveness", "authoritarian", and "authoratitiveness", for each of the parents. It has demonstrated a test-retest reliability ranging from 0.77 to 0.92 and Cronbach coefficient α ranging from 0.74 to 0.85 for the six sub-scales.

Oxford Happiness Inventory

The Oxford Happiness Inventory (Argyle et al. 1981) is a 29-item questionnaire measuring the general psychological causes of happiness, including its main components: achievement and satisfactory enjoyment, and vigour and health. It has demonstrated a test-retest reliability correlation coefficient of 0.78 and an α of 0.93.

Procedure

Participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire in the school environment. It took about 40 min to complete. The guarantee of confidentiality was stressed, and the response rate was 95%.

Results

Sex differences

Table 1 shows the mean (and standard deviation) for both sexes. There was only one parental factor difference between the two sexes: males reported higher maternal authoritarian scores than females. Males had significantly lower extraversion and neuroticism scores but higher psychoticism scores than females. Females also had significantly lower self-esteem scores than males. Most of these differences have been found before. Females tended to be slightly older than males. There were no significant differences in the social class of participants (based on parental employment) or happiness level. In relation to parental rearing styles, mothers of boys had significantly higher scores on authoritarian parenting than mothers of girls, indicating that mothers tend to be more "bossy" and possessive towards boys than towards girls.

Table 1 also shows the α reliability scores for the various measures. All were satisfactory, with the possible exception of psychoticism, which did not reach the visual 0.70 cut-off score.

Intercorrelates

Table 2 shows the intercorrelation between the six PAQ scores and the other measures (controlling for sex and age of participants).

Permissiveness (both maternal and paternal) seems correlated only with psychoticism (positively), though paternal permissiveness was marginally correlated with happiness (NS). Authoritarian parental styles (both maternal and paternal) were significantly associated with introversion, neuroticism, poor self-esteem and low happiness scores. The highest correlations seemed to be with authoritativeness, particularly maternal authoritativeness, which indicated that it was associated with extraversion, emotional stability, self-esteem and happiness. Correlations between parental authoritarianism and authoritativeness were consistently opposite on sign, but roughly equal in strength, with the other measures.

Table 1 Mean and SD of parental rearing style (Parental Authority Questionnaire, PAQ), personality (Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, EPQ), self-esteem, happiness (Oxford Happiness Inventory, OHI), and demographic variables by sex

Measures	α	Males (n = 179)		Females (n = 227)		F level (ANOVA)
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Age		17.47	2.32	19.17	2.45	11.29***
Father's employment[a]		2.36	1.42	2.13	1.29	3.24
Mother's employment[a]		1.36	1.06	1.48	1.00	1.32
Permissiveness						
Father	0.75	27.44	6.18	26.42	6.37	2.32
Mother	0.73	26.50	5.81	26.15	6.35	0.31
Parents	0.82	53.88	10.88	52.75	10.89	0.92
Authoritarian						
Father	0.89	30.04	7.97	29.23	9.05	0.78
Mother	0.87	29.38	7.66	27.17	8.29	7.15**
Parents	0.92	59.18	14.27	56.28	15.33	3.29
Authoritativeness						
Father	0.85	32.90	7.29	32.81	7.35	0.01
Mother	0.83	33.48	6.93	34.42	7.11	1.64
Parents	0.88	66.22	12.22	67.27	12.22	0.62
Extraversion	0.84	7.80	3.47	8.56	3.36	4.18*
Neuroticism	0.72	6.09	2.94	7.12	2.93	10.97**
Psychoticism	0.61	4.30	2.30	3.61	2.56	6.65*
Lie scale	0.70	3.81	2.56	3.67	2.61	0.29
Self-esteem	0.85	31.62	5.23	30.39	4.40	6.33*
OHI	0.88	157.24	29.69	157.71	27.00	0.02

*$P < 0.05$; **$P < 0.01$; ***$P < 0.001$

[a] Full-time employment coded as "3", part-time as "2", and unemployment or others as "1"

α Internal reliability (Cronbach)

Table 2 Partial correlations between parental rearing style (Parental Authority Questionnaire, PAQ), personality (Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, EPQ), self-esteem, and happiness (Oxford Happiness Inventory, OHI), controlling for age and sex. *Ext* extraversion, *Neu* neuroticism, *Psy* psychoticism, *Lie* lie scale, *SE* self-esteem

Measures	Ext	Neu	Psy	Lie	SE	OHI
Permissiveness						
Father	0.12*	−0.01	0.14*	−0.04	0.07	0.11
Mother	0.07	−0.02	0.21***	0.05	0.04	0.04
Parents	0.11*	−0.02	0.19***	0.01	0.08	0.10
Authoritarian						
Father	−0.17**	0.12*	−0.04	0.11	−0.27***	−0.30***
Mother	−0.15**	0.20***	−0.05	0.01	−0.27***	−0.27***
Parents	−0.19***	0.18***	−0.01	0.07	−0.31***	−0.33***
Authoritativeness						
Father	0.15***	−0.12*	−0.10	−0.07	0.26***	0.30***
Mother	0.21***	−0.24***	−0.07	0.04	0.32***	0.31***
Parents	0.22***	−0.19***	−0.11*	−0.04	0.32***	0.35***

*$P < 0.05$; **$P < 0.01$; ***$P < 0.001$

Predicting happiness from self-esteem, personality, parental rearing styles (both paternal and maternal), and demographic variables

A path model was designed (Fig. 1) and a set of hierarchical regressions were conducted. As an initial measure, the parental styles (both maternal and paternal), the three demographic variables and the four personality variables were regressed on to happiness (along with self-esteem) and then onto self-esteem itself. Thus, with the happiness score as the dependent variable, first sex and age were entered, followed by parental styles, then personality variables and finally self-esteem. The rationale was that the more stable and earlier "occurring" variables were entered first. Once this regression was completed, the pattern was repeated, with self-esteem as the dependent variable. Following this, extraversion and neuroticism became the dependent variables, respectively. Thus, this was a theory-driven path analysis, which allowed for the testing of the specific hypotheses. The results of the initial regression was significant [$F(13,215) = 13.32$, $P < 0.001$; Adj $R^2 = 0.45$], and showed that self-esteem ($\beta = 0.48$, $t = 7.33$, $P < 0.001$) and extraversion ($\beta = 14$, $t = 2.22$, $P < 0.05$) were significant predictors of happiness. The results of the second regression, with self-esteem as the dependent variable, was also significant [$F(12,226) = 12.95$, $P < 0.001$; Adj $R^2 = 0.41$).

Extraversion and self-esteem, as well as maternal authoritativeness, were significant predictors of happiness, whilst extraversion, neuroticism, maternal authoritativeness, as well as sex, were significant predictors of self-esteem. Maternal authoritativeness was also a pre-

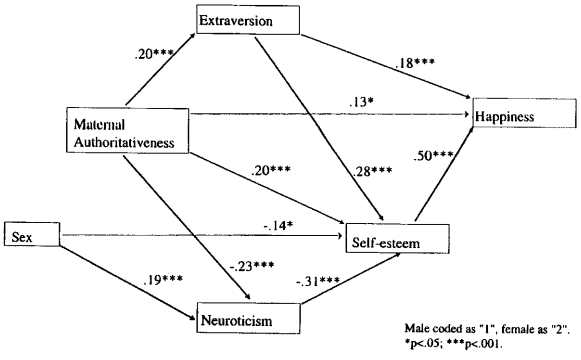

Fig. 1 Path model, predicting happiness (Oxford Happiness Inventory, OHI) from self-esteem, personality (Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, EPQ), parental rearing style (Parental Authority Questionnaire, PAQ, both parental and maternal) and demographic variables

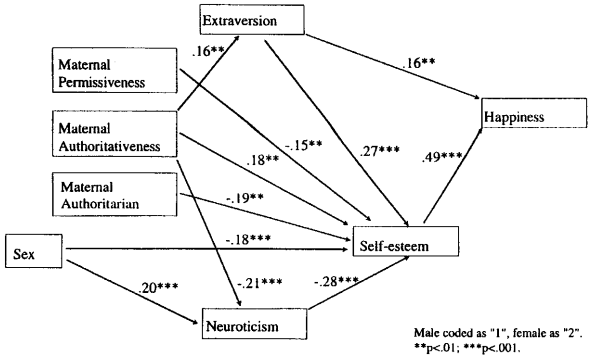

Fig. 3 Path model, predicting happiness (Oxford Happiness Inventory, OHI) from self-esteem, personality (Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, EPQ), maternal rearing style (Parental Authority Questionnaire, PAQ), and demographic variables

dictor of extraversion and neuroticism. It showed that extraversion, neuroticism, and maternal authoritativeness were both direct and indirect (mediating though self-esteem) predictors of happiness and, among the six variables of parental styles, maternal authoritativeness was the most influential factor of perceived happiness.

Predicting happiness from self-esteem, personality, parental rearing styles (separately), and demographic variables

In order to distinguish the influences of paternal and maternal rearing styles on young people, the three paternal and three maternal variables were used separately in the hierarchical regression.

Figure 2 shows that, along with self-esteem and extraversion, paternal authoritativeness was a significant direct predictor of happiness. Extraversion, neuroticism, sex, and paternal authoritarian parenting style were significant predictors of self-esteem, which was by far the strongest predictor of self-reported happiness.

Figure 3 shows that extraversion and self-esteem were the only significant direct predictors of happiness.

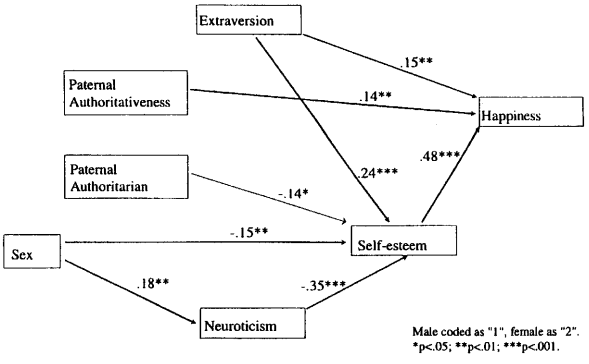

Fig. 2 Path model, predicting happiness (Oxford Happiness Inventory, OHI) from self-esteem, personality (Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, EPQ), paternal rearing style (Parental Authority Questionnaire, PAQ), and demographic variables

However, there were many more significant predictors of self-esteem (sex, maternal permissiveness, maternal authoritativeness, maternal authoritarian style, extraversion and neuroticism), suggesting that self-esteem is probably a moderator variable between personality, maternal rearing styles and happiness.

Discussion

This study was an attempt to combine the two currently active research areas – the happiness or mental well-being research and the parental behaviour research – to examine the question of the primary determinants of happiness in young people. Whilst the former have been mainly concentrated on personality, self-esteem, life satisfaction, social activities and leisure, the latter have been more focused on parental rearing styles and self-esteem in relation to psychological illness, such as social maladjustment in the society.

It was expected that extraversion and neuroticism would be statistically significantly associated with both self-esteem and happiness, which would be closely correlated. It should be noted, however, that there is some evidence to suggest that both the self-esteem and neuroticism measures may be less reliable and more affected by mood states than the other trait variables (i.e. extraversion).

Results showed that self-esteem was both a direct and a moderator variable for young people's self-reported happiness. Extraversion had both direct and indirect predictive power of happiness, whereas neuroticism predicted happiness mediating through self-esteem. Maternal authoritativeness was the only direct predictor of happiness when paternal and maternal rearing styles were examined together, suggesting that a reasonable discipline exercised by mothers towards their children was particularly beneficial in enhancing the off-springs' self-esteem. Further, when measured alone, paternal authoritativeness also showed a direct predictive power of happiness, while paternal authoritarian behaviour

appeared to reduce young people's happiness through weakening their self-esteem. All three maternal rearing styles tend to affect happiness mediating through self-esteem. Moreover, maternal authoritativeness seemed to increase and decrease extraversion and neuroticism respectively. It is uncertain as to whether this is evidence of mothers responding to the particular personality of their children or whether parental style in some way shapes their off-springs' personality. Perhaps it is the result of constant dynamic interactions, since one's personality is believed to be formed by both genetic and environmental factors, though to what degree each source is responsible remains unclear.

Among demographic variables, sex seemed to be the only significant predictor of self-esteem: females had lower scores than males, and this remained so when parental rearing styles were examined together or separately, which is in line with the previous findings. Age may not have had a significant effect, because of range restrictions in this fairly homogeneous sample.

It is interesting to note that when both parental scores were combined, it was only maternal authoritativeness that was directly causally linked to both personality variables (positively with extraversion; negatively with neuroticism), as well as self-esteem and happiness. This is to be expected in terms of Baumrind's (1971) theory, which emphasizes the positive nature of this parental style. However, it may have been expected that the other two styles (authoritarian and permissive) would be negatively associated with the two major outcome variables. One possible explanation could be that the intercorrelations between paternal and maternal measures of each style ($r = 0.48$–0.58) implied that a certain amount of variance might be shared by these measures, which thus had a suppressing effect.

As can be seen from Figs. 1 and 2, when the results were separated for the two parents, the three different parental rearing styles had more impact. The pattern for the parental rearing style showed that authoritativeness was a direct positive predictor of happiness, while an authoritarian style was a direct negative predictor of self-esteem. This confirms previous findings (Baumrind 1971; Buri 1989).

The pattern for maternal rearing styles was more complex. None of the three rearing styles was directly related to happiness, but all three were significantly predictive of self-esteem. Thus, as demonstrated previously, authoritarian and permissiveness scores were negatively, and authoritativeness positively, associated with self-esteem. This confirms Baumrind's (1968, 1971, 1972) theory, and the various studies using Buri's (1989, 1991) measures. The results also suggest that maternal authoritativeness is positively associated with extraversion and negatively associated with neuroticism. However, what Fig. 3 indicates most clearly is that maternal rearing styles impact most directly on self-esteem rather than happiness. The results indicate that stable young males with authoritative parents have high self-esteem, which is related to their self-reported happiness. Conversely, neurotic females whose parental styles were authoritarian or permissive tend to have low self-esteem and concomitant levels of happiness.

Maternal rearing styles seem to be more powerful predictors of self-esteem, and thence happiness, than paternal styles. Further, maternal rearing styles are significantly related to personality variables, which paternal styles are not. Gender plays an important role, which indicates that females have lower self-esteem and may, therefore, be expected to have lower happiness. However, the findings of previous studies and the present study showed no such a tendency. One reason might be that females tend to have better friendship-making skills and, since social support has been found to be positively correlated with mental well-being, it balanced the overall happiness levels between males and females. The power of neuroticism as a predictor of happiness is mediated through self-esteem, but extraversion is not. Certainly, these results advance the personality and happiness literature by providing a part explanation for the role of neuroticism in self-reported happiness.

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