

A Comparison of the Attitudes of Educators and Their Parents as Measured by Four Constructs Associated with Child Abuse

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Doctoral Dissertation
Loyola University of Chicago, 1980

Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to verify the factor structure of the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI). This study was the first to gather data from an adult sample on the AAPI which identifies and measures four constructs typically found in abusive parents. A second purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of educators as measured by responses to the AAPI. Lastly, self response sets and perceived parental response sets were compared on a number of variables.

The subjects in this study were 194 students enrolled in the Graduate School of Education at Loyola University in Chicago. They were asked to complete two copies of the AAPI (one for self and one for parents) and a general information sheet.

Factor analytic and internal consistency measures were used to verify the factor structure of the AAPI. All items significantly contributed to the common variance, a great majority of which was accounted for by four factors. Thirty-one of the thirty-two items were grouped into the same four factors as those in the original testing of the AAPI. Comparisons and correlations based on the factor analysis and the measure of internal consistency show that the factor structure was verified.

Conclusions

The attitudes of the educators did not contain any extreme scores and appear to indicate the presence of appropriate parenting attitudes. Conclusions are tentative due to the lack of comparable adult samples and questions about the unidimensional nature of the AAPI.

Analyses of Variance and post hoc comparisons assessed differences within and between groups. The main effect for differences between self and parent scores was highly significant for each factor ($p < .001$), reflecting a tendency of respondents to portray themselves as having more favorable parenting attitudes than their parents.

Sex was the only variable where significance was found in the self group and occurred when females rated themselves as significantly higher ($p < .01$), or as having more favorable scores than males and their own parents on the empathic awareness factor. No significant differences were found for the parental status and income level variables and differences found on age, socioeconomic level and religious affiliation groups were not significant on within-group post hoc tests.

There were a number of significant differences on the variable related to the quality of life in one's family of origin. In three of the four constructs the depiction of one's family life as excellent was further substantiated with generally more positive parenting attitudes than those who depicted the quality of their family life less favorable. Additionally, correlations between parent and self attitudes and the relatively low number of extreme parent scores suggests a relationship between attitudes of self and parents and the passing on of good attitudes. These findings may be considered a form of external validation of the AAPI.