THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG PARENTS' STRESS, SELF-ESTEEM AND ADOLESCENTS' WELL-BEING: PARENTS' GENDER DIFFERENCE

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Adolescents’ well-being and self-esteem are extremely important for youth to develop positively. Previous researches have explored some factors which could affect adolescents’ well-being and self-esteem (Harter, 1993; David et al., 1996; Ersoy et al., 2008; Inchley & Currie, 2013). However, few study investigated the relationship between parenting stress and adolescents’ well-being, especially the mediating role of self-esteem and its difference in terms of parents’ gender. The present study has two goals. The first one is to explore the relationship between parenting stress and adolescent well-being for mothers and fathers separately. Secondly, this study is to examine the mediating role of self-esteem on the relationship between parental distress and well-being in Chinese adolescents.

There were 2,257 pairs of parent-child (child and one of his/her parent) from 13 public middle schools in Beijing participating in the study and finishing the questionnaires. All of the participants were eighth grade students (1017 girls). Written informed consent was obtained from the students and their parents. Parenting stress was assessed using Parental Distress sub-scale (Abidin, 1995). Self-esteem was measured using Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) among adolescents. Well-being was measured through self-report using the Survey on Psychological Characteristics of Children and Adolescents aged 6-18 in China.

The results revealed that: 1) there was a significant negative correlation between parenting stress and adolescents’ well-being for fathers, but a significant positive correlation for mothers. 2) There was a significant difference of parenting stress in terms of parent’s gender, and adolescents’ self-esteem partially mediated the relationship between parenting stress and adolescents’ well-being for fathers. These results suggested that adolescents well-being may be affected by parenting stress of parents through adolescents’ self-esteem, especially for fathers. The differences of parenting stress and the mediation role of self-esteem in the relationship between parenting stress and adolescents’ well-being in terms of parents’ gender could be discussed further.