

A Bootstrap-Based Analysis of the Relationship between Father Involvement and the Subjective Well-being of Junior High-School Students

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between father involvement in parenting and the subjective well-being of junior high-school students, investigating the mediating effects of self-esteem of junior high-school students. A total of 384 junior high-school students from two middle schools in Henan and Anhui were investigated by means of questionnaires – simplified Chinese version of inventory of father involvement, subjective well-being scale and self-esteem scale. The collected data were processed and analyzed by SPSS23.0 and PROCESS macro for SPSS23.0, t-test, variance analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and Bootstrap-based meditation model. The results showed that the daily care dimension of father involvement in parenting contributes the most to self-esteem and subjective well-being of junior high school students. Self-esteem of junior high-school students shows a significant difference in gender, boys have better self-esteem than girls. The self-esteem of junior high school students has a significant positive correlation with the subjective well-being of junior high school students. The father involvement in parenting is positively correlated with the self-esteem of junior high school students, and the father involvement in parenting is positively correlated with the subjective well-being of junior high school students. The results also showed that the self-esteem of junior high school students partially mediated the relationship between father involvement in parenting and the subjective well-being of junior high school students.

Keywords: SPSS, Bootstrap-based mediation model, father involvement in parenting, subjective well-being, self-esteem, junior high-school students

1 INTRODUCTION

The implementation of *The Family Education Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China* on January 1, 2022 indicates the direction of Chinese family education [6]. It required both parents to raise their children by themselves, strengthen parent-child companionship, and participate in parenting together. Most of the studies carried out in the past focused on the important role of the mother in family education and the influence of parenting style on children, while the father, the breadwinner in the family, was often ignored. The publication of *Father, the Forgotten Contributor to Child Development* written by Lamb impassioned researchers to study fatherhood education which has been taken seriously when its irreplaceability is

recognized [14]. The change in modern family structure, the increase in mother employment, and the realistic problems of how to allocate family chores have triggered researchers to reflect on father involvement in parenting. With the emergence of ecological theory and family system theory, researchers have redefined the duty and role of the father. While mother's responsibility in a family is taking care of the children in daily life, father is responsible for children's personality, education, and so on.

Junior high-school students are in the critical period of personality development, and they are sensitive and fragile, easy to get negative and extreme because of their immature thoughts. Poor development in self-esteem will lead to a series of psychological and

behavioural problems. It's considered that self-esteem is closely related to positive personalities such as individual initiative, self-confidence and sense of honor [3], and it is also a critical factor to promote the development of individual's mental health. And children are more confident and self-respecting if their fathers highly involve in parenting [2]. Xiaoping Chen has found that the lack of father involvement in parenting affects the development of children's self-esteem. And the self-esteem of left-behind children with absent fathers is significantly lower than that of those from intact families [5].

With the rise of positive psychology, subjective well-being has attracted a lot of researchers. As the country becomes more prosperous, children's mental health and well-being are getting more attention. The research conducted by Wen Zhang and others has shown that there is a significant positive correlation between subjective well-being and self-esteem for college students [26]. Some studies have pointed out the partial correlation between parenting style and subjective well-being, however, fewer domestic studies on the subjective well-being of junior high-school students were found in the literature review. To provide some practical suggestions for family education, this paper will explore the fact whether father involvement in parenting will boost the subjective well-being of junior high-school students and the relationship among father involvement in parenting, the subjective well-being, and self-esteem of junior high-school students.

2 SUBJECTS AND METHODS

2.1 Subjects

A total of 420 junior high-school students from two middle schools in the provinces of Henan and Anhui and their fathers were selected as the subjects. Taking the class as a unit, we conducted the survey and recovered 384 valid questionnaires with an effective rate of 91.4%, among which 207 (53.9%) were boys and 177 (46.1%) were girls.

2.2 Tools

2.2.1 Questionnaire for Basic Information

The questionnaire, designed by the researcher, was used to investigate the demographic data of the research objects such as their gender, grade, etc.

2.2.2 Father Involvement in Parenting Questionnaire in Simplified Chinese Version

The revised Chinese version of Hawkins' Father Involvement in Parenting Scale conducted by Xiaoyun Yin, Zhihua Li, and Xinhua Yang in 2012 was selected as the father involvement in parenting scale in

the survey, including 26 items with four dimensions. The scale is scored on a 5-point scale, where a higher score indicates a higher level of father involvement in parenting. The four sub-dimensions are support and planning, encouragement and praise, daily care and discipline. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.92, indicating good reliability [23].

2.2.3 Subjective Well-being Scale

The Subjective Well-being Scale compiled by Campbell et al. includes two dimensions: index of general affect (8 items) and life satisfaction (1 item). The scale has been proved to have high reliability and validity, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.94, indicating good reliability [4].

2.2.4 Self-esteem Scale

The Self-esteem Scale (SES) compiled by Rosenberg has 10 questions, among which 5 items are reverse scoring with four grades: 1 is very inconsistent, 2 is not consistent, 3 is consistent, and 4 is very consistent. The score ranges from 10 to 40 points. It is applicable to middle school students (13-17 years old) and adults. The high reliability and validity of this scale has been shown in the study. The Cronbach alpha coefficient is 0.88, indicating good reliability [17].

2.3 Data Processing

SPSS23.0 and PROCESS macro are adopted for data processing and analysis, which involves the following main analysis methods: descriptive statistical analysis, t-test, variance analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and analysis of Bootstrap-based mediation model.

3 RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1 Current Status of Father Involvement in Parenting, Subjective Well-being and Self-esteem of Junior High School Students as well as How They Differ by Gender

Descriptive statistics are used to examine the overall and sub-dimensional current status of father involvement in parenting, subjective well-being of junior high-school students and self-esteem of junior high-school students as shown in Table 1. The overall mean of father involvement in parenting is 5.98, which is at the upper-middle level. As for each dimension, discipline scores the lowest at 5.55; encouragement and praise scores the highest at 6.45; daily care scores 5.57, and support and planning scores 6.34. The subjective well-being of junior high-school students scores 5.47 overall and by dimension, which is at the upper-middle

level. The overall mean of self-esteem of junior high-school students is 3.08, which is at the upper-middle level.

In this study, the differences in gender among father involvement in parenting, subjective well-being of junior high-school students and self-esteem of junior high-school students are investigated by t-test, as shown in Table 1. No significant statistical differences in gender has been found in father involvement in parenting and subjective well-being of junior high-

school students, both overall and sub-dimensionally ($p>0.05$). But the self-esteem of junior high-school students differs significantly in gender ($p<0.05$), and it is evident from comparing the means that boys score higher than girls. In general, father involvement in parenting and subjective well-being of junior high-school students shows no significant difference in gender ($p>0.05$). But there is a significant difference in gender regarding the self-esteem of junior high-school students ($p<0.05$), and it can be seen by comparing the means that boys have higher self-esteem than girls.

Table 1 Status of Father Involvement in Parenting, Subjective Well-being and Self-esteem of Junior High School Students as well as How They Differ by Gender

Variables	M±SD	Comparison by gender				
		Boys	Girls	<i>t</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	<i>p</i>
Encouragement and Praise	6.45±0.65	6.43±0.70	6.48±0.59	-0.625	0.077	0.532
Disciplines	5.55±0.99	5.61±0.97	5.48±1.01	1.26	0.131	0.208
Daily Care	5.57±1.00	5.65±0.99	5.48±1.01	1.632	0.17	0.103
Support and Planning	6.34±0.66	6.34±0.73	6.35±0.58	-0.182	0.015	0.855
Father Involvement in Parenting	5.98±0.72	6.01±0.76	5.94±0.67	0.894	0.098	0.372
Index of General Affect	5.47±1.27	5.56±1.29	5.37±1.25	1.524	0.15	0.128
Life Satisfaction	5.47±1.42	5.57±1.43	5.37±1.41	1.364	0.141	0.173
Subjective Well-being	5.47±1.25	5.56±1.26	5.37±1.23	1.552	0.153	0.121
Self-esteem	3.08±0.53	3.07±0.53	3.12±0.53	2.264	0.229	0.024

3.2 The Correlation among Father Involvement in Parenting, Subjective Well-being and Self-esteem of Junior High-school Students

Pearson's correlation analysis is adopted to respectively analyze the correlations between father involvement in parenting, subjective well-being and self-esteem of junior high-school students as shown in Table 2. Father involvement in parenting shows a significant positive correlation with subjective well-being overall and by dimension ($r>0$, $p<0.01$), and

father involvement in parenting shows a significant positive correlation with self-esteem of junior high-school students ($r>0$, $p<0.01$), and also a significant positive correlation was observed between self-esteem and subjective well-being of junior high-school students overall and by dimension ($r>0$, $p<0.01$). In general, father involvement in parenting, subjective well-being and self-esteem of junior high school students are positively correlated overall and by dimension ($r>0$, $p<0.01$).

Table 2 The Correlation among Father Involvement in Parenting, Subjective Well-being and Self-esteem of Junior High-school Students

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 Gender	1											
2 Grade	-.028	1										
3 Main Person in	-.140**	.003	1									
4 Father	-.046	-.103*	.015	1								

5	.032	-.132**	-.084	.766**	1								
6 Discipline	-.064	-.054	.128*	.824**	.528**	1							
7 Daily Care	-.083	-.081	.078	.928**	.557**	.740**	1						
8 Support and	.009	-.104*	-.122*	.859**	.744**	.571**	.672**	1					
9 Subjective	-.079	-.029	.064	.437**	.341**	.355**	.411**	.367**	1				
10 Life	-.070	-.058	.079	.437**	.354**	.357**	.399**	.377**	.777**	1			
11 Index of	-.078	-.024	.060	.422**	.327**	.342**	.398**	.352**	.996**	.719**	1		
12 Self-esteem	-.115*	.005	.042	.414**	.332**	.284**	.424**	.321**	.634**	.547**	.624**	1	

Note: ***represents $p < 0.001$, **represents $p < 0.01$ and *represents $p < 0.05$.

3.3 Regression Test of Father Involvement in Parenting on Self-esteem of Junior High-school Students

Pearson correlation analysis shows that father involvement in parenting has a significant positive correlation with the subjective well-being of junior high school students. To further clarify the quantitative relationship among them, the father involvement in parenting is taken as the independent variable, the subjective well-being is taken as the dependent variable, and gender, grade and the main person in charge of education are taken as the control variables for regression analysis. It's found that the father

involvement in parenting has a positive predictive effect on subjective well-being ($\beta=0.43$, $p<0.01$), and the father involvement in parenting has a positive predictive effect on self-esteem ($\beta=0.41$, $p<0.01$). After introducing self-esteem as the mediating variable, it's found that father involvement in parenting has a positive predictive effect on the self-esteem of junior high school students ($\beta=0.21$, $p<0.01$), and the self-esteem of junior high school students also has a positive predictive effect on subjective well-being ($\beta=0.55$, $p<0.01$). The hierarchical regression analysis is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 The Regression Analysis of Father Involvement in Parenting on the Subjective Well-being of Junior High-school Students

Variables		Subjective Well-being		Self-esteem		Subjective Well-being	
		β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Control Variables	Gender	-0.05	0.12	-0.09	0.05	-0.01	0.10
	Grade	0.01	0.07	0.05	0.31	0.01	0.06
	Main Person in Charge of Education	0.05	0.17	0.02	0.06	0.04	0.11
Independent Variables	Father Involvement in Parenting	0.43***	0.08	0.41	0.03	0.21***	0.07
Mediation Variables	Self-esteem					0.55***	0.10
	R	0.444		0.428		0.663	
	R ²	0.197		0.183		0.440	
	F	23.284***		21.237***		59.378***	

Note: ***represents $p < 0.001$, **represents $p < 0.01$ and *represents $p < 0.05$.

3.4 The Mediating Effects of Self-esteem in the Relationship between Father Involvement in Parenting and Subjective Well-being of Junior High-school Students

A mediation model illustrated in Figure 1 is established with father involvement in parenting as the independent variable, self-esteem of junior high school

students as the mediating variable, and subjective well-being of junior high school students as the dependent variable. Bootstrap confidence intervals (CI) are used to test the mediating effect of self-esteem of junior high school students, and the results are shown in Table 4.

Referring to the bootstrap method proposed by Preacher and Hayes, the mediation effect test is carried out using the process software recommended by Hayes [10]. Under the 95% confidence interval of Bootstrap, 5000 random samples are set to explore the mediating

role of self-esteem of junior high school students between father involvement in parenting and subjective well-being of junior high school students as well as the size of the mediation effect. According to Table 4, for the route “father involvement in parenting → subjective well-being (c)”, the Bootstrap confidence interval is (0.60, 0.92). The interval does not include 0, indicating that the total effect c is significant. After introducing self-esteem, the Bootstrap confidence interval becomes (0.22, 0.51). The interval does not include 0, indicating that the direct effect c' is significant. In the route “father involvement in parenting → self-esteem → subjective well-being”, the Bootstrap 95% confidence interval is (0.29, 0.50). The interval does not include 0, indicating that the indirect effect $a \times b$ is significant, and the mediating effect of self-esteem is 51.2%.

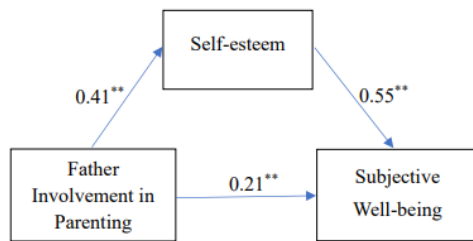


Figure 1: Mediation Model of Self-esteem

Table 4 The Mediating Effects of Self-esteem in the Relationship between Father Involvement in Parenting and Subjective Well-being of Junior High-school Students

Path	β	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Father Involvement in Parenting → Subjective Well-being(c)	0.43	0.08	0.60	0.92
Father Involvement in Parenting → Subjective Well-being(c')	0.21	0.07	0.22	0.51
Father Involvement in Parenting → Self-esteem → Subjective Well-being(a×b)	0.22	0.03	0.29	0.50

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Status Analysis of Father Involvement in Parenting, Subjective Well-being and Self-esteem of Junior High-school Students

According to descriptive statistics, father involvement in parenting is above the middle level with an overall mean score of 5.98, and this is consistent with

previous studies [15] [16] [24]. In terms of dimensions, discipline scores the lowest 5.55, encouragement and praise scores the highest 6.45. The daily care scores 5.57 and support and planning scores 6.34. Overall, the current status of father involvement in parenting is relatively optimistic, showing a good trend, indicating that more and more scientific parenting concepts get promoted and the fathers of junior high school students are paying great attention to fulfil their responsibilities in daily life.

The self-esteem of junior high school students scores 3.08, which was at a upper-middle level, and this is consistent with previous study result of Lihua Zhang [25] and Hui Wang [20]. It indicates that junior high school students are not too modest nor too proud, having objective personal evaluation and reasonable self-understanding. In addition, parents have a high level of education and can educate their children in a scientific way, so that children feel loved and accepted, which helps junior high school students to promote their self-esteem.

Subjective well-being scores 5.47 overall and sub-dimensionally, which is at the upper-middle level, and it is consistent with the research results of Yana Wu [22] and Xiaoyan Fan [8]. With the progressive era and growing awareness of education, fathers will provide the children with more superior material life and a healthier mental world, enabling them to experience a sense of well-being when feeling the concern and love from their family, school, and society [9].

4.2 Differences in Gender among Father Involvement in Parenting, Subjective Well-being and Self-esteem of Junior High-school Students

According to Pearson's correlation analysis, father involvement in parenting does not differ significantly by junior high school students' gender both overall and sub-dimensionally, which is consistent with the findings of Ji You [11]. It proves that the father's education concept and awareness of scientific parenting have been significantly improved, so that boys and girls can be treated equally in their daily life. There is no patriarchal preference, so they can receive equal love from their fathers.

Pearson's correlation analysis also indicates that subjective well-being of junior high-school students shows no difference in term of gender. Yao Sun has found in his research review on the subjective well-being of junior high-school students that no unified conclusion has been yielded on the differences of subjective well-being of junior high school students in different demographic variables from different researches [19]. There are similarities and differences in the results of previous studies. The author speculates

that growing awareness of education will provide the boys and girls with a healthier mental world, enabling them to experience efficient love from their father, other families, teachers and friends. Therefore, there is no significant difference in gender, and the overall level of well-being is above the average level.

Self-esteem of junior high-school students differs significantly in gender, with boys scoring higher than girls, and this result is consistent with the researches' results both at home and abroad. Shiyi Lei pointed out in the study that girls develop earlier than boys, and girls care more about their images, including their own body and weight [13]. Too much expectations leads to lower self-esteem of girls. At the same time, boys' logical thinking in junior high school develops rapidly and is more likely to experience sense of achievement, so boys' self-esteem level is generally higher than that of girls'. Moreover, girls are more sensitive, obedient and weak, tending to ignore their independent self-approval and self-acceptance, thus boys have higher self-esteem than girls.

4.3 Correlation Analysis of Father Involvement in Parenting, Subjective Well-being and Self-esteem of Junior High-school Students

4.3.1 Positive Correlation of Father Involvement in Parenting and Subjective Well-being of Junior High-school Students

Correlation analysis was adopted in this study, and the results show that father involvement in parenting is significantly positively associated with the subjective well-being of junior high-school students overall and sub-dimensionally. Fabricious (2003) noted in the study that children whose fathers are involved in parenting have a higher sense of value [7]. Adams (2005) et al. pointed out that fathers' involvement in their children's upbringing can effectively improve their children's self-efficacy [1]. The more encouragement and praise from fathers, the more confident the child becomes, and the more they can feel the inner strength and warmth from their fathers. Moderate discipline and restraint can help the children establish boundaries, and it tells them what they can do and what they cannot, so that they feel sense of security and deep love from their father. Father participates in support and future planning and daily care, the children feel loved and cared which can promote their well-being. All in all, with father involvement in parenting, especially father help them in daily care, the children will get a higher sense of achievement and self-efficacy, and thus the children improve their subjective well-being.

4.3.2 Positive Correlation of Father Involvement in Parenting and Self-esteem of Junior High-school Students

Correlation analysis was adopted in this study, and it has found that the self-esteem of junior high school students is significantly predicted by father involvement in parenting, which is consistent with previous research results. Kawash, et al. pointed out in the study that the more receptive are the parents, the higher their children's self-esteem levels [12]. Ronald E. noted that father involvement in parenting predicts adolescent's self-esteem in a positive way in his study [18]. The findings in the study of Xiaoting Wu reveal that father involvement in parenting affects the self-esteem development of the children in various degrees [21]. The more support and planning the children receives from their father, the higher their self-esteem level will be. When father gives more daily care to children, children will be easier to feel the love and learn how to love themselves, thus they have a higher level of self-esteem. The more the father participates in parenting and the more support and planning paid to the child, the more the child can feel his position and value in their father's heart, thus the self-esteem is further improved.

4.3.3 Positive Correlation of Self-esteem and Subjective Well-being of Junior High-school Students

Based on the results of correlation analysis, it has found a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and subjective well-being of junior high-school students overall and sub-dimensionally. The result is consistent with the study completed by Wen Zhang, et al. (2014). Furnham (2000) showed that self-esteem was significantly positively correlated with an individual's subjective well-being. Self-esteem is a significant influence factor on individual's subjective well-being. [9] Children with a higher level of self-esteem are inclined to have higher evaluation, recognition, and satisfaction of themselves. And as an important part of subjective well-being, satisfaction indicates the increase of subjective well-being. Individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to have good self-recognition and the higher the degree of recognition, the easier it is to have good behaviours, and good behaviours will increase self-satisfaction. Children with high self-esteem are more positive and optimistic, and they have more positive emotions than negative emotions, thus the index of general affect is higher, so self-esteem is positively correlated with children's subjective well-being.

4.4 *The Mediating Effect of Self-esteem between Father Involvement in Parenting and Subjective Well-being of Junior High-school Students*

Based on the results of correlation analysis, this study confirms that self-esteem partially mediates the relationship between father involvement in parenting and the subjective well-being of junior high-school students. Father involvement in parenting improves children's self-esteem, self-confidence, and sense of self-identity. Their willingness to withstand challenges and solve problems boosts their sense of self-efficacy, which in turn increases their sense of achievement, self-recognition, satisfaction and self-esteem. This further explains that the effect of father involvement in parenting on subjective well-being can be realized through the mediating effect of self-esteem.

5 CONCLUSION

To sum up, this study indicates that the daily care dimension of father involvement in parenting contributes the most to self-esteem and subjective well-being of junior high school students. Self-esteem of junior high-school students shows a significant difference in gender, boys have better self-esteem than girls. The self-esteem of junior high school students has a significant positive correlation with the subjective well-being of junior high school students. The father involvement in parenting is positively correlated with the self-esteem of junior high school students, and the father involvement in parenting is positively correlated with the subjective well-being of junior high school students. The results also showed that the self-esteem of junior high school students partially mediated the relationship between subjective well-being of junior high school students and the self-esteem of junior high school students.

This study guides the direction of family education for the fathers and improves the mental health level of junior high school students. The study recommends that fathers abandon existing concepts and participate more in daily care to improve their children's self-esteem and subjective well-being. Father involvement in parenting has enabled children to improve their self-esteem, self-confidence and sense of self-identity, and they have the courage and inner strength to try and withstand the challenges, and the successful experience after solving problems has improved their self-efficacy, which in turn has improved the sense of achievement, self-recognition, satisfaction and self-esteem, thereby their subjective well-being is improved, which further shows the mediating role of self-esteem of junior high school students. This conclusion complements previous studies, and at the same time it makes a contribution to family fatherhood education.

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