Parental Self-Efficacy in Parents of Pre-School and School-Aged Children

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Introduction

Parental Self-Efficacy

- Parental self-efficacy (PSE) is the perceived capability to solve parenting problems and appropriately influence children’s development (Dumka et al., 2010; de Montigny & Lacharité, 2005).
- Higher PSE is associated with competent parenting practices (e.g., persistence, involvement, monitoring, and consistent disciplining), parental wellbeing, and children’s emotional and behavioural adjustment (Dumka et al., 2010; Jones & Prinz, 2005; de Montigny & Lacharité, 2005; O’Neill et al., 2009; Sandler et al., 2011; Shumow & Lomax, 2002).
- There is strong evidence that PSE mediates the relationship between parenting behaviours and child adjustment.

Rationale

- An understanding of PSE may inform service delivery.

Research Question

- What parent, child, and help-seeking characteristics are associated with PSE?

Method

International Parenting Survey – Canada (IPS-C)

- Developed by researchers at the University of Queensland and the University of Bielefeld, the IPS-C is a questionnaire that examines family characteristics, service preferences, child functioning, and parenting strategies.

Measures

- Child Adjustment and Parent Efficacy Scale (CAPEs; Morawska & Sanders, 2010)
  - Behavioural Intensity Scale: α = .90
  - Emotional Intensity Scale: α = .73
  - Parent Efficacy Scale: α = .97
- Parenting and Family Adjustment Scale (PAFAS; Sanders & Morawska, 2010)
  - Parenting Practices: α = .72
  - Parental Adjustment: α = .79
  - Parental Teamwork: α = .73
  - Family Relationships: α = .79

Participants

- Canadian parents of children aged 2 to 12 years (N = 2310) completed the IPS-C between spring 2012 and 2013.

Analyses

- Hierarchical multiple regression to predict PSE
  - Step 1: demographic variables (parent age and gender, child age and gender, ethnicity, income adequacy)
  - Step 2: parenting characteristics (PAFAS Parenting Practices, Parental Adjustment, Parental Teamwork, Family Relationships; Kessler Psychological Distress Scale), child characteristics (CAPEs Intensity scale), and help-seeking characteristics (professional consultation, participation in a parenting program)
  - Correlations and partial correlations to assess relationship between PSE and service preferences and parental wellbeing

Results

Parents’ Reported Self-Efficacy

- Parents rated their PSE in managing their child’s behavioural and emotional functioning from 1 “certain I cannot do it” to 10 “certain I can do it.”
- Overall, parents reported a high level of PSE (M = 8.32; SD = 1.58).

Parent, Child, and Help-Seeking Characteristics Associated with Reported PSE

- Demographic variables explained 1.2% of the variance in PSE, F (6, 1735) = 3.53, p < .005.
- With the addition of parent, child, and help-seeking characteristics, the model explained 28.0% of the variance in PSE, F (15, 1726) = 44.86, p < .001, accounting for an additional 26.8% of the variance, F change (9, 1726) = 71.55, p < .001.
- The greatest predictor of PSE was intensity of child behavioural problems (β = .26, p < .001), followed by parenting practices (β = .18, p < .001), parental adjustment (β = .13, p < .001), and intensity of child emotional problems (β = .07, p < .01).

Parental Wellbeing and Reported PSE

- PSE was significantly associated with parental wellbeing, even when controlling for the effects of child behavioural and emotional problems. Specifically, higher PSE was associated with fewer depressive symptoms, r = .19, p < .001, a small effect.

Service Satisfaction and Reported PSE

- Higher PSE was significantly associated with higher service satisfaction, r = .19, p < .001, a small effect.
- Lower PSE was significantly associated with increased likelihood of future participation in a parenting program, r = .24, p = .001, a small effect.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Parental Self-Efficacy

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* Control variables included child age, child gender, parent age, parent gender, ethnicity, and income adequacy.
* p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

Conclusion

Key Findings and Implications

- High PSE was most likely to be reported by parents who also reported infrequent behavioural and emotional problems in their children, the use of positive parenting practices, and parental adjustment or coping.
- Parents with low PSE were more likely to indicate their intent to participate in a parenting program in the future. It is possible that PSE provides some indication of perceived vulnerability or need for services. It may be important for service providers to consider parents’ confidence when trying to engage them in services.
- Fostering PSE is important to the self-regulation framework of parenting programs.
- Parents need to feel that they can generalize the skills they learn to novel parenting challenges in order to experience the most success.

Future Directions

- The CAPES is a newly developed measure. Further research is required to establish clinical cut-offs for child behavioral and emotional problems and to establish concurrent and predictive validity of the measure’s PSE rating.
- Further research is required to understand ways to boost parents’ PSE.