| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

A Study of the Effects of Parental Psychological Control on Adolescents' Self-control

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| **ABSTRACT**

With the development of research in educational psychology in recent years, adolescent self-control has gradually become an important research topic. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between adolescents' self-control and parental control and how this relationship affects adolescents 'behavior and their psychological development. It is discussed through the methods of literature survey and conceptual analysis. The study found that the essence of parental psychological control is that parents achieve control by invading their children's inner world and undermining the development of their autonomy. This intrusive parenting style has a negative impact on adolescents' self-control through the family environment, parenting styles, and adolescents' coping styles. Based on these findings, we propose some recommendations for adolescents' self-control, in which parents should more actively support adolescents to make their own choices and develop their own sense of responsibility and decision-making skills.

| **KEYWORDS**

Adolescent self-control; parental control; behavioral development; educational recommendations

| **ARTICLE INFORMATION**

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In the process of adolescents' growth, self-control, as a critical psycho-social ability, has a far-reaching impact on their academic achievements, interpersonal relationships, and even their future careers. However, the formation of adolescents' self-control is not an isolated process; it is deeply influenced by family environment, especially parenting style. In recent years, with the in-depth research in the field of psychology, parental psychological control, as a special kind of parenting style, has gradually entered into the vision of the researchers. It involves parents realizing their own will by manipulating adolescents' self-perception, emotional expression, and behavioral decisions. So, does and how does this psychological control affect adolescents' self-control development? This constitutes the central question of this study.

1.2 Significance of the Study

1.2.1 Theoretical Implications

Although studies have begun to focus on the relationship between parental psychological control and adolescent development, research on how it affects teenage self-control is still insufficient. The purpose of this study is to explore in depth the specific mechanism of parental psychological control on adolescents' self-control, which will help to enrich and improve the existing theoretical system and provide new research perspectives for the field of psychology.

1.2.2 Practical Implications

In reality, many parents may unconsciously use psychological control to discipline their children, which may have a negative impact on adolescents' psychological development and behavioral control. The results of this study help parents recognize the importance of their own behaviors on their children's self-control and provide them with scientific guidance on family education. It also provides targeted suggestions and interventions for schools, communities, and other educational institutions in the development of adolescents' self-control.

1.3 Formulation of Research Questions

Given the importance of parental psychological control in adolescent development and its potential impact on adolescents' self-control, the present study aims to answer the following key questions: does parental psychological control affect adolescents' self-control development? Is this influence moderated by other factors? How can the negative impact of parental psychological control be mitigated through scientific family education strategies to promote the healthy development of adolescents' self-control?

1.4 Selection of Research Methods

This study chooses the combination of the literature research method and inductive summarization method. Through literature research, the current research status of parental psychological control, adolescent self-control, and their relationship is sorted out to provide theoretical support for this study. At the same time, by analyzing a large amount of information and summarizing some common patterns or conclusions from it, the specific effects of parental psychological control on adolescent self-control and its mechanisms are explored in depth. This choice of research methodology aims to ensure the comprehensiveness and scientificity of the study and to provide strong support for the subsequent practical application.

1.5 The Reasons of the Particular Approaches Chosen for the Study

This study adopts a combination of the literature research method and the inductive summarization method, aiming to comprehensively sort out and analyze the existing research results and, through scientific summarization, to deeply explore the specific impact of parental psychological control on adolescents' self-control. This choice of research method ensures the theoretical depth and breadth of the study. Through the literature research method, we can understand the results and shortcomings of previous studies and provide theoretical support and research hypotheses for this study; through the inductive summarization method, we can provide parents with more scientific and practical educational strategies, as well as provide strong family support for the healthy growth of adolescents.

In summary, this study has important theoretical significance and practical value. By deeply exploring the effects of parental psychological control on adolescents' self-control, we are expected to make valuable contributions to the development of the fields of family education and adolescent mental health. At the same time, it also provides targeted guidance and suggestions for parents and educators to help them better understand and cope with the challenges and problems of the development stages of adolescents' growth.

2. Description of Relevant Concepts

2.1 Psychological Control

Psychological control usually refers to parenting behaviors in which parents intervene in the child's inner world with the intention of controlling the child's thoughts, feelings, and attachment to the parent (Barder & Hammon, 2002).

2.1.1 Research Developments in Psychological Control

Research on psychological control began in the 1960's. Schaefer (1965) used factor analysis to study parenting styles through children's self-reports and extracted three basic factors: rejection-acceptance, detachment-strict control, and psychological control-autonomy support. On this basis, the concept of parental psychological control was proposed, and it was considered that parents' hindrance of adolescents' independent and autonomous growth was the core of the idea. Soenens et al. (2010) categorized two types of psychological control, namely, dependency-oriented and achievement-oriented. Dependency-oriented psychological control is characterized by possessiveness, separation anxiety, and overprotection (Ng et al., 2014). This type of control is mainly due to parents' intolerance of their children's increasing independence and desire to separate from them, which they perceive as a threat to the parent-child relationship. As a result, they use psychological control methods to make their children emotionally and psychologically dependent on their parents. Self-criticism and perfectionism are the primary forms of achievement-oriented psychological control. These individuals are fearful of failure and perceive low achievement as a threat to self-esteem, so they seek high achievement. This is manifested in parenting by pressuring children to perform well in school (Soenens et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2017).

2.1.2 Parental Psychological Control
Parenting styles can be categorized into two types: supportive and controlling (Dong et al., 2024; Soenens et al., 2010). " Supportive parenting" is an upbeat parenting style that is associated with positive child development (Wu et al., 2023). "Supportive parenting" is an upbeat parenting style that is associated with positive child development. " Controlling parenting is a negative parenting style characterized by control, coercion, supervision, and punishment, and is related to a variety of internalizing and externalizing problems in children. Parenting styles have a profound effect on individuals. Different parents have different parenting styles, which can be divided into psychological and behavioral parenting, and parental psychological control is often classified as one kind of parenting style. According to Wang et al. (2007), parental psychological control undermines children's autonomy by triggering guilt, deprivation of love, and authoritative arbitrariness, so as to achieve the goal of controlling children's thoughts and feelings (Guo, 2009). Parental psychological control has been described as a kind of control that is characterized by control, coercion, supervision, and punishment and is related to various internalization and externalization problems (Zhan et al., 2012). It has been shown that parental psychological control has many parental in+uences on children's development and is a dangerous parenting style (Liu & Chen, 2019; Steinberg et al., 2007).

2.1.3 The Current Situation of Parental Psychological Control in the Cultural Background of China
Cross-cultural studies have shown that parents influenced by Chinese interdependent cultures have higher levels of psychological control in parenting compared to parents influenced by Western independent cultures (Wang et al., 2007). In addition, traditional Chinese filial piety to parents and Confucian philosophical concepts seem to provide a more rational cultural interpretation of parental psychological control (Minuchin, 1985; Ng et al., 2014), leading to the fact that parental psychological control has not been recognized by scholars in China for a long time. The timely introduction of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of Family Education has not only raised the attention of all sectors of society to family education but has also made parental psychological control, which was initially an insidious and harmful parenting style, gradually be recognized by domestic scholars and begin to be widely researched.

2.2 Self-control
Self-control ability (hereinafter referred to as self-control) is an essential component of the individual personality system, which refers to the individual's behavior, emotion, cognitive activities, etc., to exercise discipline and management, according to his own social standards or self-will (Cai et al., 2021).

2.2.1 Development of the Research of Self-Control
Academically, the earliest and most famous study of self-control was conducted by Walter Mischel (1977), who was the first to study self-control in the United States. Mischel). With his team's early research on the delay of gratification and the famous marshmallow test, as well as the later hot-cool system and cognitive affective personality system (CAPS), Mischel and his team gradually established and refined the theory of self-control in the process of exploring the emergence and mechanism of self-control. In the process of exploring the mechanism of self-control, Michel and his team gradually established and perfected the theory of self-control, which is also known as impulse control. Delayed gratification, also known as impulse control, refers to an individual's attempt to obtain an unfulfilled desire.

The ability to give up the ability to choose to give up the relatively small benefits of the moment in favor of the bigger and better benefits of the future. The dual systems theory of self-control has also been proposed by scholars such as Strack and Hofmann in subsequent research. The Theory suggests that the realization of self-control is based on the struggle between impulsive processes and reflective processes. In a given situation, the two processes jointly influence the individual to make behavior and decisions after deep thinking in the current academic research process. The theory proposed by scholars such as Strack and Hofmann has been supported by the results of several studies (Hou et al., 2018).

2.2.2 Impact of Self-control on Adolescents' Development
Self-control ability is divided into behavioral self-control, emotional self-control, cognitive self-control rate, etc., and the academic community has focused more on young people. Aspects of adolescents' academic self-control and self-control over addiction. Self-control is one of the most important expressions of an adolescent's level of socialization and an essential factor in resistance to stress, bad feelings, and even external risk-taking behavioral problems during adolescence. Adolescents with high levels of self-control are also more likely to be physically and psychologically healthy, achieve better grades, be more comfortable and open in their relationships, and have successful careers in their adult futures. They are also more likely to feel happy in their personal growth and have a higher subjective sense of well-being. Attention, risk-taking, self-efficacy, and other characteristics that are essential for personality growth as influenced by self-control have a significant impact on social achievement, interpersonal relationships, academic development, marital status, and other important life developments in late adolescence. Self-control plays a significant role in social and personal growth. Adolescents with a high level of self-control tend to face difficulties positively and have stronger psychological resistance and resilience; adolescents with a high level of self-control are more inclined to explore the

unknown and have a stronger desire to explore the new world. Therefore, there is reason to believe that self-control is a positive predictor of personal growth initiative.

Adolescents' self-control varies during adolescence and is mainly influenced by developmental level (Guo, 2009), stress, temptation, emotions (Crosswhite & Kerpelman, 2012), family atmosphere, parenting styles (Ng-Knight et al., 2016), etc. Adolescents with high self-control are able to bring about a stronger sense of self-efficacy and a stronger sense of control over themselves. Adolescents with high self-control can bring stronger self-efficacy and have a stronger sense of control over themselves, and are less likely to lose control of themselves and engage in high-risk negative risk-taking behaviors, such as smoking, driving under the influence of alcohol, truancy, cheating, and ridiculing others (Jing et al., 2021).

3. Impact of Parental Psychological Control on Adolescents' Self-control
3.1 Overall Relationship or Mechanism of Influence Between Parental Psychological Control and Adolescent Self-control
Existing studies generally agree that parental control has a significant impact on adolescents' self-control. On the one hand, moderate parental control can provide adolescents with the necessary behavioral norms and emotional support, which can help them establish an effective self-monitoring mechanism; on the other hand, excessive or inappropriate control may inhibit adolescents' development of autonomy, resulting in a lack of adequate self-regulation in the face of temptation and pressure. However, the current research is not sufficient to provide a comprehensive explanation of the specific mechanism of action between parental control and adolescents' self-control. However, relevant conclusions can be introduced from related perspectives, such as family environment, parenting style, and coping style.

3.2 The Effect of Parental Psychological Control on Adolescents' Self-control in the Home Environment
According to Family Systems Theory, family systems are composed of interacting and interrelated subsystems such as parents, siblings, and parent-child. Each family member belongs to different subsystems, such as parent-child and parent-child subsystems (Minuchin, 1985). From this theoretical perspective, fathers/mothers' parenting behaviors may affect not only their own relationships with children but also their partners' relationships with children. Cai et al. (2021) found that mothers' negative parenting behaviors predicted mother-child conflict and father-child conflict; Hou et al. (2018) found that mothers' parenting could influence adolescents' relationships through both mother-child and father-child relationships. Father-child relationship to influence adolescents' adaptive behavior. Thus, one parent's psychological control may affect adolescents' emotional regulation not only through their own conflict with their children but also through their partner's conflict with their children. It has been found that the better an individual's emotional regulation, the higher his or her self-control. Unstable emotions and negative emotions weaken an individual's ability to control impulses, making it easier for people to lose self-control and make impulsive choices (Guo, 2009). That is to say; parental psychological control may negatively affect adolescent self-control through their own conflict with their children or even the partner effect.

3.3 The Effect of Parental Psychological Control on Adolescents' Self-control in Parenting Styles
Family parenting style refers to the relatively stable behavior of parents in the process of child rearing and education, including the concept of child rearing, parenting behavior, and the formulation of family rules (Soenens et al., 2010), and is a summary of the characteristics of various parenting behaviors (Wang et al., 2007). The family is the first and immediate environment of an individual's life. Positive and warm parenting styles can have a positive impact on individuals, not only increasing their level of self-happiness, resilience in the face of difficulties, and self-confidence but also decreasing addictiveness and increasing self-control. Self-control theory suggests that families are primarily responsible for the development of self-control in their children and that in the absence of effective parenting, individuals are likely to develop low self-control (Crosswhite & Kerpelman, 2012). Empirical research also suggests that when parents adopt effective parenting styles and express more warmth, adolescents develop better self-control (Ng-Knight et al., 2016).

3.4 The Effect of Parental Psychological Control on Adolescent Self-control in Terms of Coping Styles
Parental psychological control of children destroys the family atmosphere and leads to tensions in the parent-child relationship and a lack of trust and attachment to the parents. Adolescents who are subjected to parental control for a long period of time tend to adopt negative coping behaviors. Coping behaviors also have a psychological impact on self-control. Coping style refers to the cognitive and behavioral styles that individuals adopt in the face of frustration and stress, based on the interaction between individual stability factors and situational factors, and can be differentiated into positive coping and negative coping depending on the nature of the outcome (Jing et al., 2021). Due to the habitual and stable nature of individual coping styles, individuals always respond in a similar way when facing stressful events. Individuals with different types of coping styles have different social, behavioral response patterns. For example, individuals who are more likely to use positive coping in the face of difficulties are more likely to gather strength to solve the current problem, whereas individuals who are more likely to use negative coping than positive coping will react in maladaptive ways, such as avoidance, fantasizing, and pathological obstinacy when faced with

frustration ((Jing et al., 2021). That is to say. Parental psychological control negatively predicts adolescents' self-control through their negative coping styles.

4. Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the effects of parental psychological control on adolescents' self-control and its mechanisms in depth. Through empirical analysis and theoretical discussion, we have made a series of important findings and suggestions for future research directions. This study found a significant association between parental psychological control and adolescent self-control. Behaviors such as parental over-intervention, excessive expectations, and emotional manipulation negatively impacted adolescents' self-control. This not only limits the development of autonomy in adolescents but may also lead them to show lower coping ability and adaptability in the face of challenges and stress. We also identified moderating factors, such as adolescents' individual differences, family environment, and cultural background, which can have an impact on the relationship between parental psychological control and adolescent self-control. Although this study has made some important findings, there are still some limitations, such as a single research method. Future studies can further expand the sample size and adopt more diverse research methods, such as fieldwork and in-depth interviews, in order to reveal the effects of parental psychological control on adolescent self-control more comprehensively. Meanwhile, future studies can further explore the relationship between different dimensions of parental psychological control and different manifestations of adolescents' self-control, with a view to providing more specific guidance for practice. In addition, future research could also focus on how to improve parental psychological control behaviors through interventions to promote healthy adolescent development.

In summary, the influence of parental psychological control on adolescents' self-control is a complex and important issue. Through this study, we hope to draw the attention of more scholars and practitioners to work together to create a more favorable environment for the healthy growth of adolescents.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.
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