Editorial: How Children Learn From Parents and Parenting Others in Formal and Informal Settings: International and Cultural Perspectives

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Editorial on the Research Topic

How Children Learn From Parents and Parenting Others in Formal and Informal Settings: International and Cultural Perspectives

The goal of this special Research Topic is to bring together scholarship from diverse perspectives to address how broadly- and narrowly-defined parenting behaviors correlate with child and adolescent cognitive/emotional outcomes. Each contributor to this special Research Topic examines the issue of parenting behaviors and child/adolescent developmental outcomes from different methodological and theoretical orientations. The Research Topic includes 10 peer-reviewed articles, including 2 literature reviews and 8 empirical research articles. In accordance with the objectives of the topic, the contributions come from different nationalities, as parenting has a cultural component. However, while the literature agrees on the possible contribution of parenting to the adaptation of children and adolescents, influencing psychological well-being and cognitive and academic outcomes, little is known about cultural variables and about the association between constructs in different countries. Our contribution aims to stimulate debate in this direction, collecting contributions on the relationship between parenting and the adjustment of individuals at different points in development and, in particular, from different countries, in order to highlight the importance of the cultural context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In their article, Rollè et al. review the contemporary literature on father involvement and cognitive outcomes in preschool and middle school children. They conclude that father involvement is a multidisciplinary construct and that when, how, and why fathers are involved in their children’s lives varies according to SES, ethnicity, education level, and residency. With a somewhat different focus, Trombetta et al. review the extant research on the linguistic environment of twins, with the goal of teasing apart the distinctive features of the home environment language, which potentially accounts for the language performance differences between twins and singletons. They point to the need to consider computational methods and contexts as we make interpretations about the differential linguistic performance between twins and singletons.
EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: PARENTING AND COGNITIVE OUTCOMES IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Suh et al. explore the interactions between mothers and their children from different ethnic backgrounds as they are engaged in block-building type tasks. We learn from their work, for example, that ethnicity is a significant predictor of maternal engagement and the time spent on tasks.

Lara and Saracostti provide a cultural perspective on levels of parental involvement and how these levels are associated with academic achievement in Chilean school age children, and they observed that highly- and medium-involved parents have children with higher academic outcomes.

Based upon the Walker et al. (2005) theoretical model, Jiang et al. extend our knowledge about the correlation between parental theories of intelligence (“incremental theory” vs. “entity theory”) and their involvement in children’s education. They observed this association in China: a specific cultural context in which parents place an exceptionally high value on education and are actively engaged in their children’s education at home. In particular, this study addressed the congruence and discrepancy between parents, highlighted the importance of parental beliefs in parent educational involvement, and revealed the significant role of mothers.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: PARENTING AND EMOTIONAL OUTCOMES/MENTAL HEALTH IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

In Australia, Waters et al. examine over time the relationship between strength-based parenting and subjective well-being in teens and preteens. Interestingly, the authors suggest that parenting is a significant predictor of the well-being of children in real time but that strength-based parenting does not predict children’s future well-being. Considering the decline in strength-based parenting, the authors highlight the importance of supporting parent-child relationships during adolescence to improve their mental health.

Similarly, Calandri et al. found that adolescents with high levels of parental support are less depressed, and this finding holds central for adolescent girls, especially if the support is provided by their mothers. The researchers provide suggestions on designing intervention programs for adolescents and their parents.

REFERENCES

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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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