Study on the Childhood Abuse and Resilience of Female College Students

Xiang-na Kong

Abstract: To study the childhood abuse of female college students and the relationship between childhood abuse and resilience. Methods CTQ-CF and RSCA were used to investigate the randomly selected female college students and the statistical software was used to analyze the data. Results Female college students experienced much more emotional abuse and emotional neglecting than men; Parents with less education background were more incline to neglect the body caring of their daughters; Childhood abuse could significantly predict the resilience of the female college students.

Keywords: Female college students; Childhood abuse; Resilience

Introduction

Different cultural groups have different understanding of child abuse. Although lots of studies showed that childhood abuse experience would lead to a long-term negative impact on one’s psychological development, many Chinese parents believe that Strict education can promote children's success. So they can make a reasonable explanation for their behavior of child abuse. If all kinds of punishment can really make children successful, it should be the parents' physical punishment, scolding and so on, which enhance their adaptability to adversity and promote their resilience. Resilience is a good adaptive process when one person encounters adversity, trauma, tragedy, threat or great pressure. It means a rebound to difficult experiences” [1]. In china, women are the main victims of domestic violence, and cases of girl abuse are often reported. So this study explored childhood abuse of female college students and the influence of childhood abuse on their resilience.

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Methods

313 college students were investigated by the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ-CF) and the resilience scale for Chinese adolescents (RSCA). 297 copies of the questionnaires were qualified, including 251 female students and 46 female students as a matched group. CTQ-CF was made by Bernstein PD and Fink L, including 25 clinical items and 3 validity items. All the 25 clinical items constituted 5 dimensions: emotional abuse (EA), physical abuse (PA), sexual abuse (SA), emotional neglect (EN) and physical neglect (PN) \(^2\). RSCA was made by Yue-qin HU, Yi-qin Gan, including 27 items and 5 dimensions: target concentration, emotion control, positive cognition, family support and interpersonal assistance\(^3\). All data were statistically analyzed using SPSS 20.0.

Results

General features of childhood abuse female college students. Based on table 1, there were significant gender differences in the emotional abuse, emotional neglect and CTQ-CF \((p<0.05, p<0.001, p<0.01)\), girls were more likely to suffer from emotional abuse and emotional neglect. But they had no significant differences in physical abuse, sexual abuse and physical neglect \((P>0.05)\).

Table 1. Gender differences in childhood abuse experiences among College Students.

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & EA & PA & SA & EN & PN & CTQ-CF \\
\hline
male (n=46) & 6.72±2.29 & 5.78±1.53 & 5.22±0.51 & 7.67±2.32 & 6.91±1.77 & 32.30±5.69 \\
female (n=251) & 7.60±2.76 & 5.84±1.92 & 5.29±1.08 & 9.42±5.31 & 7.17±2.82 & 35.33±10.25 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\(t\) & -2.044* & -0.194 & -0.474 & -3.651*** & -0.804 & -2.852**

\(* P<0.05 \quad ** P<0.01 \quad *** P<0.001\)

Based on table 2 and table 3, There was no significant difference in emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional neglect among college students whose parents had different educational backgrounds, but in physical neglect, there was significant difference \((P<0.05)\), Parents who were less educated (in primary school or below) were more likely to neglect physical care of their children.

Table 2. Differences in childhood abuse among female college students with different father’s educational level.

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Father’s educational level & EA & PA & SA & EN & PN & CTQ-CF \\
\hline
Primary school and below (n=51) & 7.69±2.70 & 6.18±2.44 & 5.55±1.47 & 10.12±4.86 & 7.86±3.38 & 37.39±11.51 \\
Middle school and above (n=200) & 7.58±2.79 & 5.76±1.76 & 5.23±0.95 & 9.25±5.42 & 6.99±2.63 & 34.80±9.87 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\(t\) & 0.245 & 1.159 & 1.469 & 1.048 & 1.987* & 1.617
Table 3. Differences in childhood abuse among female college students with different mother's educational level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother's educational level</th>
<th>EA</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>EN</th>
<th>PN</th>
<th>CTQ-CF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary school and below (n=79)</td>
<td>7.94±2.73</td>
<td>6.09±1.88</td>
<td>5.37±1.11</td>
<td>10.00±4.022</td>
<td>7.71±2.70</td>
<td>37.10±9.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school and above (n=172)</td>
<td>7.45±2.77</td>
<td>5.73±1.93</td>
<td>5.26±1.07</td>
<td>9.16±5.73</td>
<td>6.92±2.84</td>
<td>34.51±10.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relationship between childhood abuse and resilience of female college students. Based on table 4, childhood abuse was negatively correlated with resilience. In table 5, childhood abuse was used as predictor variable, and resilience was used as predictor variable, then we found that childhood abuse had a significant negative predictive effect on the resilience of female college students.

Table 4. Correlation between childhood abuse and resilience of female college students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EA</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>EN</th>
<th>PN</th>
<th>CTQ-CF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Concentration</td>
<td>-0.111</td>
<td>-0.099</td>
<td>-0.127*</td>
<td>-0.074</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
<td>-0.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion Control</td>
<td>-0.255**</td>
<td>-0.099</td>
<td>-0.105</td>
<td>-0.095</td>
<td>-0.216**</td>
<td>-0.207**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Cognition</td>
<td>-0.097</td>
<td>-0.033</td>
<td>-0.104</td>
<td>-0.165**</td>
<td>-0.155*</td>
<td>-0.172**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family support</td>
<td>-0.461**</td>
<td>-0.246**</td>
<td>-0.192**</td>
<td>-0.363**</td>
<td>-0.354**</td>
<td>-0.476**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Assistance</td>
<td>-0.306**</td>
<td>-0.172**</td>
<td>-0.143*</td>
<td>-0.303</td>
<td>-0.342**</td>
<td>-0.381**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSCA</td>
<td>-0.410**</td>
<td>-0.215**</td>
<td>-0.208**</td>
<td>-0.323**</td>
<td>-0.365**</td>
<td>-0.440**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Regression analysis of female college students' childhood abuse on resilience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Predictor variable</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Adjust R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Childhood abuse</td>
<td>0.440</td>
<td>0.194</td>
<td>0.191</td>
<td>59.874***</td>
<td>-0.532</td>
<td>-7.738***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

In this survey, compared with boys, girls were more likely to suffer from abuse, especially emotional abuse and emotional neglect. Maybe there were two reasons for this result. First, the patriarchal ideology has been lurking in China. Many parents prefer boys, so they may be more likely to ignore and even abuse girls. On the other hand, women are more sensitive to emotional needs than men, so they were more likely to remember their parents' abuse and neglect of their emotions. In this study, there was no significant difference between male and female college students in physical abuse, sexual abuse and physical neglect. This was inconsistent with Niu Yi's research which found that physical abuse and physical neglect were more common in boys than in girls. Maybe the difference between the two samples led to a difference in this result. There is a slight difference between cultures in different provinces and regions, so parental rearing patterns are different. Another feature was that
parents with low educational level tend to ignore the physiological care of girls. The low level of parents' education means that their income is lower, and they had less employment opportunities, and their educational concepts are relatively backward.

The resilience theory explores the influence of frustration and stress on physical and mental development from a positive perspective. If people overcome difficulties in adverse situations and reshape their mind and body, they can form psychological resilience. However, the mediating variables between adversity and resilience are not easy to ascertain. Age, biological genes, external environment and other factors can play a role. For children, their ability to adapt is weaker than that of adults. If they are in a particularly difficult situation, especially when the plight is caused by the physical and mental abuse of their relatives, it is more difficult for children to overcome adversity and get resilience. In this investigation, the more severe the childhood abuse was, the worse the resilience was after growing up. The sample we selected was female college students. Maybe their parents think their children are very successful. Perhaps some parents attribute this academic success to their strict education, such as corporal punishment, scolding, neglect, etc. In fact, parents' behaviors have damaged the resilience of children. This will have a negative effect on their future life. It is ridiculous for parents to think that their rough, indifferent parenting is right because their children go to college.

Summary

Through the investigation and analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn: Female college students experienced more emotional abuse and emotional neglect than male college students; Parents with lower education were more likely to neglect the girl’s physical care; Female college students' childhood abuse could significantly negatively predict resilience.

References


