Theories of parent-child relations

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Overview for today

1. Guidelines for writing an introduction paragraph

   – Lecture & Discussions

   – Lecture & Discussions
Introduction paragraph is due on March 9th

Timetable:
- March 2: Possible topics for your paper
- March 2: Guidelines for writing introduction paragraph
- March 7: APA format
- March 9: Introduction due
Topics for parent-child relations

Three major topics
1. Nature of parent-child relations (itself)
2. Antecedents (predictors) of parent-child relations
3. Outcomes (effects) of parent-child relations
Topics for parent-child relations

1. Nature of parent-child relations (itself)
   - Comparing/contrasting theories
     • Attachment vs. Social learning theory
     • Behaviorism vs. Psychoanalysis
   - Deeper understanding of parent-child interactions:
     • Differences between mother-child and father-child interactions
     • Differences between boys and girls
     • Children’s preference for their mother vs. their father
     • Types of maladaptive relationship (boundary disturbance, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse)
1. Nature of parent-child relations (itself)
   – Deeper understanding of parenting
     • Styles: Sensitive parenting, democratic parenting, etc.
     • Cross-cultural differences
     • Across different socio-economic statuses, etc.
     • Across children’s ages (childhood; adolescence; early adulthood)
2. Antecedents (predictors) of parent-child relations

- **Family:**
  - The effect of mother-father relations (or coparenting) on children’s relations with their parents.
  - The effect of father on mother-child relationship.
  - The effect of parent’s depression on parent-child relation.
  - The effect of parental divorce on children’s relationship with parents.
  - The effect of parenting on parent-child relationship.

- **Contexts:**
  - The effect of poverty on parent-child relations (or on parenting)
  - The effect of neighborhood
  - The effect of family therapy
  - The effect of marital therapy
3. Outcomes (effects) of parent-child relations
   • Psychopathology (mental health or behavioral adjustment)
     – The effect of maladaptive parenting on children’s depression, anxiety, aggression, conduct problems, ADHD, etc.
   • School achievement:
     – The effect of parent’s alcoholic problem on school-dropout, delinquency, academic performance, etc.
   • Social competence:
     – The effect of parent-child relationship on friendship, romantic relationships, prosocial behavior, general social trust, civic/political engagement, etc.
Three major topics
1. Nature of parent-child relations (itself)
2. Antecedents (predictors) of parent-child relations
3. Outcomes (effects) of parent-child relations
Guidelines for writing introduction paragraph

3 things you need to include in your intro paragraph:
1. Describe how important your topic is.
2. Define your constructs
3. Describe your topic in very general terms at the end of the paragraph
   • Optional: Include your take-home message(s).
Guidelines for writing introduction paragraph

1. Describe how important your topic is.
   - What is the impact of the topic on society?
   - Or why your topic is important in the area of inquiry?
   - You should catch the readers’ attention.
   - Example: the effect of parent-child relation on trust in other people
     • “It is considered important for adolescents to trust other people. For example, adolescents who trust their friends are more likely to be satisfied with their life, compared to those who do not (Bjornskov, 2006)”
1. Describe how important your topic is.
   – What is the impact of the topic on society?
   – Or why your topic is important in the area of inquiry?
   – You should catch the readers’ attention.
   – Example: the effect of parental divorce on children’s well-being
     • “In the Czech Republic, the number of divorces has dramatically been increasing since 1950’s, and today approximately 50% of marriages end in divorce (Český statsitický úřad, 2013).”
2. Define constructs
   - Especially important if constructs in your topic are not commonly used in everyday language.
   - You need to define: coparenting, triangulation, sensitive parenting, democratic parenting
   - Exception: you do not need to define: divorce, age, etc.
   - Examples:
     • Adolescents’ trust that their political leaders’ work for their citizens (defined as “political trust”) does not necessarily come from their evaluations of politics.
     • Some children believe that other people are in general trustworthy. Hereafter, this belief is referred to as “general social trust.”
3. Describe your topic in very general terms at the end of the paragraph
   – One sentence description of your specific topic that you pursue in your paper.
   – Simple is better
   – Examples:
     • “Hence, I explore the effect of X on Y”
     • “Thus, this paper focuses on X.”
     • “Therefore, I review whether X affects Y.”
     • “This paper examines the relation between X and Y.”
Guidelines for writing introduction paragraph

1. Describe how important your topic is.
2. Define your constructs
3. Describe your topic at the end of the paragraph

Example:
It is considered important for adolescents to trust other people. For example, adolescents who trust their friends spend time with them, do not feel lonely, and therefore are satisfied with their lives (Bjornskov, 2006). According to attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982), individuals who trust their parents are more likely to assume that other people are trustworthy (hereafter, we call it “general social trust”). The present paper explores the effect of parent-child relationships on children’s general social trust.
Guidelines for writing introduction paragraph

• Optional: Include your take-home message(s).
  – “Divorce has been more prevalent in the past a few decades. It has been empirically demonstrated that parents’ divorce leads their children to develop behavior problems, including attention, oppositional, and conduct problems (Amato & Keith, 1991). However, findings from several studies suggest that conflicts between parents (or parental conflict) negatively influences children’s behavior problems, rather than does parental divorce. Hence, in this paper I explore associations among parental divorce, parental conflict, and child behavior problems.”
Guidelines for writing introduction paragraph

- Think of your paper as a funnel; start general and get more specific.
Class Exercise

• Write one sentence for each of the 3 (+1) guidelines.
1. Describe how important your topic is.
2. Define your constructs
3. Describe your topic in very general terms at the end of the paragraph
• Optional: Include your take-home message(s).
• Introduce the topic of your paper to your classmate.
Guidelines for writing introduction paragraph

More tips:
• One paragraph (not two or three paragraphs)
• Use past tense for previous studies and present tense for your paper in the introduction.
• Make sure organization is logical with smooth transitions
• Be concise: Use as few words as possible
  – “look for” → “explore”  “bring up” → “raise”
• Write precisely and clearly
  – Make sure it is clear what pronouns are referring to
  – Say exactly what you mean (e.g., “think” → “believe” or “propose”)
• Do not use gendered language
  – “mankind” → “human beings”  “he” → “he/she” or “she or he”
Maccoby, 1992
The role of parents in the socialization of children:
An historical overview

Three major historical changes
1. From grand, all-encompassing theories to more modest theories that were more limited to specific behavioral domains or specific age periods.
2. From top-down processes (parents as trainers) to bidirectional and interactive processes.
3. From direct connections to indirect connections.
Maccoby, 1992
The role of parents in the socialization of children:
An historical overview

1. From grand theories to domain-specific theories.
   – Grand theories
   1. Behaviorism
      • Parents are teachers, and children are learners.
      • Conditioning: rewards and punishments
      • B. F. Skinner's speech
   2. Psychoanalytic theory
      • Two major intrapsychic forces – sexuality and aggression
      – Parents can lower their child’s toxic intrapsychic forces
      • “Internal” conflict in children: relation vs. rejection
      • Early childhood is a time of high plasticity
1. From grand theories to domain-specific theories.
   – More domain-specific theories
   1. Developmental psycholinguistics
      • Innate language acquisition device
        – Not random
        – Child’s readiness
        – Age
   2. Attachment theory
      • Evolutionary biology (ethology): infant-parent relationship as a primary outcome for survival, but neither as a secondary outcome nor as a reduction of sexuality.
   3. Social learning theory (or nonreinforced learning through modeling)
      • Modeling: children could acquire new behaviors without rewards or punishments
2. From top-down processes (parents as trainers) to bidirectional and interactive processes.
   - Parents are antecedents, and children are outcomes.
     - Asymmetry: power and competency
   - Moment-to-moment sequences of interactions between parent and child
   - Parents and children coconstruct (or coregulate) their interactions.
     - Children learn about positive social interactional skills in coherent joint activities.
Maccoby, 1992
The role of parents in the socialization of children:
An historical overview

3. From direct connections to indirect connections.
   – Earlier: Direct connections between parental practices and child outcomes
   – More recent: Processes that may influence the way in which parental practice affects child.
Mediation

Parental Practice → Child Outcome

Moderation

Parental Practice → Child Outcome

A spurious relation

Parental Practice → Child Outcome
3. From direct connections to indirect connections.

Fig. 1 Longitudinal model linking parental warmth, adolescents’ trust in parents, their personal belief in a just world (BJW), general belief in a just world (BJW), their trust in peers, and their trust in politicians. Solid lines show significant paths while dashed lines show nonsignificant paths. Mothers and fathers’ educational levels were controlled as covariates. \(* p < .050; **p < .010; ***p < .001\)
Maccoby, 1992
The role of parents in the socialization of children: An historical overview

Three major historical changes

1. From grand theories to more domain-specific theories.

2. From top-down processes (parents as trainers) to bidirectional and interactive processes.

3. From direct connections to indirect connections.
Cox and Paley, 2003
Understanding families as systems

• To understand parent-child relations in family systems
  1. Family as a whole
     • Each relationship within a particular family influences the family as a whole.
       – Only looking at parent-child relationships does not give you a good understanding of parent-child relationships
  2. Mutual influences among family subsystem
     • Mother-child, father-child, mother-father, etc.
     • E.g., mother-father -> mother-child
     • E.g., mother-child -> mother-father
Cox and Paley, 2003
Understanding families as systems

- mother-father
- mother-child
- father-child
Cox and Paley, 2003
Understanding families as systems

• **Empirical finding**: parents behave differently when the whole family was together than when they were interacting one-on-one with child
  – E.g., couples were less hostile toward each other when child is present.

• **Coparenting**: how parents interact together to take care of their children
  – **Supportive** (cooperative): help each other
  – **Undermining** (competitive): blame on the partner's caregiving behaviors
    • E.g., father calling mother “pig” influences child calling mother “pig.”
  – **Triangulating**: include the child into the fight

• **Emotional-security theory** *(Cummings and Davies)*
  – Marital conflict between parents threatens child’s sense of security in the family.
3. Families need to adjust to disequilibrium (or changes).

– Normative transitions
  • Birth of a child, child entering school, etc.
    – New parents are at increased risk for depression

– Nonnormative transitions
  • Departure of spouse, entrance of new spouse, death of family member
1. Family as a whole
2. Mutual influences among family subsystem
3. Families need to adjust to disequilibrium (or changes).
Homework

• Read two articles

• Email me your thought questions by Sunday midnight.

• Start writing your introduction paragraph.