

Psychometric Properties and Construct Validity of the Parents Preference Test, PPT™ in the Italian Context

XXIX International Congress of Psychology
20-25 July 2008, Berlin, Germany

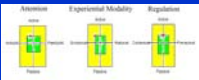
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INTRODUCTION: PARENTAL STYLE TESTING AND PPT™

In our study, we focused on the Italian Validation of the Parenting Preference Test (PPT). The test is developed as an instrument to use in family treatment programs. PPT is a picture-based, multiple-choice test with images representing everyday family activities parents positively can identify themselves with. The PPT is aimed at measuring four general aspects of the interactions between parents and their children, presumed to be universal: **Focus of Attention**, **Experiential Modality**, **Regulation and Precept**, and **Energy**. Each item consists of five picture presentation pictures and four selection pictures, illustrating four different possible courses of development of the theme of the presentation picture. The PPT is a test where the parents indicate their own preferred *modus operandi* as parents.



Aim of the study

The study is mostly aimed to examine the psychometric properties, the convergent and construct validity of the PPT in the Italian context. A secondary aim is to determine the relative influence of parenting style on children's behavior.

METHOD

Measures

Family Assessment Device (FAD): Epstein et al. 1983. The FAD operationalizes the McMaster Model of Family Functioning and identifies 6 dimensions of family functioning: Problem Solving, Communication, Roles, Affective Responsiveness, Affective Involvement, Behavior Control.

Ghent Parental Behavior Questionnaire (GPBQ): Van Leeuwen et al. 2004. Confirmatory factor analysis provide evidence for 9 scales: Positive parenting, Monitoring, Rules, Discipline, Inconsistent discipline, Harsh punishment, Ignoring, Maternal rewarding and Autonomy.

Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach, 1978): CBCL is designed to assess the behavioral problems and social competencies of children as reported by parents. It measures 8 dimensions: Aggressive Behavior; Anxious/Depressed; Attention Problems; Rule-Breaking Behavior; Social Problems; Somatic Complaints; Withdrawn/Depressed; Thought Problems.

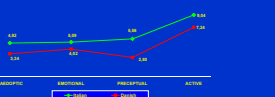
Subjects

During 2008, we administered the PPT to 320 parents: 245 mothers (76.6%) and 75 fathers (23.4%). 56.8% of mothers and fathers had completed high school; 26.7% were college graduates, and 1.9% had master degrees.

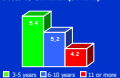
Procedures and Data Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the convergent validity of the scale. Group differences were analyzed using ANOVA.

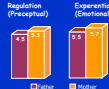
PPT'S DIMENSIONS: DANISH (N=111) vs ITALIAN (N=320)



AGE DIFFERENCES: Focus of attention (children)



Fathers & Mothers



PPT'S DIMENSIONS AND THE DESTABILIZABILITY SCALE (LIE) N=320 (Italian sample)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
|----------------------------------|---|-------|------|------|-------|
| 1) Focus of attention (Children) | 1 | -0.02 | 0.01 | 0.07 | 0.01 |
| 2) Experiential (Emotional) | | 1 | 0.04 | 0.09 | 0.12* |
| 3) Regulation (Preceptual) | | | 1 | 0.02 | 0.06 |
| 4) Energy (Active) | | | | 1 | 0.13* |

CONVERGENT VALIDITY: PPT and FAMILY ASSESSMENT DEVICE

| | Parenting | Attention | Rules | Discipline | Monitoring | Harsh punishment | Ignoring | Maternal rewarding | Autonomy |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------|------------|------------|------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|
| Attention-Children (Paedagogic) | -0.05 | -0.18* | -0.06 | -0.03 | 0.04 | -0.01 | -0.03 | | |
| Experiential (Emotional) | -0.02 | -0.03 | 0.02 | 0.11 | 0.19* | 0.14 | 0.06 | | |
| Regulation (Preceptual) | 0.16 | 0.14 | 0.06 | 0.14 | 0.13 | 0.05 | 0.14 | | |
| Energy (Active) | 0.02 | -0.10 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.07 | 0.03 | 0.01 | | |

CONVERGENT VALIDITY: PPT and the

Ghent PARENTAL BEHAVIOR QUESTIONNAIRE

| | Focus of attention (Children) | Experiential (Emotional) | Regulation (Preceptual) | Energy (Active) |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Positive parenting | -0.07 | 0.07 | 0.05 | 0.01 |
| Monitoring | -0.09 | -0.07 | 0.11 | 0.10 |
| Rules | -0.06 | 0.13 | 0.08 | 0.14 |
| Discipline | -0.15 | 0.11 | 0.08 | 0.11 |
| Inconsistent discipline | -0.01 | 0.11 | 0.15 | 0.01 |
| Harsh punishment | -0.03 | 0.07 | 0.20* | -0.11 |
| Ignoring | 0.04 | -0.18* | 0.10 | 0.02 |
| Maternal rewarding | -0.20* | 0.02 | 0.15 | 0.12 |
| Autonomy | 0.05 | -0.07 | 0.20* | -0.06 |

Regression analysis predicting CBCL's dimensions

Clinical Vignetta

INTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR



During interactions with the child the parent is regulating the child's behavior primarily on the basis of the functional options seemingly present in the situation (Contextual) as well as in the child.

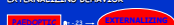
Carlo is a children of 7 years of age. In the last six months he is becoming more and more aggressive and he is the perpetrator of domestic violence towards his parents while at school he has a good performance and adequate behaviour. In the last weeks the child refuses to leave home, clings to his father maybe as a way to refocus the parents' attention and to give a flexing illusion of control.

Their parents, Laura (36 years of age) and Franco (39 years of age), ask for a family therapy because they are not able to handle him.

After some months of therapy, parents are able to communicate their problems as a couple and they express the possibility to separate.

"By creating a crisis, the child may be achieving his goal of keeping his parents together."

EXTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR



Parent's attention is mostly focused on him/herself during interactions with the child.

Mother (36)



Father (39)



RESULTS. The test showed a good convergent with the Family Assessment Device and the Ghent Parental Behavior Questionnaire. Cultural differences were found on all the PPT dimensions between the Italian and the Danish sample. Focus of attention (Children) decreases significantly among parents of children in the upper age groups. We also found differences between the parenting of mothers and fathers in the Experiential Modality and in the Regulation Style. Mothers during interactions with the child express an Emotional style in their way of perceiving and understanding the child and their interactions. Fathers during exchanges with the child are more likely to regulate the child's behaviour primarily on the basis of an a priori set of rules and regulations governing what to do, how and when to do this or that, what is right and wrong, good and bad, etc.

Internalizing behavior is predicted by the Regulation Style (Preceptual dimension) while the externalizing behavior by the Focus of Attention Style (Paedagogic dimension). As data were cross-sectional in nature, causal relationships between the parenting style and psychological well-being of children cannot be inferred.