ANXIETY AND PARENTING BEHAVIORS DURING EMERGING ADULTHOOD. A LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS

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Introduction

Emerging adulthood is characterized by changes in close relationships, education, and work. Regarding parent-child relationships, research shows the importance of positive family relationships during emerging adulthood and the role they play in preventing emerging adults' psychological distress over the years. Concretely, research suggest that positive family relationships are associate in a negative way with emerging adults' anxiety. During these years it is necessary a readjustment in the family relationship system in which parent-child relationships are increasingly closer to be a relationships between equals. However, there is a lack of studies focuses on family context using longitudinal analysis.

This study examined the stability in emerging adults' perceptions of parenting behaviors throughout the initial years (Wave 1) and intermediate years (Wave 2) of emerging adulthood and whether these relationships were associated with emerging adults' anxiety.

Results

- The repeated measured ANOVA indicated a significant decrease between the initial years and intermediate years of emerging adulthood in family social support, *Pillai multivariate analysis*, $F(1,396)= 12.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$ and parental warmth, *Pillai multivariate analysis*, $F(1,391)= 7.74$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$. However, parental involvement and parental autonomy support remain stable over the years.

- The repeated measured ANOVA also indicated a significant decrease between the initial years and intermediate years of emerging adulthood in psychological control, *Pillai multivariate analysis*, $F(1,386)= 5.97$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$ and behavioral control, *Pillai multivariate analysis*, $F(1,386)= 79.21$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .17$.

- Moreover, there was a medium relative stability (table 3) for the scores of the participants.

- Both psychological and behavioral control in W1 were positively associated with emerging adults' anxiety in W2. The relationship between the rest of parenting behaviors in W1 and emerging adults' anxiety in W2 was negative.

Methodology

Participants and instruments:

This longitudinal study involves 400 emerging adults: Wave 1 (*Mean*: 20.31; *SD*: 2.04), Wave 2 (*Mean*: 23.66; *SD*: 2.08) from the Transition to Adulthood in Spain (TAE) research project.

Participants fulfilled a questionnaire that included socio-demographic variables (sex and age). Furthermore:
- Family subscale of the Spanish adaptation of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Landeta & Calvete, 2002).
- The Perception of Parents Scale (POPS) (Compilation from Grolnick, Deci & Ryan, 1997; Grolnick, Ryan & Deci, 1991; Robbinson, 1994).
- Psychological control subscale of Parental Styles Scale (Oliva et al., 2007).
- Kerr & Stattin's Control Subscale (Kerr & Stattin, 2000).
- Anxiety subscale of the Spanish adaptation of the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) (Bados, Solanas & Andres, 2005).

Table 1. Descriptive stadistics

	Wave 1		Wave 2	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Family social support (ASS)	6.02	1.29	5.82	1.30
Parental involvement (PI)	5.51	1.18	5.48	1.15
Parental autonomy support (PAS)	6	1.00	5.88	1.06
Parental warmth (PW)	5.47	1.06	5.41	1.06
Psychological control (PC)	2.22	1.09	2.10	1.13
Behavioral control (BC)	2.23	1.08	1.78	.93

Table 2. Relative stabilty of variables

	ASS (W2)	PI (W2)	PW (W2)	PAS (W2)	PC (W2)	BC (W2)
ASS (W1)	.51**	.46**	.50**	.43**	-.37**	-.17*
PI (W1)	.48**	.61**	.48**	.38**	-.32**	-.15*
PW (W1)	.47**	.50**	.59**	.50**	-.43**	-.28**
PAS (W1)	.46**	.47**	.52**	.58**	-.52**	-.42**
PC (W1)	-.31**	-.30**	-.36**	-.47**	.61**	.48**
BC (W1)	-.17**	-.13*	-.24**	-.37**	.39**	59**

**p < .001. *p < .01.

Table 3. Incercorrelations between study variables

	Anxiety (W1)	Anxiety (W2)
1. ASS (W1)	-	-.22**
2. ASS (W2)	-.26**	-
3. PI (W1)	-	-.25**
4. PI (W2)	-.24**	-
5. PW (W1)	-	-.19**
6. PW (W2)	-.26**	-
7. PAS (W1)	-	-.22**
8. PAS (W2)	-.32**	-
9. PC (W1)	-	.28**
10. PC (W2)	.31**	-
11. BC (W1)	-	.20**
12. BC (W2)	.21**	-

**p < .001

Conclusion

These findings suggest the need of developing intervention programs that help parents to adapt their parental behaviors to their children's needs during this stage and specifically, making lower their control to emerging adults.

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