

**Perceived Parental Rearing Styles, Distress Tolerance and Mental Health
Problems of University Students**



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Declaration

I, Maha Azhar, ID 15001257005, student of MS Counselling Psychology session 2015-2017 hereby declare that the matter printed in the thesis title “Perceived Parental Rearing Styles, Distress Tolerance and Mental Health Problems of University Students” is my own work and has not been printed, published and submitted as research work thesis or publication in any form in any university, research institution etc. in Pakistan or abroad.

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Certificate of Approval

Accepted by the Faculty of the Institute of Clinical Psychology, University of Management and Technology, Lahore in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MS in Counselling Psychology.

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Table of Contents

Chapter		Page No.
	Declaration	i
	Certificate of Approval	ii
	Acknowledgements	iii
	Table of Contents	Iv
	List of Tables	V
	List of Figures	vii
	List of Appendices	viii
	Abstract	1
Chapter I	Introduction	2
Chapter II	Review of Literature	11
	Rationale of Research	22
Chapter III	Method	24
	Research Design	24
	Participants	26
	Measures	26
	Procedure	28
Chapter IV	Results	29
	Sample Description	30
	Hypotheses Testing	39
	Summary of Results	54
Chapter V	Discussion	56
	Conclusion	62
	Implications	62
	Suggestions for further research	63
	References	64
	Appendices	

List of Tables

Table No.		Page No
Table 1	Frequency and Percentages of Demographic Variables of the Participants (N=300)	30
Table 2	Eigen Value and Variance Explained by 2 Factor of Distress Tolerance Scale	33
Table 3	Factor Structure of Distress Tolerance Scale (DTS) with Varimax Rotation for 49 items (N=300)	33
Table 4	Summary of Inter-Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations for Scores on 2 Factors and Total Scores of Distress Tolerance Scale (N=300)	35
Table 5	Cronbach's Alpha for Total Scores and Subscales of Distress Tolerance Scale, Depression Anxiety Stress Scale and EMBU-A Scale	37
Table 6	Inter-Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations of Parental Rearing Practices, Distress Tolerance and Mental Health Problems in University Students (N=300)	40
Table 7	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors for Mental Health Problems of University Students (N=300)	42
Table 8	Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Predictors for Distress Tolerance of University Students (N=300)	44
Table 9	Means, Standard Deviations, t and p values of men (N=153) and women (N=147) for Parental Rearing Practices, Distress Tolerance and Mental Health Problems	47
Table 10	Means, Standard Deviations, t and p values of Younger Age Group (n=203) and Older Age Groups (n=97) for Distress Tolerance and Mental Health Problems of University Students	49
Table 11	One Way Analysis of Variance of Four Levels of Education Years and Distress Tolerance of University Students (N=300)	50

Table 12	One Way Analysis of Variance of Three Levels of Home Atmosphere and Distress Tolerance of University Students (N=300)	51
Table 13	One Way Analysis of Variance of Four Levels of Education Years and Mental Health Problems of University Students (N=300)	52
Table 14	One Way Analysis of Variance of Three Levels of Home Atmosphere and Distress Tolerance of University Students (N=300)	53

List of Figures

Figure No.		Page No.
Figure 1	Scree Plot for Factors	32

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Plagiarism Report
Appendix B	Item Pool of Distress Tolerance Scale
Appendix C	Research Protocol
Appendix D	Permission Letter for Data Collection

Abstract

Distress Tolerance is described as the capacity to resist negative emotional states (Simons & Gaher, 2005), and is becoming a focus of clinical practitioners in recent years. The current study aimed to explore the culture specific experiences and manifestation of distress tolerance in university students and its relationship with perceived parental rearing styles and mental health problems. For this purpose, firstly, phenomenology was explored from 26 university students through open ended question that yielded a list of 60 items, followed by expert validation. After exclusion of repeated items and pilot study, a self-report measure was made having 52 items on 4 point Likert scale which was given to 300 university students with the age range of 16 – 25 years ($M=20.05$, $SD=1.75$) along with a demographic questionnaire, Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS 21, Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), and EMBU-A (Perris, Jacobsson, Lindström, von Knorring, and Perris, 1980). Exploratory factor analysis revealed the 2-factor solution of Distress Tolerance Scale with acceptable level of psychometric properties. Hierarchical Regression Analyses have revealed that studying in a government university; experiencing maternal rejection and over-protection and having low distress tolerance level predicts more mental health problems. Similarly, maternal rejection and over-protection predicts low distress tolerance in university students. Results were discussed in terms of culture and gender differences with its clinical and counselling application.

Chapter I

Introduction

Parenting is a crucial and significant contributor of child development. It is the practice that adults do when they have children and is the expression of their cognitions. The ideas, knowledge, goals, attitudes and the overall belief system of parents leaves a significant impact on the child's mental health (Goodnow, 2002). Such parental beliefs generates their behaviours, effectiveness of their parenting, and helps them in achieving their parental goals in the form of child development. For children, the actual experience provided by their parents is the glass with the help of which they view the world throughout their lives. The biological parents are not only contributor of child's genetic makeup but are also the sole reason of their social adaptation. They are the providers of interactive environment to children, helping to shape the adaptation of children's learning, growth and development (Bornstein, 2013). Parents who provide constant warmth and care with persistent positive attention in early years proves to be the source of mental health of that individual later in life (Yamawaki, Nelson, & Omori, 2011). Hence, the prosperity of this parent – child bond is crucial for the children as well as for adults as parents. Human beings does not survive in isolation, but in varied contexts like parent-child. And this very context is largely shaped and determined by cultural practices. Culture, by and large, provides the outline to adults as parents with which they continue rearing children throughout their lives (Bornstein, 2012).

Culture is transmitted from generation to generation assigning meaning to parental rearing practices as well as mental health of children. It makes sure that each successive generation attains appropriate and normative patterns of beliefs and behaviour leading to early year experiences of children. Different cultures promote various practices in terms of responsibility distribution. In most of the cultures, principal caregiver is mother, whereas, in some other cultures, multiple caregiving is promoted as a norm (Bornstein & Lansford,