
Fathers' Personality Dispositions and Conduct-disordered Children's Perception of Their Fathers

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This study finds out the personality disposition of three groups of fathers having children with conduct disorder (CDC), dysthymic disorder (DDC), and normal children (NC), and children's perception of their fathers.

30 male children, aged 9 to 13 years, in each group, meeting the criteria of conduct disorder (experimental group), dysthymic disorder (control group), and normal criterion (control group), and their fathers were assessed. Neo Five Factor Inventory and Parent-Child-Relationship Scale were administered on fathers and their children respectively.

The fathers of conduct-disordered children (CDF) showed lower agreeableness than the normal children's fathers (NF). The CDC perceived their fathers as most rejecting, neglecting, demanding and symbolically and objectively punishing, amongst all three groups. The DDC perceived their fathers (DDF) as less loving, more rejecting, and more symbolically and objectively punishing compared to the NC, but they did not perceive their fathers as more neglecting and demanding than CD children.

The CDC's perception of the CDF as loving was maximally predicted by their conscientiousness. The negative correlation of conscientiousness with CDC's perception of CDF as rejecting and neglecting suggests that conscientiousness of CDF compromises the negative perception of the father by CDC. The DDF's extraversion caused their child to perceive them as objectively punishing.

The above findings reveal that if the child's attachment to the parents and parental monitoring is jeopardised due to the aforesaid reasons, and the parents fail to provide the child with a warm, trusting, dependable and firm relationship, the child may form varied behavioural problems.