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Mindfulness, compassion for children and parents well-being

Ying MA

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

Mindful parenting is a new extension of mindfulness and parenting. It was defined as bringing parents' attention to the present moment and parenting process with their children, at the same time holding attitudes of non-judgment and acceptance. Previous studies have showed that mindfulness of parents was negatively related to parent's depression, anxiety, and children's problematic behaviors. Our study aims at investigating the predicting effects of parents' mind awareness attention and compassion for children on parenting efficacy, parents' satisfaction and general health. In addition, this study also examined the difference between fathers and mothers on these variables. Participants consisted of 329 mothers and 86 fathers with primary school children (mean age=7.24 yrs, SD=1.23) in China. Correlation, T tests and regression methods were applied to analyze data. The results demonstrated that both parents' mind awareness attention and compassionate attitude towards children were positively related to parenting efficacy, parenting satisfaction and parents' general health. Fathers reported significantly higher mindfulness, compassion, parenting satisfaction and general health than mothers. Thus fathers seemed to be more confident than mothers in parenting process. Moreover, the predicting effects of fathers' mindfulness and compassion on depended variables were different from mothers. These findings indicate that in future parenting research and intervention, it's critical to consider parents' mindfulness, compassion for children, as well as father-mother difference. Discussions about future research direction and limitations of this study were also described at last.

Biography

Ying MA now is a second year PhD student in the Department of Educational Psychology, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, China. She got the Master's degree of Psychology in Peking University, China. Her current research areas are parent-child relationship and mindful parenting.

maying@link.cuhk.edu.hk
mayingsunshine@gmail.com

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