Introduction

Previous Literature

**Expressive writing** - writing about a traumatic experience (Pennebaker, 1997).

**Overall well-being** - physical and psychological improvements (Pennebaker & Chung, 2007).

**Reappraisal** - form of emotional regulation that reframes experiences (Pennebaker, 2011).

**Resilience** - stable and normal functioning despite exposure to aversive situations (Rutter, 1999; Werner, 1995).

**Secure attachment** - self-esteem along with positive social relationships (Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012).

**Authoritative parenting** - encourages communication, independence, and discipline (Agaibi & Wilson, 2005; Baumrind, 1971).

Hypothesis

We predict that there will be a positive relationship between resilience, use of specific language in emotional writing, and authoritative parenting.

Methods

Participants

100 subjects volunteered to participate from the Behavioral Sciences Research pool.

Research Design

All elements of this study were completed electronically in a laboratory setting.

1. **Demographic Questionnaire**
2. **Resilience Scale & Parental Authority Questionnaire**
3. **Group assignment**
4. **30 minute writing exercise**

Subjects were assigned randomly to either a control or experimental group and respond corresponding (Pennebaker & Chung, 2007). Their responses were saved, formatted for analysis, and ran through the LIWC (Linguistic and Inquiry Word Count 2007 edition; Pennebaker, Booth, & Francis, 2007). These outputs were then analyzed with the two scored questionnaires using the Pearson correlation.

Conclusion

Results

The experimental group wrote about their emotions more than the control group, as predicted, however the degree to which they wrote about their emotions was not related to parenting style or resilience. Almost all correlations were trivial, when adjusting for multiple correlations no significance was found. Overall this contradicts our hypothesis.

Implications

Since the experimental manipulation worked, but no significant relationships were found, perhaps the methodology of counting word frequencies is unrelated to resilience and parenting style. Considering the complex relationship between all of the variables more specific and clarifying research must be done. There may also be many factors that account for our lack of significant relationships, such as the impact of religion and college education on the resilience levels in our studied population (Waxman, Gray, & Pardon, 2003; McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). However, before we deduce that the experimental manipulation’s success means that expressive writing could be useful in clinical settings, we must take into account recent research that show’s negative outcomes related to it and wait for further studies to clarify what affects expressive writing and what it affects in turn (Sbarra, Boals, Mason, Larson, & Mehl, 2013).