

# Parenting Behaviors And Early Maladaptive Schemas In Low-Income Clinical Population: A Case Study

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## ABSTRACT

A number of psychological perspectives place significant emphasis on the role of parenting and parental communication in the development of personality in adulthood. The schema approach is a component of the third-generation therapies, which are characterized by an integrative and holistic approach. Despite the presence of psychosocial risk factors such as poverty, unemployment and insecurity, which are prevalent in the low-income population in the geographical context, family functionality serves as a robust protective factor that fosters healthy personality development and resilience. The objective was to study the parental behaviors perceived during childhood and adolescence in individuals with clinical disorders of limited resources in the City of Poza Rica, Veracruz. Consequently, this study concentrated on the analysis of parental behaviors that occurred during the upbringing of users of a psychological care center coordinated by a public university in this city, applying Young Parenting Inventory (YPI) as the instrument for identifying maladaptive schemas in childhood. The study mainly concludes that mothers are the main source of emotional support and are less likely to foster emotional deprivation. Unpredictable or absent fathers may cause the abandonment pattern. Mistrust is common in unfaithful fathers and manipulative mothers. Maternal overprotection contributes to the vulnerability to harm schema. Lack of resources and parental absence negatively affect children's emotional and psychological development.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The population with a low income is at an elevated risk of developing health issues, experiencing stress as a result of environmental and physical stimuli, and encountering exhaustion and significant challenges in their social and adaptive responses.

The lack of access to health and education services in low-income families, coupled with the necessity for both parents to dedicate a significant portion of their time to unsatisfactory employment, has a detrimental impact on the cognitive, emotional, and social development of younger members.

Furthermore, the deterioration of the social fabric, largely caused by alienation, excessive use of technological devices, and the rupture of sociocultural traditions that previously served as protective factors for mental health, may render parents more difficult to understand and meet the most important needs of their children.

The physical and emotional distancing from parental figures when they are unable to act effectively in response to the emergence of pathological symptoms in children can contribute to the perpetuation of such symptoms and ultimately lead to the development of clinical disorders that affect mental health within the most vulnerable families and communities.

It is notable that there is a paucity of studies that examine and delineate parenting behaviors within the conceptual framework of schema therapy in the specific geographical and sociocultural context. Consequently, there is a need for research in this area and this research aims to give responses to this issue.

## **2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In the context of child development, the ability of parents to foster adaptive schemas in their children is a significant determinant of positive outcomes. This capacity is shaped by a range of factors, including psychoeducation and the parents' own upbringing. The formation of stable bonds, the establishment of basic trust, the fulfilment of emotional needs, the development of self-acceptance and self-esteem, the fostering of a sense of social belonging, the nurturing of self-reliance and competence, the cultivation of resilience and security, the encouragement of self-realization, the fostering of self-efficacy and achievement, the promotion of reciprocity and humility, the development of self-discipline and self-control, the encouragement of assertiveness, the fostering of self-care, the nurturing of personal recognition and admiration, the encouragement of positivity and optimism, the fostering of emotional spontaneity and authenticity, the instilling of realistic standards, and the promotion of self-compassion (Loockwood & Perris, 2012).

These adaptive schemas, established during childhood and adolescence, serve as the counterpart to the early maladaptive schemas that underlie various clinical disorders and personality pathologies, as postulated by the creator of schema therapy, Jeffrey Young.

In light of the aforementioned considerations, the objective of this study was to ascertain the parental behaviors perceived during childhood and adolescence in individuals with clinical disorders of limited resources in the City of Poza Rica, Veracruz.

## **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A variety of theoretical approaches have been developed to explain the influence of parental behaviors on the psychological development of children and adolescents, as well as their impact on adult life.

Schema therapy is founded upon a synthesis of insights gleaned from decades of research, which have been integrated into a coherent and efficacious body of knowledge for the conceptualization of clinical cases and the design of an effective treatment.

Subsequently, the approaches and principal postulates that are integrated into the comprehensive conceptual framework of Schema Therapy are outlined. These emphasize the role of parenting and the relationship with the primary caregivers during this critical period, as well as their significant influence on the development of the adult personality.

### **3.1 Psychological theories on the role of nurture in psychological development**

The concept of the mind having simultaneous and contradictory perspectives, as postulated by Freud in his psychoanalytic theory, is based on the assumption that early experiences play a pivotal role in shaping an individual's personality and that early memories exert an unconscious influence on current behavior (Freud, S. 1923).

From the perspective of classical conditioning, as espoused by prominent figures such as Ivan Pavlov, Joseph Wolpe, Irene Levey and A.B. Martin, it is proposed that behaviors and emotions can be elicited through the association of a stimulus, and that ideas, experiences and attitudes can be reinforced in a self-reinforcing manner (Leahy, 1998).

From behaviorism and social learning theory, authors such as John Watson, B.F. Skinner, Edward Thorndike, and Albert Bandura posit that when children are in the presence of influential role models,

such as parents, teachers, and friends, they can codify behaviors (either positive or negative) through observation and subsequent imitation. As time progresses, a child may come to identify with the individual who initially modelled the behavior. This may result in the broader adoption of that person's observed behaviors, values, attitudes and beliefs (Schunk, D.H., 2012).

From the perspective of attachment theory, as postulated by authors such as John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, the significance of the maternal-child relationship is emphasized from a social, cognitive and emotional standpoint. Additionally, the concept of the association between early separations from the mother and the emergence of maladaptive behaviors is elucidated. It is widely acknowledged that infants have an innate need to seek proximity to their primary caregiver in order to ensure their survival. Furthermore, it is understood that when the caregiver is under stress or feels threatened, the infant's safety is also jeopardized.

Attachment can be defined as a deep and lasting emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space. The crucial factor in creating a secure attachment relationship is not food but care, loving warmth, and emotional responsiveness (Ainsworth, M.D., 1969; Bowlby, J., 1969/1982).

Erik Erikson's developmental psychosocial theory posits that personality develops in a predetermined order, with a series of defined stages, each building on the previous stage.

Similarly, it is proposed that the successful completion of a task generates feelings of pride, satisfaction and approval, whereas failure can lead to feelings of unhappiness and other psychological issues. The tasks at each stage are influenced by an individual's biology (genetics and fitness) and psychology (personal values and goals), as well as by the society and culture to which the individual belongs (Erickson, E., 1950).

The advent of cognitive-behavioral therapy, as espoused by pioneers such as Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck, led to the realization that external or internal events (A for activating event) do not, in and of themselves, precipitate emotional, cognitive, somatic, and/or behavioral responses in an individual. Rather, it is the manner in which these events are cognitively processed and evaluated (B for beliefs) that determines the outcome (C for consequences) (Ellis, A., & Dryden, W., 1987).

A review of the literature on temperament and personality indicates that an individual's capacity to cope with developmental tasks and the general challenge of mental well-being is influenced by their temperamental characteristics. As posited by Rothbart, M.K., & Bates, J.E. (2006), the temperament of an individual can be understood to comprise two principal dimensions: closeness, which encompasses positivity, extroversion, stimulus-seeking, and curiosity, and inhibition, which includes negativity, shyness, anxiety, and irritability. In his 1970 work, Jeffrey Alan Gray posits that two systems govern an individual's interactions with their environment: a behavioral inhibition system, which is characterized by punishment sensitivity and a motivation to avoid, and a behavioral activation system, which is defined by reward sensitivity and a motivation to approach.

The Big Five Factors Theory of Personality posits that personality traits can be grouped into five general domains, which are believed to represent the fundamental structure underlying all personality types. The five domains are openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (De Raad, B., 2000).

In addition, it is important to consider the impact of environmental risk factors and transactional stress on the development of mental illness. There is a growing body of evidence indicating that a number of socio-environmental risk factors may contribute to the onset of mental illness, including low socioeconomic status, dysfunctional family relationships, sexual or physical abuse, and the loss of a parent. Conversely, protective factors facilitate development and can mitigate the impact of risk factors. The most well-known protective factors are the presence of at least a high-quality attachment

relationship and a high level of general intelligence. However, resilience and even physical attractiveness are also considered to be protective factors (Loose, Ch. et al., 2020).

Lazarus (1966) posits that individuals possess a set of innate predispositions that shape their experiences of the environment and their subsequent responses. This response then exerts further influence on the surrounding environment, constituting an ongoing interaction between innate and environmental factors.

### **3.2 Influence of parental behaviors in different stages of childhood and adolescence**

The following section presents a concise overview of the ways in which parental behaviors can indicate risk or protective factors at various stages of child and adolescent development.

From infancy to early childhood, difficulties emerge from interactions between parents and children that are not synchronous. The child's needs are not adequately recognized or misinterpreted, parents may not respond sensitively enough, and both the child and parents may experience distressing emotional reactions. It can therefore be argued that the development of regulatory disorders represents a failure in the co-regulation of parents and infants when faced with developmental tasks. Regulatory disorders subsequently manifest as symptoms of extreme irritability, manifested in excessive crying, refusal of food, and difficulties falling and staying asleep (Loose et al., 2020).

#### **Preschool age**

At this stage, psychological distress, conflict, and trauma are the result of basic childhood needs that have not been met or have been excessively indulged in the past and present. Furthermore, parental responses to children's fears can also contribute to the formation of schemas. Parents may respond in ways that are traumatic for the child, employing age-appropriate responses that are inappropriate for the situation.

Baumrind (1971) identified four distinct parenting styles, which Loose, Ch. et al. (2020) linked to the potential for maladaptive schemas to emerge.

The permissive style of parenting is characterized by a lack of clear boundaries and expectations, which may contribute to the development of maladaptive schemas. Abandonment-instability, emotional deprivation, entitlement-grandiosity, insufficient self-control-discipline.

The authoritative style is characterized by a combination of autonomy-supportive and structured parenting. The positive psychological adjustment, positive self-concept and fewer behavioral problems that result from this parenting style are all beneficial outcomes.

The neglectful style is characterized by a lack of care and attention towards the child. Those exhibiting a permissive style may display behaviors associated with abandonment-instability, emotional deprivation, failure and avoidant coping, as well as exhibiting a lack of self-control and discipline.

The authoritarian style is characterized by a tendency to exert control over others and to impose one's own views and decisions upon them. The following characteristics are indicative of an emotionally deprived upbringing: distrust, abuse, defects, shame, subjugation and punishment.

During the school-age period, children are eager to engage fully in the adult world. As a result, they are more prone to feelings of inadequacy or inferiority, which tend to accumulate when the child has very few opportunities to demonstrate their abilities in the adult world. The development of feelings of failure is contingent upon the child being challenged beyond their competence and experiencing ongoing failure.

In his seminal work, Havighurst (1972) outlines the developmental tasks of the school-age child as follows: social cooperation, self-confidence (i.e., diligence and efficiency), learning cultural techniques (reading, writing, arithmetic), play, and group work.

As children progress beyond the early school years, there is an increased expectation of conformity. They are expected to become more organized, to manage social interactions, to act independently, to work on tasks with perseverance, and to follow rules without constant stimuli or external incentives. The acquisition of reading, writing and numeracy skills represents a significant milestone in the journey towards independence and prestige. However, these challenges also present frequent opportunities for failure, which can result in the internalization of maladaptive beliefs.

In school-age children, there is a greater likelihood of encountering fears of failure, negative evaluation, injury, illness, and loss, including death or catastrophe. Such fears may also be triggered by highly publicized events such as kidnappings or wars. Furthermore, they assess their performance not only in terms of their own effort but also in terms of external markers of achievement, such as the grades they receive. Those who have been subjected to verbal and physical abuse and who have been conditioned by their family history are particularly susceptible to the formation of schemas. It is often the case that criminals are also victims, and vice versa (Carr, 2015).

### **Adolescence**

During this developmental stage, conflicts between adolescents and their parents tend to be more frequent and pertain to matters such as clothing, music, and hairstyle. With older adolescents, disagreements regarding political views and curfews are also prevalent. A positive relationship between children and their parents, coupled with the latter's possession of effective parenting skills, has been demonstrated to reduce the likelihood of children succumbing to peer pressure (Farrell & White, 1998). However, in addition to the developmental tasks that adolescents must complete, those who have been identified as attachment figures must also demonstrate proficiency in the parental developmental tasks. Parents must be able to facilitate their adolescent offspring's requests for autonomy, understanding the need for the child to develop greater detachment (Carr, 2015).

### **3.3 Pathological role assignment**

Parents and other caregivers may unintentionally impose roles on their children that align with their own needs (Zarbock, 2011, cited in Loose et al., 2011). In this context, the term "role" is defined as the aggregate of conscious and unconscious expectations directed at the other party. The concept of pathogenic role assignment, as proposed by Richter (1974), offers a valuable framework for addressing this question. Typical role assignments include:

- The child as a substitute partner for a single parent.
- The child as idealized self (the child needs to accomplish everything that the parents are not achieving/doing in their own lives).
- The child as a scapegoat (anything negative is attributed to the child, so that the rest of the family is held together by a common enemy; anger is not expressed toward the perpetrator but is diverted toward the child as the weakest member of the system).
- The child as surrogate parent (a role reversal or 'parentification', where children take on emotional or other responsibilities as parents).

### **3.4 Influence of the family as a system**

The "rules of the family system" describe the fundamental principles, familial traditions, norms, values, and emotional styles that are internalized and serve to shape the relationship between family members. The term "family taboos" is used to describe indisputable rules regarding the types of topics that can and cannot be discussed within the family unit. In every family unit, and indeed in larger

systems such as a national community, a culture can be identified which delineates the manner in which feelings should be addressed.

These system rules serve to direct the respective system and facilitate its continued existence and resilience, both internally and externally.

Furthermore, a family's values are reflected in the parents' visions of the future. In the event of a discernible vision of the future, parents may perceive their children's symptoms as a potential threat to that vision. Such concerns may give rise to considerable stress when the child is not reaching the expected developmental milestones. Furthermore, parents may also be inclined to deny any symptoms exhibited by their child, as their perception of their child's future is influenced by their expectations regarding their child's abilities (Loose et al., 2020).

### **3.5 Basic needs and schema formation**

An alternative approach to understanding the interactions between a child and their environment is to conceptualize the total environment as a means of either satisfying or frustrating the child's fundamental psychological needs.

Schema therapy posits that psychological needs constitute the foundation of the personal experience and the driving force of human behavior. The chronic frustration of needs due to a lack of care, the presence of abuse, trauma, or a lack of boundaries allows risk factors to develop and manifest themselves in ways that harm mental and emotional well-being.

According to Klaus Grawe (2017) he presents 4 basic emotional needs:

1. Attachment: Being part of loving relationships and belonging to supportive communities.
2. Autonomy: To be independent of the influence of others; having self-confidence, self-efficacy, and the ability to control one's environment.
3. Self-esteem: Being able to appreciate and value oneself and have self-respect.
4. Play, enjoyment, happiness and stimulation: Be spontaneous and have the freedom to express oneself and obtain pleasure.
5. Limits: Have structure and orientation, so that the environment is understandable and predictable in order to control it.

Schemas, also referred to as "early maladaptive schemas," are "a broad organizing principle for making sense of one's life experience" (Young et al., 2003). They are composed of thoughts, feelings, memories, and bodily sensations. They emerge when fundamental emotional needs are not fulfilled and serve to explain past experiences and establish future expectations. The schemas manifest as an individual's self-perception and interpersonal dynamics, shaped by the prevailing environmental context.

### **3.6 Early maladaptive schemas and developmentally supportive parenting behaviors**

The 18 early maladaptive schemas identified by Young and the current literature on Schema Therapy (Morales, S., 2023) are outlined below, along with the parental characteristics and behaviors that contribute to the emergence of these dysfunctional schemas, as outlined in the Young Parent Inventory (Young, J., 2014). In addition, the cognitive processes that the child and/or adolescent may develop as a result of these behaviors are included, as proposed by Loose, C.H. et al. (2021).

#### **Abandonment/Instability**

The term denotes the anticipation or sentiment that the availability and capacity of attachment figures to offer permanence, stability, practical protection, and bonding will be compromised due to their potential departure, transformation, or demise. The instability and unpredictability of attachment figures give rise to the perception of this schema.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I am weak and helpless, I cannot do things without my parents or my teacher, making decisions is very difficult for me.

**Parental characteristic:** Unstable connection, inconsistent attention and support, frequent changes, being or feeling abandoned.

**Parenting behaviors explored by the YPI:** Dying or leaving home permanently; being moody, unpredictable, or alcoholic; preferring siblings; withdrawing and leaving the child alone for prolonged periods.

### **Distrust/Abuse**

The term denotes a sentiment of apprehension regarding the potential for intentional or negligent mistreatment, exploitation, deceit, manipulation, or exploitation by others. Furthermore, feelings of distrust and suspicion related to anger and rage, which are often experienced in response to perceived injustices, are also included. Such feelings frequently emerge from experiences within relationships where ambivalent messages have been conveyed, or from the experience of traumatic events such as sexual abuse or violence perpetrated by peers.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I must be careful wherever I am; the world is dangerous; it is very risky to do anything.

**Parental characteristic:** Emotional, physical, or sexual abuse.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** Lying to the child, cheating on him, or betraying him; physically, emotionally, or sexually abusing him; using him to satisfy his needs; deriving pleasure from hurting people.

### **Emotional deprivation**

The term denotes the anticipation or sensation that fundamental requirements will not be fulfilled by external sources. Such a situation entails the absence of care, empathy, and protection. In general, as they matured, they were not adequately considered, comprehended, or esteemed by their caregivers. Such individuals may experience feelings of loneliness, intense sadness, and a sense of distance from others, as well as a lack of satisfaction in their close relationships due to a perceived lack of importance.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I often bear the brunt; no one supports me/understands me. Others don't accept my feelings.

**Parental characteristic:** Neglect, emotional coldness, rejection.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI (Reverse Rating):** The following behaviors have been identified in the YPI:

1. Showing love and affection in a special way
2. Spending time together and paying attention to each other
3. Providing helpful guidance and direction
4. Listening, understanding, and sharing feelings

5. Being warm and physically caring.

### **Flaws/Embarrassment**

The term is used to describe the conviction that one possesses physical imperfections or disagreeable traits, which are perceived as being inherently flawed, undesirable, inferior, and invalid. This belief is often accompanied by the assumption that others will reject, criticise, or humiliate the individual in question. Disputes with others often arise from a desire to conceal imperfections. He displays a high level of sensitivity to criticism and judgment.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I am afraid of failing (for example, in school or sports); I often feel stupid; others are much better than me.

**Parental characteristic:** Humiliation in front of others; lack of respect for the child's boundaries; degradation of the child's needs.

**Parenting behaviors explored by the YPI:** The following behaviors have been explored in the YPI:

1. The child may feel unable to trust their own decisions or judgement.
2. The child may be given too many tasks to complete, rather than being allowed to complete tasks independently.
3. The child may be treated as though they are younger than their actual age.
4. The child may be subjected to frequent criticism.
5. The child may feel unloved or rejected.
6. The child may be treated as though they are inherently flawed.
7. The child may be made to feel ashamed of themselves in significant ways.

### **Social isolation**

The term is used to describe a belief that the individual is distinct from others, isolated from the wider society, or lacking in a sense of belonging to a group or community. The cause of rejection is not intrinsic to the individual, but rather the perception of difference from others. This may manifest in various forms, such as economic status, familial background, or sexual orientation.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I am different, my family is different; I don't fit in; Nobody understands me.

**Parental characteristic:** Socially isolated family; often in relation to immigrant status, minority ethnicity, or some other social exclusion (e.g., socioeconomic class).

\*The YPI does not explore parenting behaviors that favor the development of this scheme.

### **Dependence/Incompetence**

The term denotes a conviction that one lacks the requisite capacity to manage the demands of daily life, undertake new challenges, make informed decisions, or resolve issues without substantial assistance and guidance from others. Such individuals frequently exhibit symptoms of fear and helplessness, as well as a lack of self-confidence.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I am weak and helpless, I cannot do things without my parents or my teacher, making decisions is very difficult for me.



**Parental characteristic:** Overly cautious parents who want to control the child's experiences; possibly parents with anxiety disorders or trauma.

\*The YPI does not explore parenting behaviors that favor the development of this scheme.

### **Vulnerability to damage**

The term is used to describe feelings of intense fear and anxiety that unpredictable catastrophes will occur at any moment, with no possibility of avoiding them. Fears may pertain to a range of scenarios, including illness, victimization by external forces, and extreme emotional states such as the loss of control or sanity. As a result of this conditioning, the subjects came to perceive the world as a dangerous place and to maintain a state of constant vigilance in order to identify and respond to any potential threat.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I must be careful wherever I am; the world is dangerous; it is very risky to do anything.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** Worrying a lot about the child getting sick; worrying a lot about getting hurt; being a fearful or phobic person, overprotecting the child.

**Parental Characteristic:** Overly cautious parents who warn against illness and accidents with high levels of control and exaggerated precautions

### **Entanglement/undeveloped self**

The term denotes an excessive degree of involvement, attachment and emotional proximity with one or more individuals who occupy a close or significant position in the subject's life, frequently their parents. This phenomenon impedes the subject's capacity to form an independent identity and to recognize their own needs. In some cases, the subject may even perceive that their own wellbeing and survival are contingent upon the fulfilment of these needs.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I need my parents, and they need me; I am obligated to tell them everything about my life and to do everything they want me to do.

**Parental characteristic:** Children become dependent on their parents (e.g., parentification, partner compensation); when children misbehave, the parents' reactions are preachy and prudish, thus generating feelings of guilt.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** The child and parent exhibited a high degree of attachment, which enabled them to understand each other perfectly. The child lacked a sense of individuality and a sense of self separate from the parent, which resulted from the parent's strong personality. The child and parent demonstrated a tendency to hurt each other if moved away from the child.

### **Failure**

The construct is related to the belief of having failed, being failing in the present or future, as well as being perceived as lacking in certain abilities, such as intelligence, competence, or skill. This is predominantly associated with domains such as academic, professional and athletic accomplishment. The individual is inclined to be overly critical of their own performance, which can give rise to feelings of doubt, anxiety and a tendency to compare oneself unfavorably to others.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I am afraid of failing (for example, in school or sports); I often feel stupid; others are much better than me.

**Parental characteristic:** Inadequate support and encouragement to cope with developmental tasks; devaluation of the child's abilities; representing faults as stupidity.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** Never teach the child to have the discipline necessary to succeed in school; treat him as if he were stupid or untalented; really not want him to succeed; expect him to be a failure in life.

### **Law/Grandiosity**

The term is used to describe a belief that an individual or group is inherently superior to others, that they are entitled to special privileges, or that they are exempt from certain obligations. He adheres to the conviction that he is entitled to act at his discretion, without regard for the interests of others or the norms of reciprocity. Such individuals may exhibit a tendency to prioritize the desire for superiority over others, as well as the pursuit of control and power. He frequently exhibits rigidity in his desires and demonstrates a lack of empathic ability when considering the perspectives of others.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I don't need to learn new things. The task is only for "stupid people"; The rules that everyone follows don't apply to me because I'm special.

**Parental characteristic:** Indulgence, lack of structure, and setting boundaries; the child is treated like a prince or princess; all desires are instantly satisfied.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** Pampering the child too much or being too lenient in many ways; making the child feel that he or she was special, better than most people; being demanding, expecting things to be done his or her way; not teaching the child that he or she has responsibilities to other people.

### **Insufficient Self-Control/Discipline**

The term denotes a substantial and pervasive challenge in regulating one's own emotions and impulses, a diminished capacity to tolerate frustration, and a notable deficiency in commitment. These factors collectively contribute to an inability to achieve personal objectives and goals. It is imperative to avoid any potential for conflict, confrontation, or discomfort or annoyance, even if it entails risk.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I can't complete boring tasks; instead, I'm looking for something else I can do.

**Parental characteristic:** Unruly parents with capricious behavior driven by the pleasure principle.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** Providing too little discipline or structure to the child; setting few rules or responsibilities for the child; allowing the child to become very angry or lose control; being an undisciplined person.

### **Subjugation**

The term denotes a behavioral pattern characterized by the suppression of one's own needs and desires in order to avoid negative consequences in relation to others. By acquiescing to the control of others, particularly their loved ones, individuals seek to evade anger, punishment or abandonment by them. Such individuals tend to suppress their fundamental needs and emotions, leading to feelings of frustration when they are unable to express their anger due to fear of rejection.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** What I feel, and think is not important; others know it better than I do; they should decide how things should be done.

**Parental characteristic:** Parents with an authoritarian parenting style; if the child is submissive, he will be rewarded with love and care.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** Treating the child as if his opinions or desires did not count; doing what he wants, regardless of the child's needs; controlling the child's life so that he had little freedom of choice; making everything go on his terms.

### **Self-sacrifice**

The excessive attention paid to the needs of others is a voluntary action, undertaken for one of three reasons: to experience personal gratification, to avoid feelings of guilt, or to maintain a connection with those who are perceived as vulnerable. He experiences a sense of dissatisfaction when he does not devote sufficient attention to others, due to his heightened sensitivity to the emotional distress and suffering of others.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** Without me, everything falls apart; if I didn't do all the things I do, nothing would work properly.

**Parental characteristic:** Parents in need of care or support, who tend to parentification; oblivious to the child's needs.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** Sacrificing their own needs for the good of the family; not being able to handle many daily responsibilities, so the child had to do more than they should; being very unhappy; and relying on the child for support and understanding.

### **Seeking Approval**

An excessive focus on fitting in and gaining the attention, approval, or recognition of others is a common strategy for developing a sense of confidence in oneself. However, this approach may result in the neglect of developing a genuine sense of self. Approval is sought from others on the basis of status, image, social acceptance, financial status, and achievements. It seems probable that the schema will be triggered when other schemas, such as those pertaining to emotional deprivation or social exclusion, are activated.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** I have to show people how good/excellent I am; otherwise, I feel restless and unsatisfied.

**Parental characteristic:** Seeks recognition and acceptance based on school performance, social adaptation, social concepts.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** Being concerned about social status and appearance; placing a strong emphasis on success and competence; being concerned about how the child's behavior would reflect on him/her in the eyes of others; loving or paying more attention to the child when the child excelled.

### **Negativity/pessimism**

The term denotes a pervasive and disproportionate emphasis on the adverse aspects of life in diverse contexts, including economic, occupational, and interpersonal domains. This outlook tends to diminish the significance of positive or optimistic elements. Furthermore, he displays pessimistic attitudes towards a range of topics, including conflicts, betrayals, death, grief, and so forth. He tends to assume that circumstances will ultimately take a negative turn or that apparent successes will eventually be undermined.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** My happiness is temporary; inevitably something bad will happen; things will be worse than I can imagine.

**Parental characteristic:** Overly anxious parents with black-and-white thoughts and a tendency to see every situation as a potential disaster.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** Worrying a lot about the family's financial problems; making the child feel that if he made a small mistake, something bad might happen; having a pessimistic expectation and often expecting the worst outcome; being focused on the negative aspects of life or things that go wrong.

### **Emotional inhibition**

A notable inhibition of emotional responses, actions, feelings and spontaneous communication is observed, with the objective of circumventing disapproval, confronting adverse experiences, feelings of shame or a sense of loss of control. Such individuals tend to inhibit a range of emotional responses, including anger, aggressiveness, joy, and sexual arousal, as well as expressions of vulnerability. Such individuals are typically characterized by a high degree of rationality, with a tendency to disregard emotional considerations.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** It is not acceptable to show any emotion or behave in an irrational, childish or silly way.

**Parental characteristic:** Emotionally cold and rational parents, who devalue spontaneity and silly behavior.

**Parental behaviors explored in the YPI:** Having to have everything under control; feeling uncomfortable expressing affection or vulnerability; being structured and organized; preferring the familiar to change; rarely expressing anger; being reserved, and rarely talking about their feelings.

### **Unattainable Standards**

The notion that overexerting oneself is a means of meeting internalized standards and norms that are typically unattainable is a pervasive one. This phenomenon is often observed in contexts where individuals seek to avoid criticism by maintaining an unattainable standard of performance. Such a strategy can give rise to a range of adverse outcomes, including pressure, difficulty in slowing down, worry, stress, and demands, both towards oneself and towards others. The importance of pleasure, play, relaxation, health and well-being is often overlooked. There is a proclivity towards perfectionism, demandingness, and an excessive emphasis on details, rules, morality, and what should be in terms of efficiency and success.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** The only way to be lovable is to achieve something.

**Parental characteristic:** Had to work hard to be successful; believes that someone who is unsuccessful must have been lazy.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** Having very high expectations for oneself; expecting the child to give his or her all at all times; being a perfectionist in many areas; affirming that things have to be "this way"; making the child feel as if nothing he or she did was good enough; having strict and rigid rules about right and wrong; getting impatient if things were not done quickly enough; giving more importance to doing things well than to having fun or relaxing.

### **Punitivity-Authoritarian Education**

The individual adheres to the conviction that missteps ought to be met with rigorous repercussions. In the event of an error or the frustration of a desired outcome, the individual may experience a sudden and intense surge of anger, which can manifest as a punitive and impatient response, both towards themselves and towards others. It is challenging for them to excuse mistakes, as they tend to disregard extenuating circumstances.

**Cognitions in children and adolescents:** If I make a mistake, I deserve punishment.

**Parental characteristic:** Harsh consequences for making mistakes; Parents maintain power over the child or others.

**Parenting behaviors explored in the YPI:** Getting angry at the child or harshly criticizing them when they did something wrong; punishing them when they did something wrong; calling them "stupid" or "idiotic") when they made mistakes; blaming people when things went wrong.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

For the development of the study, the Young Parenting Inventory (YPI) created by Young (2014) was employed as a principal instrument for identifying the childhood origins of maladaptive schemas. The results obtained from the YPI of 45 individuals who use a psychological care center coordinated by the Faculty of Psychology of a public university, comprising 14 men and 31 women, aged between 19 and 58 years were subjected to analysis in order to describe the most frequently perceived parental behaviors and identify whether there are substantial differences based on the gender of the parents.

The YPI comprises 72 items, which respondents rate in relation to their fathers and mothers, separately. The items pertain to a range of behaviors that, according to the instrument's creator, contribute to the development of schemas. A six-point Likert scale is employed, with items organized according to underlying schemas.

It is assumed that items rated 5 and 6 are likely to be clinically significant in terms of their role as a source of a particular schema.

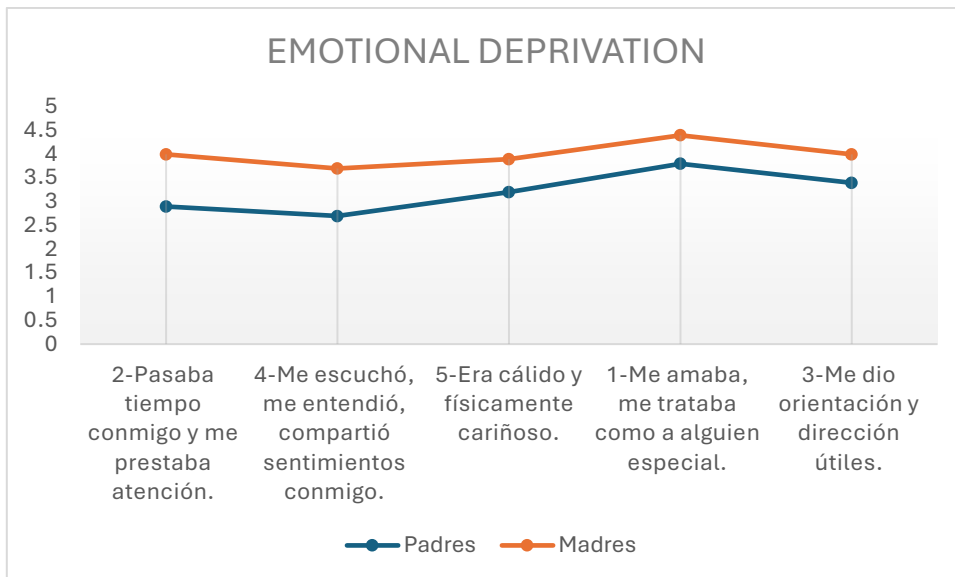
#### **5. RESULTS**

The following is an analysis of the results of the YPI instrument applied to 45 subjects, 31 women and 14 men, aged between 19 and 58 years, users of a psychological care center coordinated by the Universidad Veracruzana, a public institution located in the City of Poza Rica, Veracruz.

The graphs present each parental behavior that, according to Young, can lead to the emergence of specific maladaptive schemas.

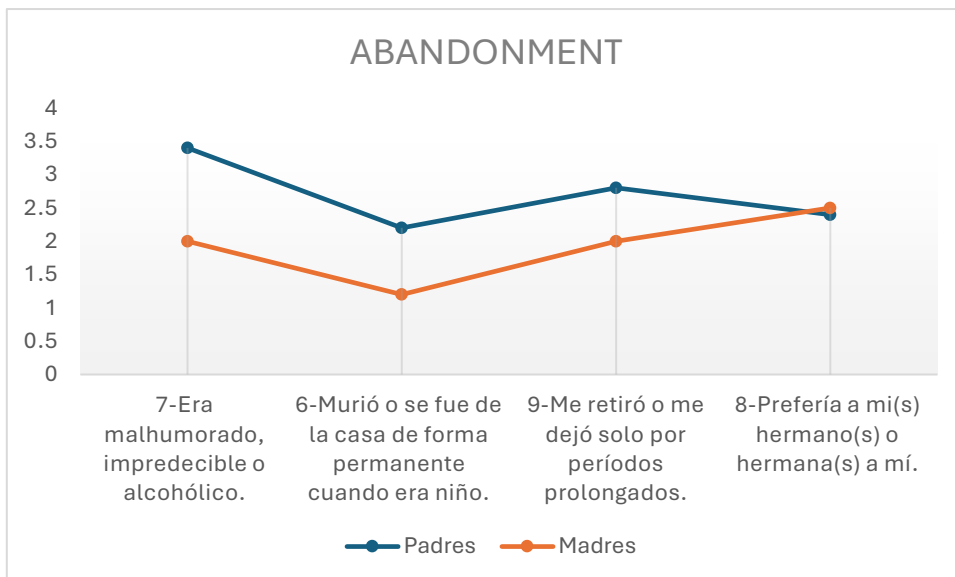
The data were organized in order to facilitate the visualization of the behaviors in which fathers and mothers differ the most (from left to right) and those in which they differ the least.

##### **5.1 Disconnect and reject domain**



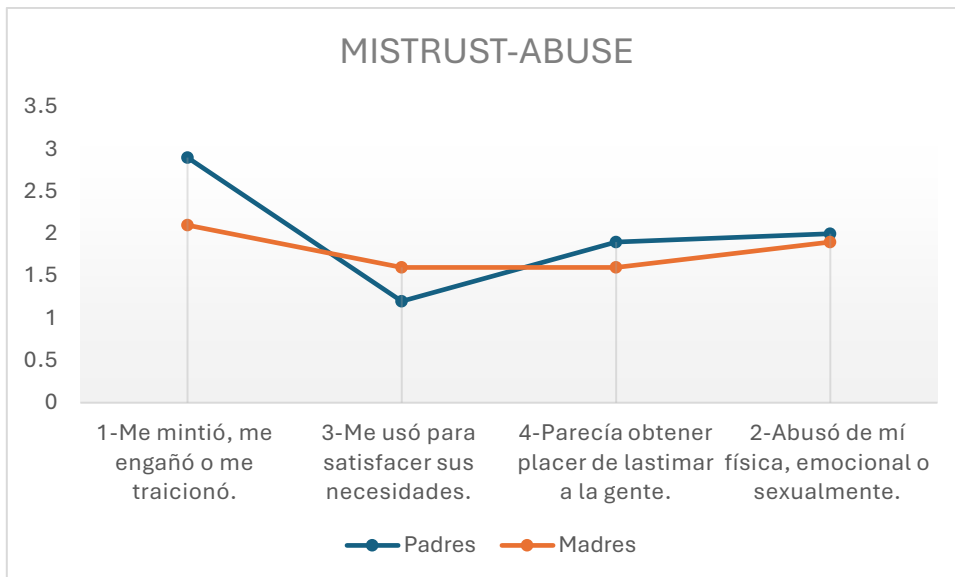
**Figure 1. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Emotional Deprivation.**

The parental behaviors that can lead to the development of the early maladaptive schema of Emotional Deprivation are the only ones that are inversely evaluated in the YPI instrument. Consequently, in this schema, a higher score corresponds to a lower probability of developing the schema. The graph illustrates that, in all items pertaining to this schema, maternal figures are the primary agents of its prevention, exhibiting greater emotional support and care behaviors.



**Figure 2. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Abandonment.**

In the Abandonment schema and in all the remaining schemes, a higher score in the dysfunctional behavior of the father perceived by the child (user) is indicative of a greater probability of the child developing the maladaptive schema. It is evident that three of the four parental behaviors associated with abandonment yielded higher scores.

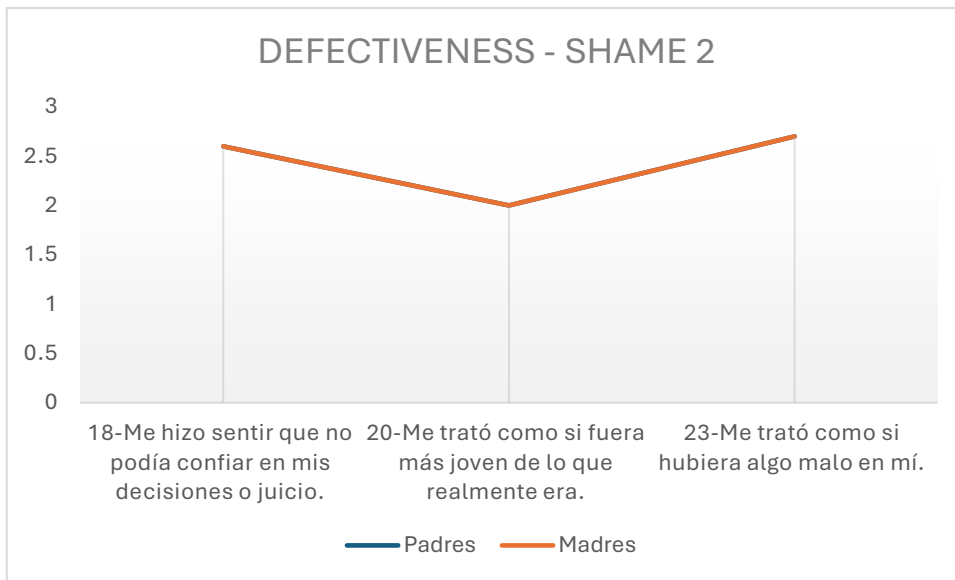


**Figure 3. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Distrust-Abuse.**

With regard to the Distrust-Abuse scheme, the most notable discrepancy between fathers and mothers is evident in their responses to questions pertaining to lying, cheating and betrayal, with fathers exhibiting higher levels of these behaviors. However, in instances where the question concerns the use of the child to fulfil their own needs, mothers demonstrate a higher propensity to engage in such actions. With regard to the remaining two items, the differences between fathers and mothers are less pronounced.



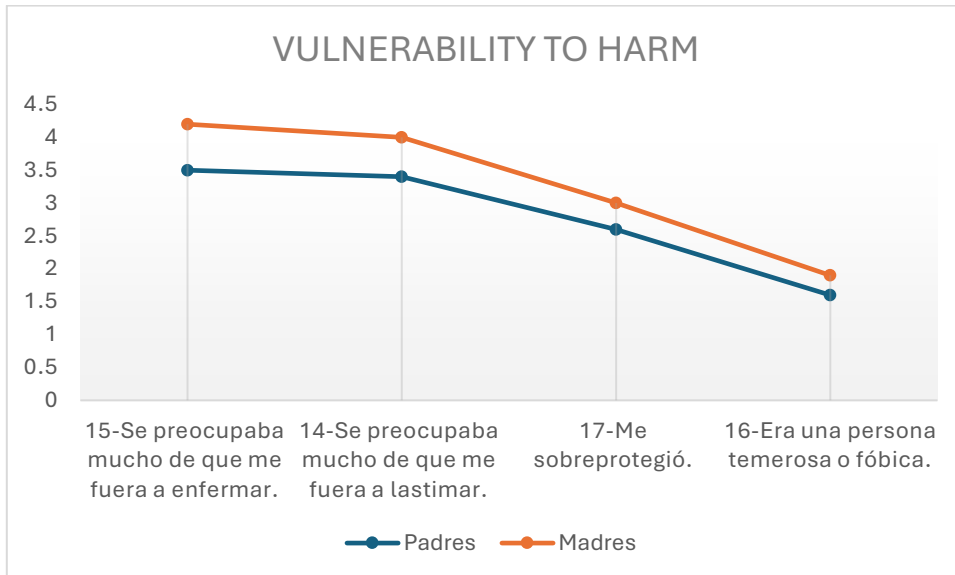
**Figure 4.1. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Defectiveness-Shame.**



**Figure 4.2. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Defectiveness-Shame.**

The Figure 4.2. illustrates that the behavior associated with the Defectiveness and Shame scheme, which exhibits the greatest discrepancy between fathers' and mothers' scores, is characterized by overprotection and under-involvement. Specifically, parents tend to engage in excessive caretaking and avoid allowing their children sufficient autonomy, with mothers exhibiting higher scores in this regard. Conversely, parents are more likely to express feelings of inadequacy or rejection towards their children. With the exception of the aforementioned behaviors, no significant differences are evident between the two scores.

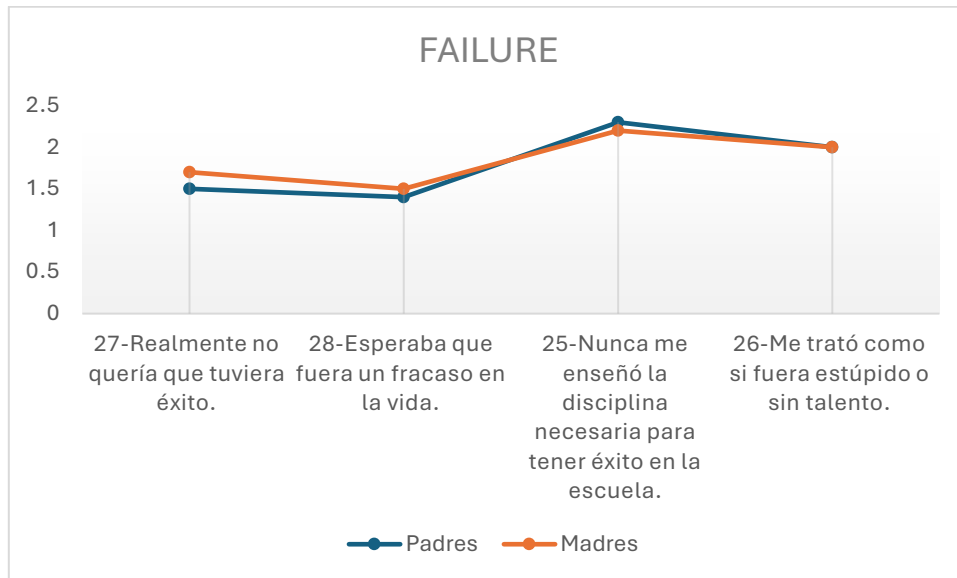
## 5.2 Impairment domain of autonomy-performance



**Figure 5. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Vulnerability to Harm.**

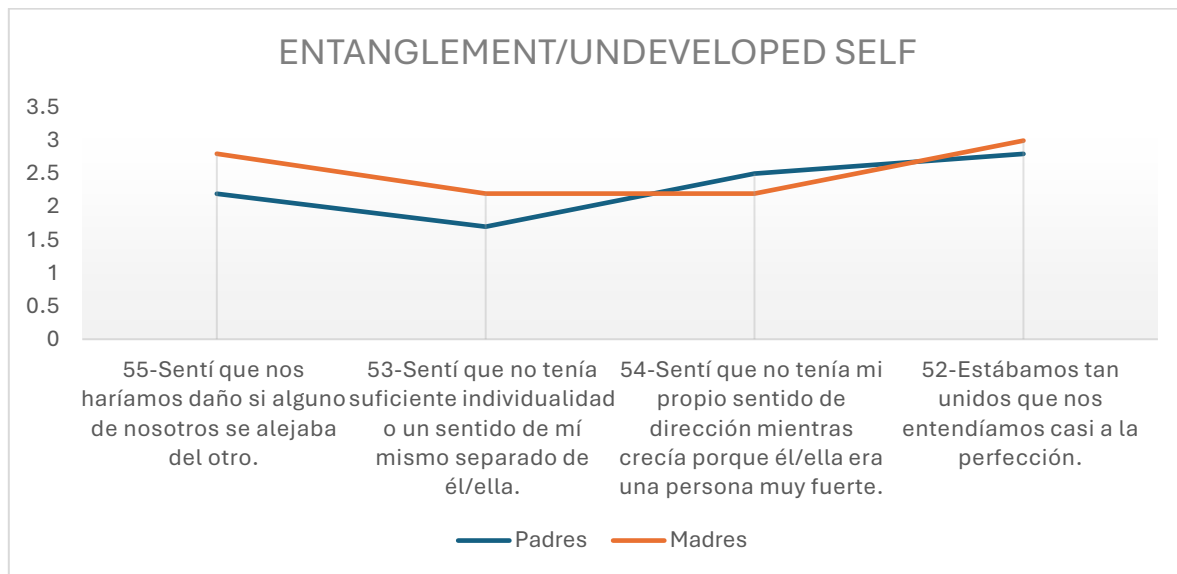


In Figure 5 in the four parental behaviors associated with the Vulnerability to Harm scheme, mothers scored higher than fathers.



**Figure 6. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Failure.**

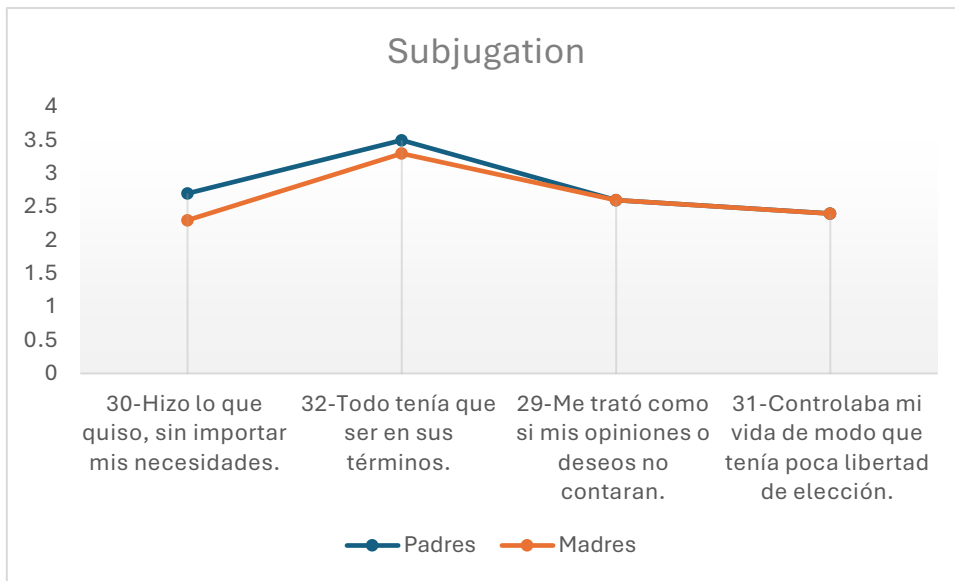
It can be observed in Figure 6 that in the Failure scheme there is a paucity of differences in the scores of the four dysfunctional behaviors obtained in fathers and mothers.



**Figure 7. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Subjugation.**

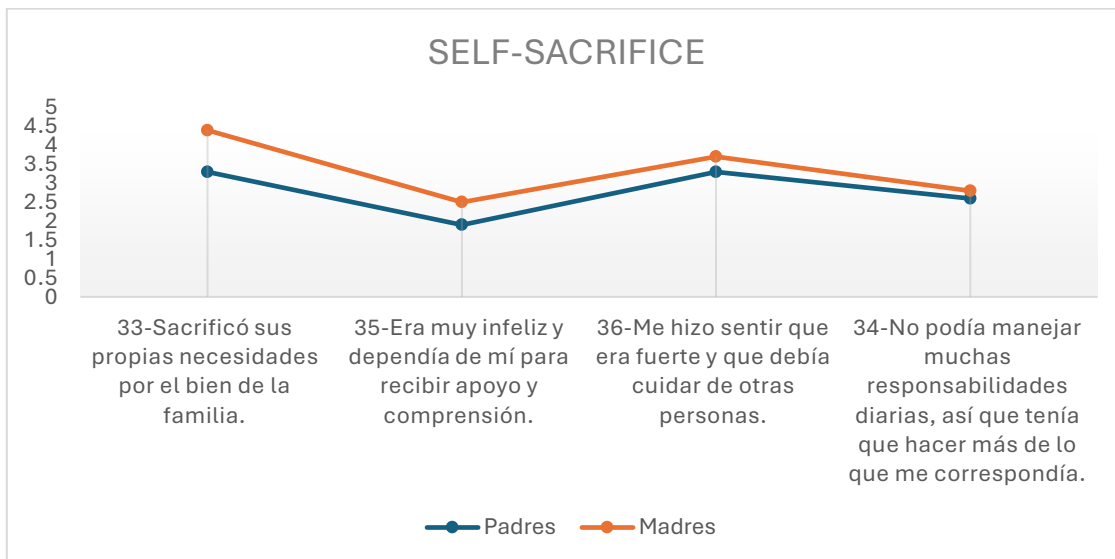
The results show higher values in mothers in three of the four behaviors indicated in the instrument.

### 5.3 Dominance of the direction of others



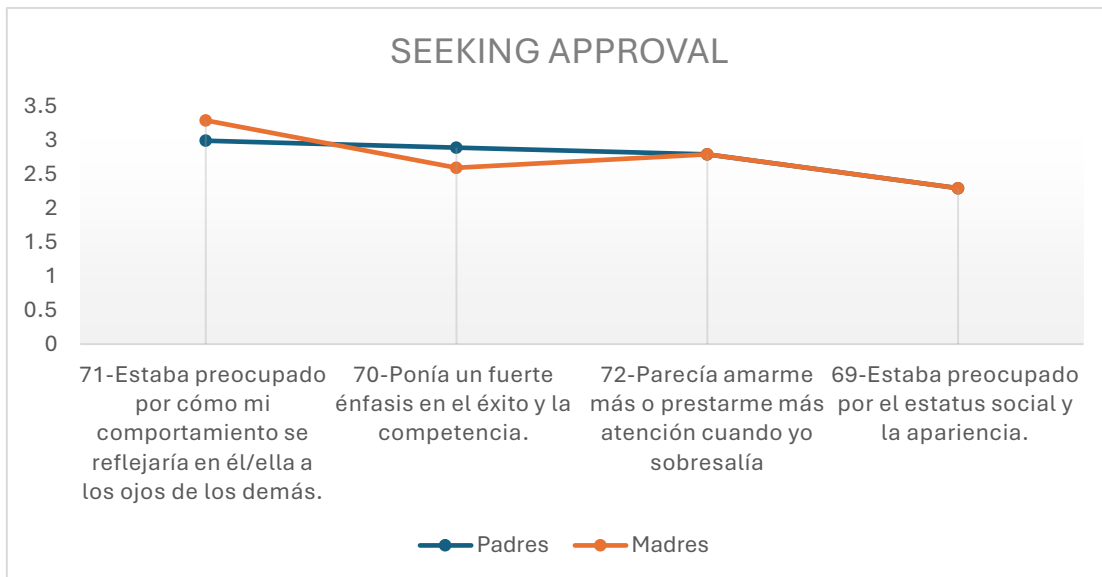
**Figure 8. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive scheme of Subjugation.**

With regard to this scheme, it is evident that there is a notable discrepancy between fathers' and mothers' approaches to parenting. Specifically, fathers tend to prioritize their desires over their children's needs, whereas mothers are more inclined to consider their children's perspectives.



**Figure 9. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive scheme of Self-Sacrifice.**

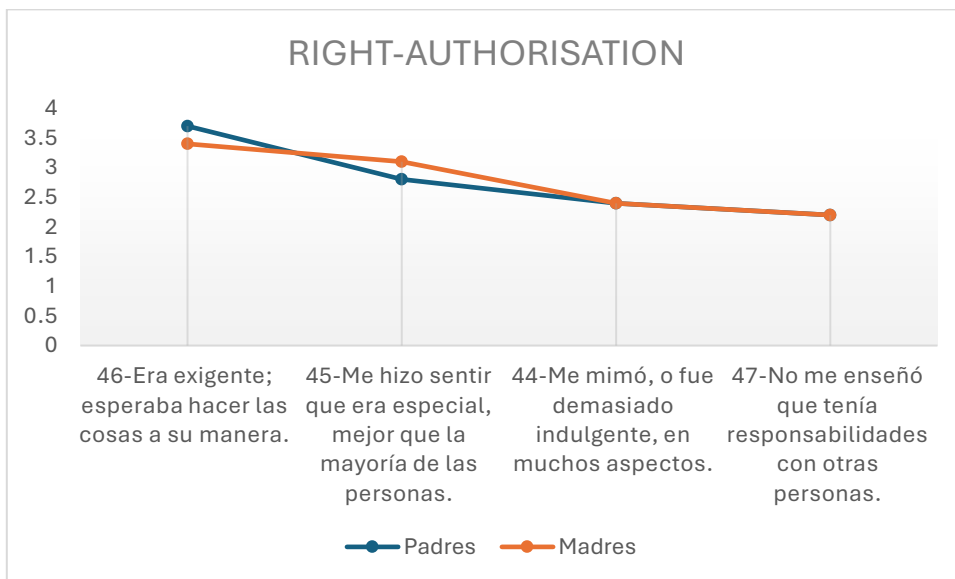
Figure 9 shows that, in all the dysfunctional parental behaviors associated with the self-sacrifice scheme, mothers are the ones who score the highest.



**Figure 10.- Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Approval Seeking.**

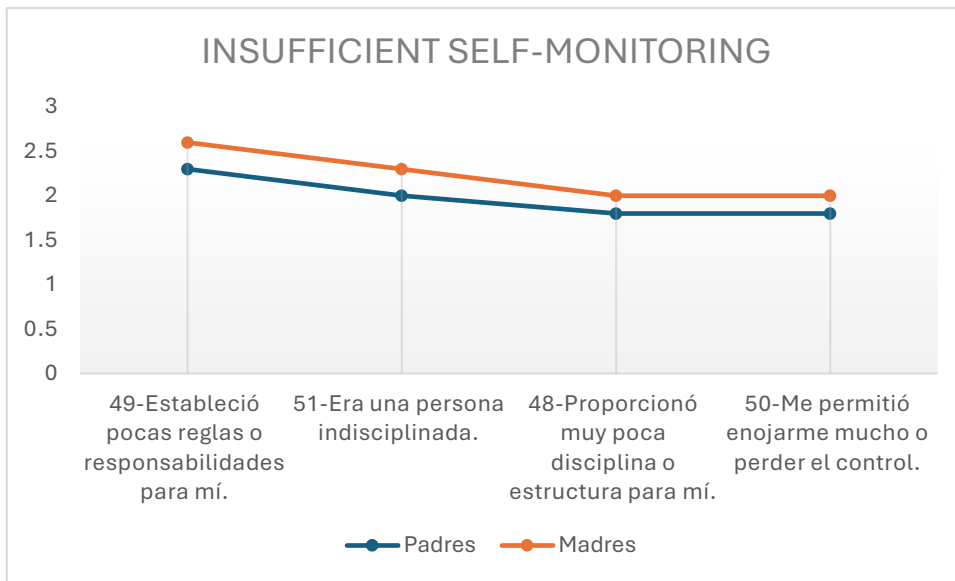
Figure 10 illustrates the frequencies with which fathers and mothers engage in behaviors that are indicative of an approval-seeking schema. It reveals that mothers exhibit slightly higher frequencies in terms of expressing concern about how their child is perceived by others, whereas fathers demonstrate a stronger inclination towards emphasizing success and competence.

#### 5.4 Impaired boundary mastery



**Figure 11. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Right-Authorization.**

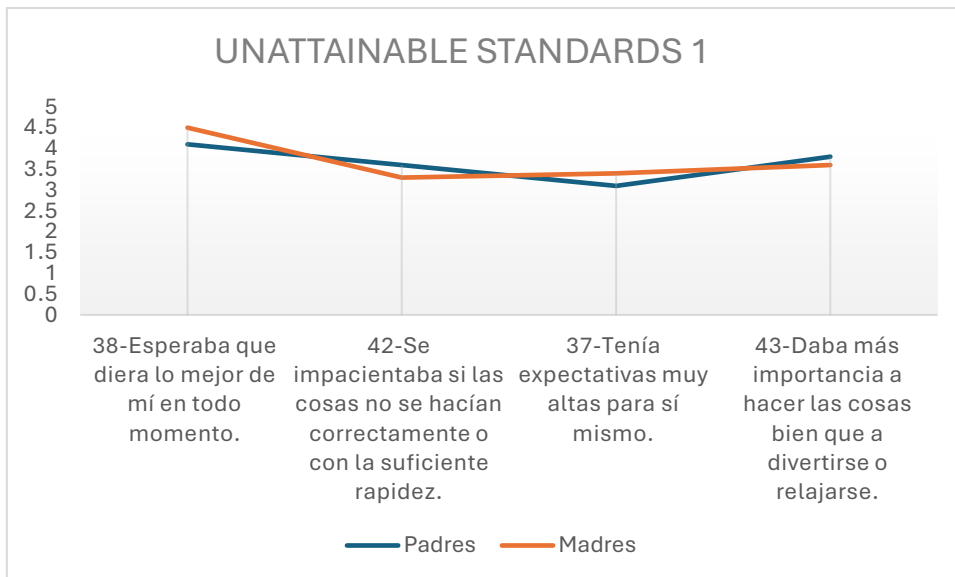
In the Right-Authorization scheme, fathers score slightly in dysfunctional behavior that can later be modeled by the child, while mothers slightly outperform them in behavior directed toward the child; in the remaining items, practically imperceptible differences are observed.



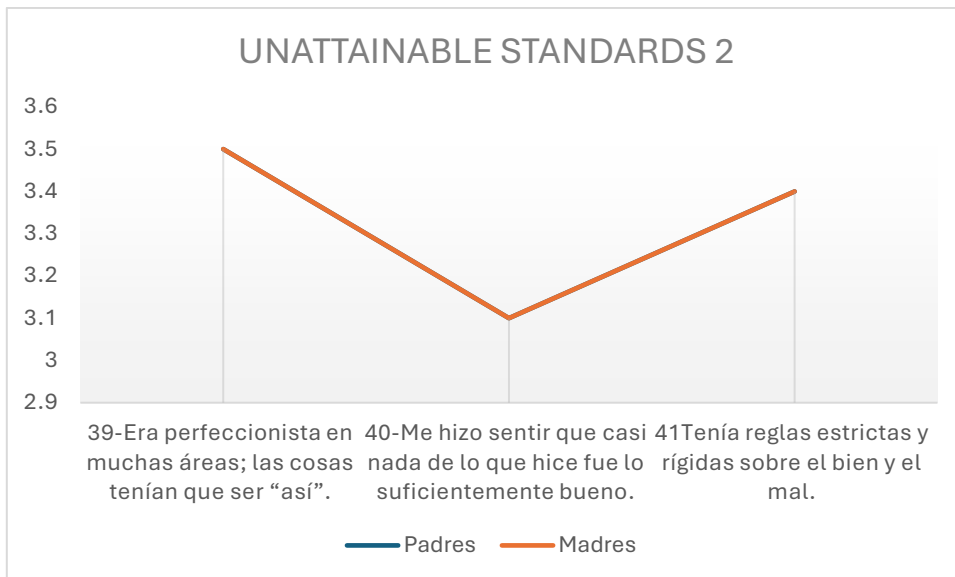
**Figure 12. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Insufficient Self-Control-Discipline.**

Figure 12 illustrates that in all dysfunctional parental behaviors associated with a lack of self-control and discipline, mothers exhibit a higher tendency than fathers.

### 5.5 Domain of emotional and hypercritical inhibition

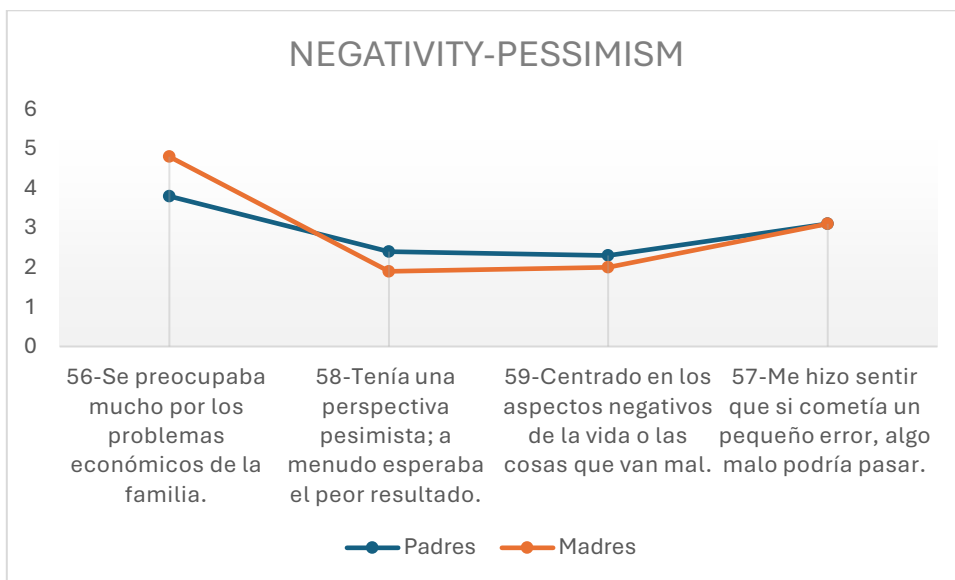


**Figure 13.1. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Unattainable Standards.**



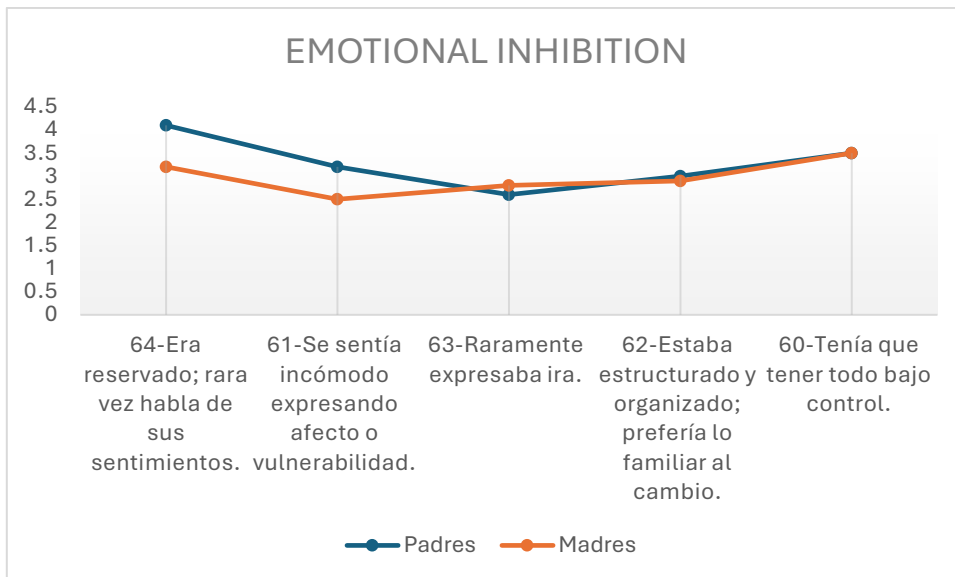
**Figure 13.2. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Unattainable Standards.**

It can be observed that in the parental behaviors that can develop the scheme of unattainable standards, fathers and mothers obtain scores that do not differ significantly. Mothers demonstrate a higher level of child-directed behaviors, whereas fathers exhibit a greater propensity for behaviors that may be emulated by the child in adulthood.



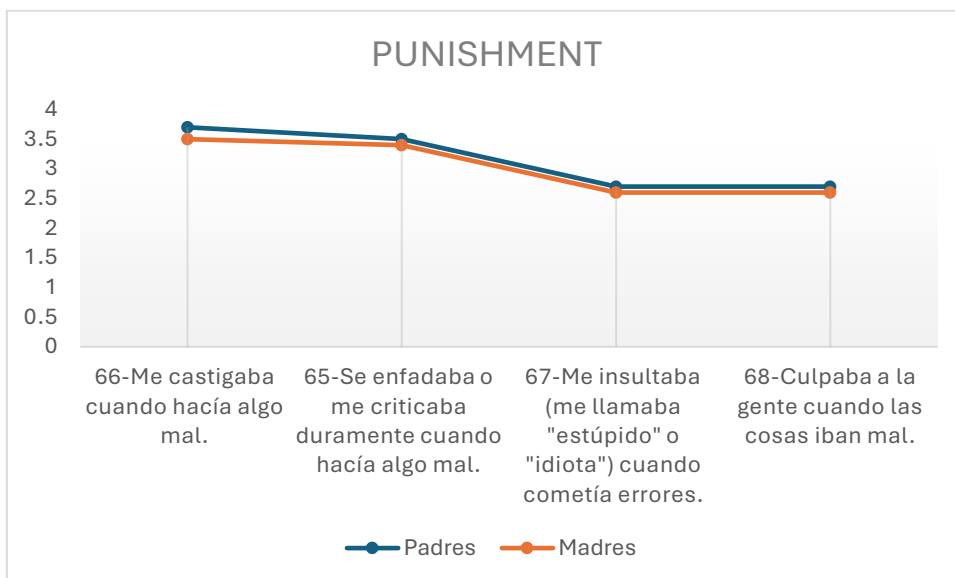
**Figure 14. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of Negativity-Pessimism.**

It can be observed that mothers tend to exhibit greater levels of concern about the financial stability of their families, whereas fathers display a tendency towards more pessimistic expectations and a proclivity for anticipating unfavorable outcomes. In the remaining items, minimal discrepancies are discernible.



**Figure 15. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of emotional inhibition.**

The most significant distinction between the parental behaviors associated with emotional inhibition is evident in the tendency to be reserved and to rarely display emotions, as well as in the experience of discomfort when expressing affection or vulnerability, which is more prevalent among parents.



**Figure 16. Parental behaviors that, during upbringing, give rise to the formation of the early maladaptive schema of emotional inhibition.**

As for the behaviors that give rise to the Punishment scheme, very similar scores are observed in fathers and mothers.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study permit the conclusion that, with regard to the prevalence of early maladaptive schemas associated with disconnection and rejection, mothers in the studied population

represent the primary source of emotional support, warmth, love, and guidance. Consequently, they are the least likely to foster the emergence of the emotional deprivation schema.

Parents who are perceived to display noticeable moodiness, unpredictability, or alcohol impairment, as well as physical absence, can give rise to the abandonment schema, which is reflected in the child's interpersonal problems in adulthood.

The distrust scheme is more frequently observed in fathers who engage in infidelity and betrayal, whereas mothers elicit greater distrust through their inclination to manipulate their children for their own benefit.

The inclination to engage in excessive caretaking behaviors, rather than allowing children to engage in activities independently and learn from their own experiences, can contribute to the emergence of the Defectiveness schema. This entire group of behaviors is observed in the mothers of the subjects studied with the greatest frequency, whereas in fathers, the behavior of making children feel unloved or rejected occurs more frequently, also causing the appearance of this scheme.

In the domain of deterioration of autonomy and performance, overprotection and excessive concern for the child's wellbeing, particularly in relation to illness or injury, is a behavior that is observed with greater frequency in mothers. This behavior has a significant impact on the Vulnerability to Harm scheme, as it conveys to the child that they lack the capacity to effectively navigate the challenges and risks inherent in adulthood.

With regard to the Failure scheme, the group of patients indicated that neither their fathers nor their mothers instilled in them the requisite discipline to succeed in their tasks.

With respect to the formation of the Entanglement or Undeveloped Self schema, mothers exert a more pronounced influence on the extent to which children perceive that separation will result in mutual harm between mother and child. Furthermore, mothers exert influence over the child's perception of their identity as an individual when separated from their mother.

In the domain of the direction of others, the formation of the subjugation schema may be more influenced in the population studied by the perception that both parents sought to impose their will upon the child, without taking into account their opinions and needs.

In terms of the formation of the Self-Sacrifice schema, mothers are more likely to promote it by demonstrating a tendency to sacrifice their own needs for the benefit of the family. Furthermore, children in these families frequently perceive their mothers as unhappy and dependent on them for support and understanding.

The maladaptive schema of seeking approval is largely influenced by both parents, particularly with regard to their behavior in terms of being concerned about how their children's behavior and attitudes will be perceived by others, and in terms of placing a strong emphasis on success and competence.

The Right-Authorization scheme is significantly shaped by the influence of fathers, particularly those who are perceived as demanding and inclined to impose their expectations and ways of doing things. Furthermore, fathers may, to a lesser extent, instill a sense of superiority in their children.

Mothers are more likely to engage in behaviors that encourage indiscipline and a lack of self-control. This can manifest as a tendency to permit children to express anger and lose control, to provide minimal structure and responsibilities, and to allow little or no guidance.

In the context of emotional inhibition and hypercriticism, the scheme of unattainable standards is likely to be the most significantly influenced by both parents. This is evidenced by the high frequencies with which it presents, including expectations of children to give their best at all times,

impatience if things are not done quickly enough, high expectations for themselves, the prioritization of duty over fun and pleasure, and the pursuit of perfectionism and strict rules.

With regard to the Negativity and Pessimism scheme, both fathers and mothers exhibit a proclivity for expressing concern about the economic challenges confronting the family unit. However, this behavior is exhibited to a greater extent by fathers than by mothers. Moreover, both parents adopt a pessimistic outlook, anticipating unfavorable outcomes and concentrating on negative elements. This results in children developing the conviction that errors could have unfavorable consequences.

The emotional inhibition scheme is strongly reinforced by parents who perceive themselves as reserved and who rarely discuss their feelings. Furthermore, both fathers and mothers are perceived as needing to maintain control over all aspects of their lives.

With regard to the Punishment scheme, parents exhibit high frequencies of punishing their children for mistakes, as well as displaying anger and harsh criticism when they do something wrong and insulting them when they make mistakes.

It is important to consider that the subjects who participated in this study are generally from low-income backgrounds and residents of urban areas. Consequently, it is more probable that they are exposed to risk factors, which facilitates a more profound comprehension of the parental behaviors that were identified.

The lack of resources results in parents having to spend more time away from home, which in turn constrains the potential for the formation of secure bonds and emotional connections with their children. The establishment of such connections represents the initial emotional need that, when fulfilled, enables parents to direct their attention towards the advancement of their capabilities. However, in the absence of this satisfaction, there is a potential for a decline in the child's performance.

The lack of physical and emotional proximity on the part of the parents results in an impairment of their capacity to provide care and protection, as well as to establish boundaries and structure, which are two fundamental functions of healthy parenting.

Maladaptive schemas exert a profound influence on the manner in which children are raised. The behavioral patterns exhibited towards them are the result of the selective internalization of aspects observed in their own growth environment.

It can be proposed that, in consideration of social, economic and cultural factors, younger generations may perceive a greater degree of disconnection and a reduction in emotional ties within their family units. Additionally, there is an increased likelihood of an individual failing to develop the necessary skills due to a lack of exploration of the surrounding environment, which is further exacerbated by the perception of danger and learned helplessness. Furthermore, anxiety about the future can result in parents exhibiting a greater tendency towards control and demand, which in turn stifles the individuality of children. The emotional and physical absence of the main caregivers, coupled with the pervasive influence of the media in promoting models that glorify competence and personal benefit, impedes the acquisition of the skills necessary for reciprocal learning, which entails recognizing the needs and limits of others. The frustration of basic physical and emotional needs can contribute to a climate of discontent within the family unit. This is characterized by a tendency towards criticism, negativity, over-demand and inhibition, which impedes the satisfaction of fundamental needs for self-expression, play, pleasure, enthusiasm and enjoyment. These needs are essential for healthy psychological development.



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