INTRODUCTION

Parenting styles (PS) defined as different expectations regarding child-rearing that sets out family emotional climate, are understood in a contextual parenting model integrating individual and external variables (Baumrind, 1971; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Belsky, Covic & Gable, 1995). Lower socioeconomic status, educational level and SE have been associated to negative outcomes in children, authoritarian and permissive-negligent PS and harsh parenting practices. Thus authoritative and permissive-insigual PS with a well balanced responsiveness and control towards child-rearing are associated with a better family climate promoting child development (Wade, 2004).

Aurina, Numis, Canutus-Avitomlin and Pulkkinen (1999) and Pires (2010,2011), found mothers to be more authoritative and fathers more authoritative. Higher educational levels and SE partially explain authoritarian styles; hence these are relevant individual variables. Although measures which include fathers, over the past decades, men are more involved in everyday family life and are more active in their parenting role making this a research field with an expanding interest for family studies (Murdock, 2012; Seward & Richter, 2008).

Hoffert, Pleck, Goldsheider, Curin and Haproczyński (2013) found fathers attitudes such as warmth and control to contribute to family structure, increased father involvement and behavioral changes in two parent households. Nicholson, Howard and Borkowski (2008) also highlight the value of growing with a positive father presence, helping to set boy’s metaparenting and his future role as a father. Like PS, parenting self-efficacy (PSE) regarding parents’ beliefs in their ability to educate and nurture their children in a positive way (Scheel & Rieckman, 1998), has been linked to positive behavioral outcomes (Thomas, Feeley & Grier, 2009). For fathers, supportive/engaged parenting behaviors contribute to PSE (Murdock, 2012).Parents with a high PSE tend to be more secure in their parenting role, more optimistic, authoritative and consistent in parent-child interactions (Arredel & Eccles, 2001; Aurina et al., 1999; Scheel & Rieckman, 1998).

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this exploratory, cross-sectional within subjects study, is to explore the relation between fathers PS, SE and PSE. To develop a fathers parenting model including individual variables and highlight the relevance of studying fathers perceptions in the scope of family functioning.

METHODS

Participants

A convenience sample of 157 fathers from 22-65 years old (M=38.41, SD=6.03), mostly married or cohabiting 74.6% (n=120) to 114 children (M=1.75, SD=.70), 40.4% has a higher education level (Figure 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Manital status demographics

Figure 1. Educational level demographics

CONCLUSION

Findings are consistent with previous research indicating parenting as a complex dynamic model influenced by several individual variables (internal or external resources). Fathers with higher education tend to have a good self-esteem, implying that personal satisfaction and self-realization may play a part in a more balanced authoritative parenting, leading to an increased self-efficacy in their parenting role. Permissiveness and authoritarian have opposite effects on self-efficacy feelings, in which responsiveness and controlled child-rearing results on increased parenting fulfillment. Constraints concerning self-report measures with possible desirability effect and cross-sectional design should be addressed in future research. Nevertheless, present results contribute to understanding fathers parenting role enhancing the need for fathers report in family and development studies.

REFERENCES:


