

Abstract

The “Value of Children” (VOC) has been studied since the 1970s to address the global population issue from a psychological perspective. Previous VOC studies paid more attention to parents’ perceptions than the offspring, especially emerging adults. The relationships between parenting practices and VOC transmission in Chinese societies have rarely been studied. To bridge the gaps, the current research explored the contributing factors in the intergenerational transmission of VOC between Chinese emerging adults and their parents. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among Chinese university students and their parents in Hong Kong. A total of 225 students (151 females and 74 males; mean age = 21.55 years, SD = 1.87) and their parents (216 mothers and 214 fathers; mean age = 52.84 years, SD = 5.16) participated and reported their endorsement of utilitarian and emotional VOC; students also reported their perceived parental warmth and parental psychological control. Consistent with previous work of the CUHK Value Transmission Project (Wang, 2012, 2014), students’ endorsed utilitarian VOC was positively correlated with parental (maternal but not paternal) utilitarian VOC and their perceived parental psychological control, but not significantly related to their perceived parental warmth. Students’ endorsed emotional VOC was positively related to their perceived parental warmth, but not significantly related to their parental emotional VOC or their perceived parental psychological control. A major finding of this study was the moderating effects of parental psychological control on predicting students’ utilitarian and emotional VOC from their parents’ corresponding VOC. Gender differences and intergenerational congruence/incongruence were further discussed in relation to social and cultural contexts in Chinese societies. Implications and future research directions were proposed.

Key words: value of children, intergenerational transmission, emerging adult, parental psychological control, parental warmth