

Children told lies by parents lie more in adulthood and have adjustment difficulties - Newstrotteur

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"If you do not behave, I'll call the police," is a lie that parents could use to get their young children to behave. The lies of the parents imply short-term observance, but a new psychology study led by the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore (NTU Singapore) suggests that they are associated with adverse effects when the child becomes an adult.

The research team asked 379 young Singaporean adults if their parents had lied to them when they were children, how much they were lying to their parents now and how well they coped with the challenges of adult life.

Adults who said they lied more often in their childhood were more likely to lie to their parents as adults. They also reported having more difficulty coping with psychological and social challenges. Difficulties in coping include disturbance, driving problems, experience of guilt and shame, and selfishness and manipulation.

The research, conducted in collaboration with the University of Toronto, Canada, the University of California at San Diego and the United States, and the Zhejiang Normal University in China, was published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology of child* in September.

Lead author, Setoh Peipei, a professor at the NTU School of Social Science in Singapore, said, "Lying lying can seem like time-saving, especially when the real reasons parents want their children do something is complicated to explain "the best policy", but display dishonesty by lying, such behavior can send conflicting messages to their children. Dishonesty of parents can eventually erode trust and promote dishonesty among children. "

"Our research suggests that lying parenting is a practice that has negative consequences for children as they grow up. Parents need to be aware of these potential downstream implications and consider alternatives to lying, such as recognizing feelings of the child, to give information so that the child knows what to do, wait, by proposing choices and by solving problems together, to encourage good behavior on the part of the children. "

How the study was done

379 young Singaporean adults completed four online questionnaires.

The first questionnaire asked participants to remember if their parents told them food-related lies; to leave and / or stay; misconduct of children; and spend money. Some examples of such lies are "If you do not come with me now, I'll leave you here alone" and "I did not bring money with me today, we can come back another day".

The second questionnaire asked participants how often, as adults, they lied to their parents. He asked lies in relation to their activities and actions; prosocial lies (or lies intended to benefit others); and exaggerations about events.

Finally, participants completed two questionnaires that measured their self-reported psychosocial imbalance and their tendency to behave selfishly and impulsively.

The analysis revealed that lying could put children at increased risk of developing problems that society disapproves of, such as aggression, non-compliance with rules and intrusive behavior.

Some limitations of the study include the use of information provided by young adults on their retrospective experience of parental lies. "Future research can explore the use of multiple informants, such as parents, to account for the same variables," Prof. Setoh suggested.

The authors also pointed out that, since the study is of correlational design, which aims at determining the naturally occurring relationships between the variables, they can not draw any causal inferences.

Another area that remains to be studied would be the nature of the lies or goals of the parent. Professor Setoh said, "It is possible for a lie to assert the power of the parents, for example by saying, "If you do not behave, we will throw you into the ocean to feed the fish, "perhaps more related to the adaptation of children difficulties as adults, compared to the lies that aim at the conformity of children, for example "there is no more candy in the house".

"The assertion of authority over children is a form of psychological intrusion that can undermine children's sense of autonomy and rejection, as well as their emotional well-being. Future research should examine the nature of the lies and goals of parents so that researchers can suggest what kind of lies to avoid and what kind of truth-telling parents should engage. "

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