The Daily Experiences of Parents of Children with ADHD and Positively Biased Self-Perceptions

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**Rationale**

The extent to which Positive Illusory Bias (PIB) is apparent to parents of children with ADHD has not yet been investigated and is important to validating the presence of this bias in kids with ADHD. It is important to study parents’ understanding of this phenomenon to determine how the PIB is present in the daily lives of children with ADHD, outside of the labs that have been the setting for the majority of existing research. Using a mixed methods approach by adding qualitative data to commonly used discrepancy score methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in order to generate a list of qualitative interview data following grounded theory

**Participants & Procedures**

- Mothers of children (age 9-13, n = 12) with diagnoses of ADHD completed questionnaires and participated in a structured interview during the summer of 2014.
- Mothers & children completed parallel versions of the Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC, Harter, 1985) to assess parent and child perceptions of the child’s competence in the scholastic, social, and behavioral domains.
- Difference scores were calculated to determine whether the child had PIB and to determine the parents' awareness of their child’s self-perceptions (Owens et al., 2007).
- A cognitive interview protocol was developed around the modified Difference scores were calculated to determine whether the child had PIB and to determine the parents' awareness of their child’s self-perceptions (Owens et al., 2007).
- Mothers report that their children with ADHD experience the PIB in their daily lives and experience differing levels of awareness.

**Quantitative Results**

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<th>Child</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>ISA</th>
<th>DD</th>
<th>PIB Ac</th>
<th>PIB Beh</th>
<th>PIB Soc</th>
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<tr>
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<td>3.27</td>
<td>4.9</td>
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<td>Amelia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethan</td>
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<td>3.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaac</td>
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<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scarlett</td>
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<td>2.73</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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</table>

*significantly (p < .05) higher than the mean of the non-ADHD sample (n = 30) based on a one-sample t-test.

**Perceiving situations**

"How she perceives what’s happening is very different from how all of the many adults perceive it. What’s happening is very different from what the adults perceive it. Trying to get her to kind of see, like, you know, you’re not looking at this in an objective way...You’re not able to look at her actual behavior in this situation. Sometimes I want a video camera..." -Scarlott’s mother

**Impact on self & others**

"Benjamin won’t tell me when he has behavioral problems in school, but he doesn’t understand why he can’t get certain rewards like student of the month because he is misbehaving..." -Jaxon’s mother

**Of Medications**

"Benjamin will only trust me. ‘I’m hungry cause I didn’t take my medicine’ or ‘I’m having a hard time in class doing writing because I forgot my pill today.’" -Scarlett’s mother

**Perception of outcome**

"I guess he’s somewhat aware. He kind of ignores when he’s told, and when he is good is really aware."

- Ethan’s mother

**Review & performance**

"I wonder if he didn’t do a lot more to last minute to do his math board and then when I went and saw it, wouldn’t really that was your best effort? Iland does ‘I’m gonna do it really bad and he kind of cried and then a half hour later he goes ‘you’re right when I saw the others kind of thing mine sucked.’"

- Liam’s mother

**Nature of difficulty**

"The standard ADHD things, the sort of focus, attention, staying on task, transitioning, those kinds of things he’s very aware of, sort of the social kinds of things he perceives the situation he manages the situation...there’s probably less awareness.

- Benjamin’s mother

Mothers report that their children with ADHD experience the PIB in their daily lives and experience differing levels of awareness depending on various circumstances. Children with ADHD were reported to respond to evidence of impairments by discounting the extent of their difficulties, and by reacting negatively, depending on the setting, the task at hand, and the method in which feedback is provided.

**Who provides feedback**

"If it is me, then yes...he’s pretty oppositional to me. He likes to disagree with me. But it’s somebody who he has more respect for, like his teacher, then I think that he would be more honest, like if he felt like it was incorrect, then he would tell [the teacher], but would be more receptive to [the feedback]. He’ll be more willing to accept it. But for me...I’m gonna be wrong no matter what you say...

- Ethan’s mother

**Setting**

"When we did math tutoring, when he was outside of the school system and he didn’t know anybody there – it was actually three kids and they’d go over math facts. And when she started she couldn’t do it on 1, 2, 3. It was very specific, like she got rewards, she accumulated points, and everybody else was doing it and they’d show their progress...But it was somewhere where she didn’t know anyone. Everybody there was there for tutoring. So, I had to be interesting. She was a lot more receptive."

- Scarlet’s mother

**Task**

"And I think it depends – is it a task in the classroom? Where she’s being compared to other people or is it a task where she’s doing something on the computer? If she’s home alone just playing a game on a computer she could care less. She just stops the task and goes on to something else. If she is taking a test and she may not do so well, she will minimise it. But she doesn’t ever have no emotional reaction."

- Scarlet’s mother

**Timing**

"Noon can be articulated outside the moment of being amped up about understanding something but in a moment of managing his emotions it’s like he’s not able to get to the level of ‘what do I need to do here to respond’..."

- Liam’s mother

**Nature of difficulty**

"Ethan didn’t study to final exams, his difficulty was sitting down and cracking open the book. He was saying things like, well it’s only worth 20% of our term grade, and the teacher said they don’t really mean anything and those kinds of things."

- Sarah’s mother

**Influencing Self-Awareness**

"Socially he’s oblivious as to how his emotional reaction may at times affect his peers’ judgment of him, but in terms of challenges academically, upon specific questioning about experiencing challenges, I think that those difficulties do impact his daily to day life and Noah would agree.

- Liam’s mother