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The development of hardiness in women

Hardiness, a personality attribute, has three major aspects. The first, control, involves the individual having a strong sense that he or she can influence his or her surroundings. The second, commitment, is the idea that daily activities have purpose and meaning. Finally, challenge is viewing change as an opportunity rather than a threat. Despite countless studies involving hardiness, very little is known about how it develops, and even less about its development in women. It was hypothesized that low levels of perceived childhood and adolescent stress, high-quality family relations, authoritative parenting, a feeling of control in the classroom, and close, high-quality friendships would each contribute to hardiness in an adult woman. To test this, female undergraduate students from the University of Missouri - Columbia (n = 132) completed a 12-page questionnaire composed of six self-report surveys measuring each of the predictor variables. Correlation and regression analyses demonstrated that hardy individuals express lower levels of perceived stress throughout their development (correlation = -0.53723 , $p < .0001$; $t = -7.26$, $p < .0001$) and that they had a learning-gearied attitude toward academics during childhood and adolescence (correlation = $.35024$, $p < .0001$; $t = 4.26$, $p < .0001$). Friendship quality (correlation = $.16037$, $p < .07$) and closeness of relationships (correlation = $.02546$, $p < .78$), however, did not provide strong enough relations to indicate involvement in the development of hardiness in women. Most of all, the results clearly express the importance of family in an individual's development. Very strong relations (correlation = $.4233$, $p < .0001$; $t = 5.33$, $p < .0001$) were found between the closeness and quality of relationship of the individual with her parents as she grew up and her level of hardiness as an adult. The family as a whole (correlation = $.40666$, $p < .0001$; $t = 5.08$, $p < .0001$) also showed great influence on hardiness development. Further research should be conducted to investigate the family's influence on the development of hardiness.