

## **Abstract**

A substantial amount of research has been dedicated to examining personality characteristics and coping strategies among second and third generation of holocaust survivors, due to their unique family history. In the current research, personality and family characteristics, such as parenting, coping and family adjustment among second and third generation of Holocaust survivors, were investigated. At the basis of this research, lies the assumption that crises, difficulties and trauma are all means that facilitate the development of active coping strategies, psychological flexibility and resilience.

The aims of the present research were to study and characterize second and third generation of holocaust survivors concerning their own parenting styles, and the way they perceived the parenting styles of their parents. Coping strategies with problems and family adjustment to changes and crises were also examined.

The study tested four groups of participants: Group 1) second generation - sons and daughters of holocaust survivors; Group 2) third generation of holocaust survivors - grandchildren that at least one of their grandparents are holocaust survivors; Group 3) 2<sup>nd</sup> generation whose parents are not holocaust survivors; and Group 4) 3<sup>rd</sup> generation that none of their grandparents are holocaust survivors. The participants filled out parental authority questionnaire - PAQ (Buri, 1991), coping styles questionnaire (Moos, Cronkite, Billings & Finney, 1987), and- Family Adaptability & Cohesion Evaluation Scales - Faces III (Olson, 1986). Participants who are descendants of holocaust survivors' completed another

questionnaire that characterized their family history during and after the holocaust, a questionnaire that was specially compiled for the purpose of this research.

Analysis indicated that the 2<sup>nd</sup>-generation of holocaust survivors characterized themselves as more authoritative and authoritarian parents compared to 2<sup>nd</sup>-generation controls who characterize themselves as parents who are more permissive. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations of holocaust survivors perceived their parents as more authoritarian, compared to the controls who perceived their parents as more authoritative. A difference between generations was found with regard to permissive parenting. The 2<sup>nd</sup> generation perceived their parents as less permissive compared to the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation, regardless of groups (experiment-control). An interaction found between group (holocaust-non holocaust) and generation (second-third) that indicated 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of holocaust survivors perceived their parents as authoritarian compared to 2<sup>nd</sup> generation who were not descendants of holocaust survivors. No such difference was found among the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation.

Examination of coping strategies showed that 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations of holocaust survivors were significantly more active compared to the control groups. An interaction found between group and generation indicated that 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of holocaust survivors were less passive in their coping strategies when compared to the control group. There was no such differences among the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation.

Examinations of family adjustment showed that 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of holocaust survivors classified their families as significantly higher on the flexibility scale, compared to

control groups. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of holocaust survivors classified their families as higher on the cohesion scale when compared to control groups. A difference between generations was found for the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation who rated their families higher on the flexibility scale and the cohesion scale when compared to the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation.

Examination of the correlations between parenting styles and coping strategies showed that low levels of permissive parenting and high levels of authoritative parenting predicted active coping strategies. Parents who classified their parenting styles as authoritative and authoritarian were less passive in their coping strategies.

Examination of the correlation between evaluations of the parents' parenting styles and the children's coping strategies indicated that the more the children evaluated their parents as less permissive and less authoritative, the more they evaluated their coping styles as active. The more children evaluated their parents as authoritative and authoritarian, the less they evaluated their coping style as passive.

Examination of the correlation between self-evaluation of parenting styles and evaluation of parenting styles by the children showed that the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation evaluated themselves as more permissive, more authoritative and more authoritarian compared to their evaluations of their parents' parenting styles. An interaction showed that 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of holocaust survivors and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of the control group evaluated themselves as more authoritative compared to their parents, but that difference was more significant among the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of holocaust survivors.

In conclusion, second generation of holocaust survivors were found to be more authoritative, compared to control group. Offspring of holocaust survivors had more active coping strategies, compared to the control group. In addition, offspring of holocaust survivors evaluated their families as more flexible and more cohesive compared to control group. It is possible that these patterns are related to their unique family history, which included growing up with parents and grandparents who dealt with traumatic experiences. The qualitative research clarified the meanings of active coping and showed that realistic thinking, optimism and motivation for action are features that characterize coping strategies of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations of holocaust survivors.

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Parenting Styles, Coping Strategies and Family Adjustment  
among Second and Third Generations of Holocaust  
Survivors

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