



The Relationship between Psychological Well-Being and Parents' Communication Patterns and Social Acceptance of Third-Grade Primary School Students in Tehran, Iran

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Quantitative Study

Abstract

Background: Child psychologists argue that primary school years are one of the critical periods of development because many of the child's abilities are developed during this period. There is a research gap in students' social acceptance and the role of psychological well-being and communication patterns between parents. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between psychological well-being and parental communication patterns with students' social acceptance.

Methods: The study design was correlational. The statistical population was all female third-grade primary school students in Tehran, Iran, studying in the academic year of 2019-2020. The sample included 381 female elementary school students and the schools were selected using a convenient sampling method; the samples from these schools were selected randomly. Data were collected using Social Acceptance Scale, Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale, and couples' Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ). Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis were used for data analysis.

Results: A significant positive relationship was observed between psychological well-being and parents' pattern of interaction with the social acceptance of children and a significant negative relationship between the components of the pattern of bilateral avoidance of fathers and mothers with social acceptance of students. Multiple regression analysis results indicated that fathers' psychological well-being (13%), mothers' psychological well-being (24%), fathers' constructive model (27%), and mothers' constructive model (29%) could predict children's acceptance.

Conclusion: Parents' psychological well-being and communication patterns can predict their children's social acceptance; therefore, the results can have implications for the follow-up of psychological problems among the students.

Keywords: Social status; Schools; Students; Parents; Communication

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Introduction

Child psychologists argue that primary school years are one of the critical periods of development because many of the child's abilities are developed during this period (Javadi, Sohrabi, Falsafi Nejad, & Borjali, 2008). During primary school, children gradually develop more effective social interactions with their peers. One of the aspects of making a distinction between a child and his or her peers is social acceptance (Vahedi, Fathiazar, Hosseini-Nasab, & Moghaddam, 2008). The results of this period can affect other aspects of personality and accompany a person for the rest of his or her life. Social acceptance is speaking and behaving based on the expectations of others (Soubelet & Salthouse, 2011). Social acceptance plays a major role in the development of a child's social personality and predicts subsequent adjustments during adolescence (Ghorbanian, Mohammadloo, Khanbani, & Yousefi Kia, 2017). Children who fail to gain social acceptance among their peers and are rejected by them have many problems, including poor academic performance, dropout, anti-social behavior, delinquency, and other behavioral disorders in adolescence and early childhood deprivation (Hassanzadeh Kalateh, 2009). Moreover, children who are not liked by their peers are more quarrelsome, rebellious, and unbalanced.

Unfortunately, parents and teachers do not identify and detect child poor adjustments until they are separated from their peers (Hurlock, 2011). Family is the first educational base for a child and the parents form this important educational institution. The influence of parents on the child begins without introduction and is manifested with a certain learning power and may remain throughout the life of the person (Navabi Nejad, 2007). Hence, when each parent has a marital problem or difficulty in communicating with their spouse, they will be unable to meet the needs of their children, and these marital and communication problems between the parents cause many adjustment problems in children. Parents' communication with each other is a process during which a man and a woman exchange feelings and thoughts with each other, either verbally in the form of speech or non-verbally in the form of listening or facial expressions (Trenholm & Jensen, 1996). Those communication methods that occur frequently between parents are called communication patterns, which are internalized and each couple brings with himself or herself to married life. People tend to repeat the communication styles learned in their origin family in their relationships with their spouses and pass these patterns on to their children (Hurlock, 2011).

At least three important communication patterns have been identified: bilateral constructive communication pattern, bilateral avoidance communication pattern, and expectation/withdrawal communication pattern (Christensen & Shenk, 1991).

Dysfunctional and defective communication pattern reduces parents' correct understanding of each other and prevents spouses from supporting each other, trying to satisfy each other's needs. Discussion on patterns of parents' communication with each other has a long history that researchers have stated several factors. These people, despite different wants, conditions, and requirements, have one common area, and that is psychological well-being. The term psychological well-being refers to how people assess their own lives. These assessments include both cognitive judgments (life satisfaction) and emotional assessments (positive and negative emotions) (Diener & Diener, 1995). Psychological well-being indicates an increase in positive mood compared to negative mood (Bagheri, 2010). Besides, psychological

well-being refers to people's assessment and perception of their quality of life (quality of social, psychological, and emotional actions) (Peyvastegar, Dastjerdi, & Dehshiri, 2010). Thus, parents' communication patterns and their performance can be influenced by the person's mental feelings, well-being, or current life experiences (Bagheri, 2010). Psychological well-being consists of several components, including life satisfaction, positive and negative affections, effective communication with others, mastery of the environment, personal growth, purpose, orientation in life, and self-acceptance (Konu & Rimpelä, 2002). Some researchers have considered mental health and psychological well-being as one of the most important aspects of going to school (Anderson & Bourke, 2000).

Human personality is affected by the family environment and one can state that from among the environmental variables, the variables related to parents have always been the most effective ones in child development in all aspects. This is because all aspects of parents' life are related to children, and family and family members' relations can have a deep effect on children's social behavior. The behaviors seen through children's communication with their peers show the significance of this issue. However, despite the studies on each of the variables of the present study, alone or with other variables, on different groups and communities, no similar studies were found among the internal and external sources to be similar to this study. Thus, this study can fill the research gap with its innovative aspect. Hence, the most important question of the study is whether there is a relationship between psychological well-being and parental communication patterns with children's social acceptance or not.

Methods

The study was descriptive-correlational. The population was all female elementary school students in Tehran, Iran, in the academic year of 2019-2020, of whom 381 were selected as the sample. A questionnaire was used to collect information in the study. After obtaining the necessary permits from the educational administration in Tehran, the first 5 schools were selected randomly as the sample and 381 students were randomly selected from among these schools according to the inclusion criteria - gender (girl), educational level (third-grade elementary), no history of serious psychological and psychiatric illnesses, and no use of neuropsychiatric drugs - and exclusion criterion - incomplete completion of questionnaires. Then, they were given the Psychological Well-being Questionnaire, Parental Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ), and Social Acceptance Scale after explaining the study objectives to each subject, and were asked to carefully read the questions on each of the scales and select the answers according to their characteristics and not leave any question unanswered as much as possible. Then, the completed questionnaires were collected and entered into SPSS software (version 22, IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA) and analyzed using statistical methods of mean, standard deviation (SD), correlation, and regression.

Social Acceptance Scale: The Ford and Robin's Social Acceptance Scale (1970) was used to measure the need for social approval in children. This scale was examined by Samoei (2004, quoted by Shekarbaygi and Amiri, 2011) and some of its questions were removed. This scale includes 17 questions with three options of "yes", "to some extent", and "no", and this scale was answered by the students, and scores of 0, 1, and 2, respectively, are assigned for them. Questions 9 and 10 are scored in reverse. The minimum score of the subject in the questionnaire is 0 and the maximum score is

34. A higher score indicates high social acceptance and a lower score indicates low social acceptance. The concurrent validity of the questionnaire was calculated based on verbal intelligence quotient (IQ), which indicated a significant correlation between the two variables. In general, children who received higher scores on the Social Acceptance Scale responded more positively to interpersonal demands (Ford & Robin, 1970). Ford and Robin (1970) calculated internal consistency at 0.48 and 0.51 for female and male preschool children, respectively, but for primary school children who were tested in the next step, it was obtained at 0.79 for male and 0.84 for female students. Further, in the other step, it was reported at 0.83 for male and 0.85 for female students. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire in Iranian primary school students were examined and approved (Khanzadeh Firoozjah & Safikhani, 2008). The reliability of this questionnaire was 0.79 by Cronbach's alpha method.

Parental CPQ: This questionnaire is a self-assessment tool designed to assess parents' marital communication and know how spouses cope with the problems that arise in their communication. It consists of 35 questions that assess parents' communication in three stages of marital conflict. Parents mark each behavior on a 9-point Likert scale set from 1 to 9. The CPQ consists of three subscales: A) bilateral constructive communication, B) bilateral avoidance communication, and C) expectation/withdrawal communication. The letters A, B, and C indicate the questions of the three steps of the parents' conflict in the questionnaire, and the numbers with these letters indicate the question of each step. Cronbach's alpha obtained in the studies conducted by these researchers on 5 scales of the CPQ has been reported from 0.44 to 0.85, which are satisfactory results. Cronbach's alpha obtained in the studies of these researchers on the constructive communication scale of CPQ was reported between 0.74 and 0.78, which is an acceptable value (Abbasipour Bourondaragh, 2011). The correlation coefficients obtained for the three subscales of bilateral constructive communication, bilateral avoidance relationship, and expectation/withdrawal communication were 0.58, 0.58, and 0.35, respectively; all of which were significant at the alpha level of 0.1. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, the internal correlation was calculated for the subscales of this questionnaire and it was obtained at 0.50 for bilateral constructive communication, 0.50 for bilateral avoidance communication, 0.53 for expecting man/withdrawal woman, and 0.55 for expecting woman and 0.55 for withdrawal man (Fatehizadeh & Ahmadi, 2005). The reliability of the subscales of this questionnaire was obtained between 0.77 and 0.84 by Cronbach's alpha method.

Psychological Well-being Questionnaire: The questionnaire was developed by Ryff in 1989 and revised in 2002. The questionnaire consists of 18 items, which are answered by the parents. It includes six axes of independence, mastery of the environment, personal growth, positive communication with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Each question is answered on a 6-point scale (from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). Questions 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17 are scored in reverse. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each of the psychological well-being scales of self-acceptance, mastery of the environment, positive communication with others, purpose in life, personal growth, and independence was obtained at 0.78, 0.77, 0.74, 0.75, 0.76 and 0.73, respectively.

To statistically analyze the data, descriptive information of variables such as mean and SD and Pearson correlation coefficient between variables were calculated using SPSS software.

Results

In this section, descriptive indices of frequency and percentage of parents of female third-grade primary school students separately based on gender, education, age range, and the mean and SD of the age of parents are presented. Based on the results, among the fathers of female third-grade primary school students, 15 had under diploma (3.9%), 40 had diploma (10.5%), 72 had associate (18.9%), 213 had bachelor (55.9%), 26 had master (6.9%), and 15 (3.9%) had a PhD level of education. Moreover, among the mothers of female third-grade primary school students, 21 had under diploma (5.5%), 55 had diploma (14.4%), 54 had associate (14.2%), 194 had bachelor (50.9%), 44 had master (11.5%), and 13 (3.4%) had PhD level of education. Moreover, among the parents, the mean age of mothers was 34.92 and the mean age of fathers was 38.57 and the minimum age observed for parents was 21 years and the highest was 51. Table 1 presents the descriptive indices of mean, SD, minimum value, maximum value, skewness, and kurtosis of social acceptance (students), psychological well-being (parents of students), and parents' communication model.

To evaluate the three assumptions of normality of criterion variable, lack of collinearity, and non-correlation of residuals, the values of skewness and kurtosis, variance inflation factor, and Durbin-Watson, respectively, were used. Based on the results of table 2, the assumption of normality for the criterion variable was confirmed. If the value of skewness and kurtosis is in the range of -2 to +2, the assumption of normality is confirmed. A value close to one means that in an

Table 1. Descriptive indices of social acceptance, psychological well-being, and parents' communication pattern

Variable	Mean ± SD	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Students' social acceptance	18.71 ± 5.72	6	31	-0.04	-5.44
Psychological well-being (fathers)	336.46 ± 57.68	206	488	0.12	-0.45
Psychological well-being (mothers)	331.09 ± 55.08	204	477	0.04	-0.38
Bilateral constructive pattern (fathers)	28.36 ± 8.28	10	51	0.21	-0.16
Bilateral constructive pattern (mothers)	31.25 ± 8.40	4	52	-0.54	-0.05
Bilateral avoidance pattern (fathers)	11.62 ± 4.19	3	22	0.18	-0.54
Bilateral avoidance pattern (mothers)	13.13 ± 4.40	3	25	0.07	-0.33
Expectation/withdrawal pattern (fathers)	11.58 ± 4.49	3	25	0.26	-0.41
Expectation/withdrawal pattern (mothers)	11.60 ± 4.51	3	25	0.27	-0.20
Sub-scale of expecting man/withdrawal woman (fathers) pattern	12.10 ± 4.60	3	24	0.19	-0.49
Sub-scale of expecting man/withdrawal woman (mothers) pattern	12.64 ± 4.44	0	24	0.22	-0.32
Sub-scale of expecting woman/withdrawal man (fathers) pattern	23.67 ± 6.63	7	42	0.01	-0.39
Sub-scale of expecting woman/withdrawal man (mothers) pattern	24.23 ± 6.27	8	44	0.17	-0.44

SD: Standard deviation

independent variable, a small part of its distribution is justified by other independent variables, and a value close to zero indicates that a variable is almost a linear combination of other independent variables; therefore, it should be more than 0.5. The results showed that this statistic was in the range of 0.872 to 0.995; thus, this assumption was also confirmed. Further, the Durbin-Watson value for the criterion variable was 1.631, which is a long distant from 0 to 4; therefore, the assumption of a correlation of residuals is rejected, since if the Durbin-Watson value is close to 0 or 4, the assumption of the correlation of the residuals is confirmed. Given what was stated above, there are assumptions for using regression. Before analyzing by multiple regression method with the stepwise model, first, Pearson correlation coefficients between students' psychological well-being and parents' communication pattern and students' social acceptance were examined, the results of which are presented in table 2.

According to the results of table 2, there was a significant positive relationship between fathers' psychological well-being ($r = 0.381$), mothers' psychological well-being ($r = 0.343$), mothers' bilateral constructive model ($r = 0.275$), and fathers' bilateral avoidance pattern ($r = 0.286$) with students' social acceptance and a significant negative relationship between the pattern of bilateral avoidance of fathers ($r = -0.141$) and mothers ($r = -0.192$) with students' social acceptance ($P < 0.01$).

As is seen in table 3, the observed R^2 level was significant ($P < 0.01$) and fathers' psychological well-being (13%), mothers' psychological well-being (24%), fathers' constructive pattern (27%), and mothers' constructive pattern (29%) could predict the acceptance of children.

Discussion

The present study aimed to predict the students' social acceptance based on psychological well-being and communication patterns of parents.

Based on the research literature, no study has been conducted so far to test all these relationships and variables in the form of research.

Results obtained on the first hypothesis are in line with results of the studies conducted by Soltani Kasmaei (2017), Behere et al. (2017), Shirnejad and Zinali (2017), Hosseini and Nazarpour (2014), and Shahsiah et al. (2012).

Table 2. Correlation coefficients of psychological well-being and parents' communication pattern with students' social acceptance

Variable	Students' social acceptance	
	Pearson correlation	P-value
Psychological well-being (fathers)	0.381	0.001
Psychological well-being (mothers)	0.343	0.001
Bilateral constructive pattern (fathers)	0.275	0.001
Bilateral constructive pattern (mothers)	0.286	0.001
Bilateral avoidance pattern (fathers)	-0.141	0.001
Bilateral avoidance pattern (mothers)	-0.192	0.001
Expectation/withdrawal pattern (fathers)	0.066	0.196
Expectation/withdrawal pattern (mothers)	0.025	0.622
Subscale of expected man/withdrawal woman (fathers)	0.033	0.519
Subscale of expected man/withdrawal woman (mothers)	0.015	0.675
Subscale of expected woman/withdrawal man (fathers)	0.065	0.207
Subscale of expected woman/withdrawal man (mothers)	0.019	0.711

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis results for predicting social acceptance through psychological well-being and bilateral constructive pattern in third-grade elementary students

	Non-standard coefficient		Standard coefficient	t	P-value
	SE	B	Beta		
Predicting variables	SE	B	Beta		
Constant	1.614	6.291	-	3.898	< 0.001
Psychological well-being (fathers)	0.005	0.037	0.372	7.813	< 0.001
				(R ²) = 0.139	R = 0.372
Predicting variables					
Constant	1.984	-0.714	-	0.360	0.719
Psychological well-being (mothers)	0.005	0.030	0.268	5.663	< 0.001
				(R ²) = 0.468	R = 0.248
Predicting variables					
Constant	2.020	-3.404	-	-1.685	0.093
Bilateral constructive pattern (fathers)	1.031	0.142	0.209	4.600	< 0.001
				(R ²) = 0.273	R = 0.520
Predicting variables					
Constant	2.032	-4.892	-	-2.407	0.017
Bilateral constructive pattern (mothers)	0.031	0.112	0.164	3.571	< 0.001
				(R ²) = 0.292	R = 0.540

SE: Standard error

It can be concluded that investigating the educational role of parents is one of the important issues in the field of education and psychology because the personality and behavior of individuals are influenced by various factors at different stages and parents are one of the basic and primary factors in this regard. Among the environmental variables, variables related to the child's parents are the most important factors influencing the development of the child because the family is the core of every society, and all aspects of the life of parents are associated with children; therefore, mental health of parents plays an important role. People with high psychological well-being have a positive evaluation of themselves in environmental events and report more satisfaction with life and are happier, while people with low psychological well-being evaluate these cases as undesirable and experience more negative emotions such as anxiety and depression, which can have a negative impact on the interaction between parents and children. Parents who were mentally healthy and had a healthy pattern of communication with each other provided good support for their children and their children felt more value among their peers. Concerning the relationship between parents' psychological well-being and children's social acceptance, it has to be noted that parents' psychological pathology leads to an increase in depression and other psychological disorders among the children (Behere, Basnet, & Campbell, 2017) and the children of the parents with psychological health problems are at increased risk of psychological and developmental problems (Wiegand-Grefe & Petermann, 2016).

The studies on clinical examples of children and adolescents have estimated that more than half of children treated for psychiatric illness have parents with a mental disorder (Middeldorp, Wesseldijk, Hudziak, Verhulst, Lindauer, & Dieleman, 2016). Parents' psychological well-being enables their children to think well, make social progress, learn communication and social skills well, have a good attitude towards life and society, and show greater adaptation in the community. In such families, the

children can agree and coordinate with each other and easily communicate with other people and the community by following the example of the parents. In families where parents have low psychological well-being, children are emotionally disadvantaged and unable to communicate well with parents and others. The well-being and health of the parents give the children psychological and emotional security and pave the way for their entry into the community, social exchanges, and comprehensive communication. Moreover, explaining the socialization of children requires the expression of patterns of individual development and patterns and values that are transferred by society and social groups, including the family and, most importantly, parents. Thus, parents should also keep in mind that increasing positive feelings and satisfaction leads to balanced development and growth and human health, and this paves the way for the proper education of children. Thus, it can be stated that components related to the psychological dimension of parents, such as their psychological well-being, predict the social acceptance of children.

The results showed that parents' communication patterns predicted students' social acceptance. The results of the study can be in line with Rinaldi and Howe (2012), Yarisar et al. (2018), Fathi and Javadzadeh (2017), and Zarei et al. (2017). The results indicate that the proper interaction pattern of parents can be one of the main factors in predicting the acceptance of children. Defective communication patterns reduce parents' correct understanding of each other and make spouses unable to support each other and meet each other's needs, and this dysfunctional communication pattern makes important problems in life remain unsolved and become a source of recurring conflict between parents. According to the above points, one can state that if besides expressing the love of parents for each other, authoritative rearing style is used to raise children, the psychological health of children and their social acceptance will increase. Indeed, satisfaction and parental love for each other lead to peace and happiness in the home, and this, directly and indirectly, brings about a positive emotional state among the children.

This study was conducted only on girls and boys were excluded; therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to boys. Information and data were collected through a self-report questionnaire and this method is always influenced by various factors such as the tendency of respondents to provide community-friendly answers. There was a temporal limitation for students and their parents. It is recommended for educational centers to use the results of this research to improve the status of students. In addition, it is recommended to treat with caution in generalizing the results of this research to other educational grades. It is suggested that parents and educators talk about the impact of parental communication on their children's socialization process and be aware of this important issue. Further, it is recommended for future studies to investigate the above-mentioned relationship in both sexes simultaneously or on the male sex and also investigate the relationship between the above-mentioned variables in other educational grades, including high school students.

Conclusion

Based on the above points, one can state that if parents have appropriate communication patterns, the flow of social acceptance of their children will form well and it will be accepted by others. However, if the communication patterns of the couples are not in line and do not solve problems, the children are affected by them, and the process of their socialization will not go well. Thus, one can claim that the

communication patterns of couples (parents) predict the social acceptance of children.

Conflict of Interests

Authors have no conflict of interests.

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