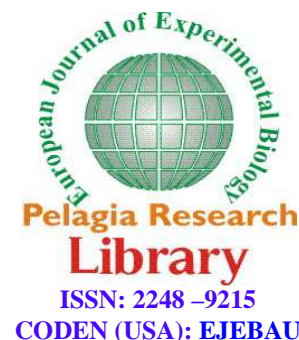




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The comparison of communication skills of adolescents in different parent-child relation patterns

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to compare the communication skills of adolescents in different parent-child relation patterns. These patterns included the security oriented, equilibrium oriented and freedom oriented ones. The research method was ex- post- facto. The participants were 154 high school girls who were selected using multi-stage cluster sampling and asked to fill out Bagheri parent-child relation pattern Inventory (PCRPI) and Jerabek Communication skills test. Collected data was then analyzed using variance analysis test. Results showed that there was a significant difference in communication skills between children in the three parent – child – relation patterns in a way that this variable was highest in equilibrium oriented pattern. Meanwhile, among the subscales of communication skills, just the assertiveness one had a significant difference in the three parent – child – relation patterns, in a way that it was highest in equilibrium oriented pattern.

Key words: parent-child relation patterns, communication skills

INTRODUCTION

Family as the smallest social unit is one of the main pillars of any societies. It is the first and most important factor which influences the personality development [3]. Within the family, parenting practices are known as the most influential factor in the transformation of the lives of individuals. In each society, these practices are deeply affected by its culture. As a result, there has never been a perfect model of parent- child relationship which is suitable for all cultures or can have an equivalent effect on children of different cultures [4].

In recent years, a new theoretical model of parenting has been presented by Bagheri (2012) in Iran which is named parent-child relation patterns model. This theoretical model is focused on the subject of education in family and describes the effect of the dominant characteristics of parent-child relationship on orientation formation and purposeful activities of children. The formation of orientation and purposeful activities in individuals is influenced by four variables. These four variables form the four main dimensions of the parent-child relation patterns including guidance, support, intimacy and acceptance dimensions. In the two ends of each dimension, there are extreme conditions under which the formation of orientation and purposeful activities in individuals will be damaged. In the middle of each of the four dimensions, there is the balanced status of these four variables. Based on the condition of

these four dimensions, the three main patterns of the model are obtained including: 1. security oriented pattern 2. equilibrium oriented pattern and 3. freedom oriented pattern [1].

- The security oriented pattern is described with four characteristics including inflexibility, control and restraint, formality and acceptance.
- The freedom oriented pattern consists of these four characteristics: instability and softness, spoiling, empathy without respect and neglect.
- The equilibrium oriented pattern includes four patterns of guidance, support in gaining experience, intimacy and acceptance by trying.

Based on the assumptions of the parent-child relation model, the different patterns cause different implications in terms of individual motivation and social communication. For example, In terms of social skills, the model assumes that children who have security oriented relation pattern face severe stress for determining boundaries in their social and family interactions. Children who have freedom oriented relation pattern cause bother and dislike in their social reactions. Finally children who have equilibrium oriented relation pattern have relatively higher capabilities and can clear red lines for others in case of facing serious threats to their life path (the same source).

Here it should be noted that what causes the formation of constructive and productive social interactions with people is the familiarity with communication skills. Communication skills which are also called interpersonal skills are the skills an individual use to interact with others in order to meet his needs, desires and rights without harming others' needs, demands, rights or obligations [8]. As already performed studies show, having these skills play an important role in mental health, personality development, Identity formation, increased job productivity, increased quality of life and increased adaptability and self-actualization of individuals [9]. This study is based on the assumption that communication skills are influenced by parent- child relation patterns. According to previous research done on the importance of communication skills and also based on the above- mentioned assumption, this study aims to compare the communication skills of adolescents in three parent (here only mother) - child relation patterns.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of this study is ex post facto. The statistical universe included all girl high school students in 19 districts of Tehran city's ministry of education. Multi-stage cluster sampling was used. First, the nineteen districts of ministry of education clustered to four geographic regions of North, South, East and West. Then from each cluster one district was selected randomly. In the next step, from each district one girls high school was selected randomly, using the name list of all girls' high schools. Finally, from each school one or two classes were selected randomly and its students answered the questionnaires. Since the independent variable in this study (parent – child relation patterns) has three levels and regarding the point that in ex post facto research a sample size of at least 30 individuals is recommended for each of the groups [7], it was decided to consider 50 adolescents for each of the groups (relation patterns) and a total number of 150 participants for answering the questionnaires. Including the possibility that some cases may lead to unusable inventory (such as unfinished questionnaires, the absence of mother in the family because of death or separation and other cases), the total numbers of 160 adolescents were first participated in the study. Finally, 154 subjects who responded to both questionnaires completely were taken as the final volume of the sample.

Instruments

- Parent-Child Relation Pattern Inventory (PCRPI)

This questionnaire was developed by Bagheri in the year of 1390 in Iran and is composed of 80 items. Participants answer its questions on a scale of 1 to 5, from strongly disagree to totally agree. Questions are answered about each of the parents separately. This questionnaire consists of 8 subscales: rigidity, instability and softness, Control and restraint, spoiling, formality, Interconnectedness, Conditional Value and indifference-neglect. Each of these subscales is composed of 10 items. Accordingly, the three main patterns of parent- child relation are obtained including security oriented, equilibrium oriented and freedom oriented ones. To assess the reliability of the test, Cornbrash's alpha was used which equaled 92% for the security oriented pattern, 95% for the freedom oriented pattern and 66% for the whole of the inventory. The face and content validity of the questionnaire was also reported by the experts. Meanwhile, the construct validity was determined according to analytical indicators of principal components, item analysis, discrimination coefficient, difficulty coefficient and Loop method [2].

• Jerabek Communication Skills Test

This questionnaire is composed of 34 items. Participants answer its questions on a scale of 1 to 5, from never to always. In this test 5 subscales of listening, emotion regulation, message understanding, insight and assertiveness are examined. The reliability of the test is reported 69% by Hosseinchari et al (2005) using Cronbach's alpha. To assess the construct validity of the test, these researchers used confirmatory factor analysis based on principal components. They reported KMO index value equal to 71% and χ^2 index value from Bartlett Test equal to 2318/01 which was significant at 0.0001 level, using Cronbach's alpha and split-half method, Yousefi (1385) also reported the reliability coefficient of the test equal to 0/81 and 0/77 accordingly.

RESULTS

Collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. First, statistical indicators of "communication skills" and its subscales were measured in terms of communication patterns. Results are shown in table1.

Table1.statistical indicators of "communication skills" and its subscales in terms of communication patterns

Variable	group	mean	Standard deviation	Standard error
*Communication skills (total scale)	Freedom oriented	111.70	9.33	1.94
	Security oriented	112.13	10.33	1.68
	Equilibrium oriented	116.12	9.66	1.00
Insight	Freedom oriented	16.17	3.14	0.66
	Security oriented	16.26	3.43	0.56
	Equilibrium oriented	16.86	2.68	0.28
Message understanding	Freedom oriented	29.96	3.96	0.83
	Security oriented	29.61	4.48	0.73
	Equilibrium oriented	31.13	4.11	0.42
Emotion regulation	Freedom oriented	25.35	2.91	0.61
	Security oriented	25.66	4.08	0.66
	Equilibrium oriented	26.88	3.70	0.38
Listening	Freedom oriented	24.43	4.02	0.84
	Security oriented	24.18	3.70	0.60
	Equilibrium oriented	24.12	3.28	0.34
*assertiveness	Freedom oriented	15.78	3.16	0.66
	Security oriented	16.42	2.54	0.41
	Equilibrium oriented	17.13	2.35	0.24

Table 2.variance analysis of "communication skills" in terms of mother-child relation patterns

Variable	values	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of squares	significance Level	effect Size
*Communication skills (total scale)	Between-groups	7.38	2	14.77		
	Within-groups	8.70	151	1313.86	0.04	0.03
	total		153	1328.62		
*assertiveness	Between-groups	19.50	2	39		
	Within-groups	6.41	151	967.63	0.05	0.05
	total		153	1006.62		
Insight	Between-groups	36.54	2	73.08		
	Within-groups	17.51	151	2644.49	0.43	
	total		153	2717.57		
Message understanding	Between-groups	33.80	2	67.60		
	Within-groups	13.67	151	2063.47	0.13	
	total		153	2131.07		
Emotion regulation	Between-groups	0.92	2	1.85		
	Within-groups	12.27	151	1853.06	0.09	
	total		153	1854.90		
Listening	Between-groups	7.38	2	14.77		
	Within-groups	8.70	151	1313.86	0.93	
	total		153	1328.62		

Statistical indicators presented for each of relation patterns show some differences in between-group values. Although this difference is negligible in some of the sub-scales, there is an important difference between the values of the subscales of message understanding, emotion regulation and assertiveness and also the value of the total scale

in each of the relation patterns. To examine whether this difference is significant at the maximum error level of 5%, analysis of variance test was used. Results are shown in table2.

Table2. shows the results of the variance analysis test for the assessment of the difference between the scores of communication skills subscales in terms of mother-child relation patterns. As it can be seen, F test has confirmed that there is a significant difference between the communication skills of the three groups, in a way that this skill is higher in the group with equilibrium oriented pattern. This assessment has been made of the subscales of this index as well. It is observed that only about the subscale of "assertiveness" the difference between the groups (relation patterns) is confirmed, in a way that assertiveness is higher in the group with equilibrium oriented pattern.

Due to the test's significance for the communication skills index and assertiveness subscale, the three groups were compared with each other two by two to in order to find more details about the differences between them. For this purpose Tukey post hoc test was done, the results of which are shown in tables 2 & 3.

Table3.Results of post hoc test for Paired comparison of the mean scores of communication skills (assertiveness subscale)

Relation pattern	M difference	St err	sig	95% confidence interval	
				Lower limit	Upper limit
Freedom oriented- security oriented	-0.64	0.67	0.34	-1.96	0.68
Freedom oriented- equilibrium oriented	-1.35(*)	0.59	0.02	-2.51	-0.18
Equilibrium oriented- security oriented	0.71	0.49	0.15	-0.25	1.67

Table3. indicates that there is not a significant difference between equilibrium and security oriented patterns in terms of assertiveness score, but on the other hand there is a significant difference between freedom oriented and equilibrium oriented patterns in terms of assertiveness, in a way that children with an equilibrium oriented relation pattern are more assertive than children with freedom oriented relation pattern. This has been confirmed by Tukey post hoc test.

Table4.Results of post hoc test for Paired comparison of the mean scores of communication skills (total scale)

Relation pattern	Mean differences	Standard error	significance	95% confidence interval	
				Lower limit	Upper limit
Freedom oriented- security oriented	-0.44	2.58	0.87	-5.54	4.67
Freedom oriented- equilibrium oriented	-4.42	2.28	0.06	-8.98	0.08
Equilibrium oriented- security oriented	3.99(*)	1.89	0.04	0.27	7.71

Table4 indicates that there is not a significant difference between freedom oriented and equilibrium oriented patterns in terms of communication skills, but the difference between equilibrium oriented and security oriented patterns is significant. This has been confirmed by Tukey post hoc test. As it can be seen, participants with equilibrium oriented relation pattern have more communication skills than the ones with security oriented relation pattern.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

For years, psychologists have emphasized the significant impact of parents' functions on the formation of the child's thoughts, behavior and emotions. Based on Diathesis- stress model in psychopathology, a number of studies have investigated the role of family-related factors as a predisposing factor in the vulnerability of the individuals [16]. Among the wide range of these vulnerabilities we can refer to the inadequacy of communication skills. Nowadays, there are lots of people who cannot deal well with others, show fear in their social interactions, do not know what to say and how to behave when entering gatherings, feel unable to talk to people, cannot cooperate with individuals and are not capable of making decisions for their everyday problems. All of these difficulties have made researchers examine the family effects, especially the effects of parent-child interactions on the occurrence of such dysfunctions. Among the research conducted in this area we can mention the studies by Yousefi (2007), Hosseinchari et al (2007), Jacob (1997), Darling (1999), Lieb et al (2000), Landry et al (2006) and Roopnerine et al (2006). In all of these studies the inadequacy of communication skills is known as the result of authoritarian parenting and the adequacy of these skills are known as the result of authoritative parenting.

Regarding the results of this study and consistent with previous findings and also the assumptions of the parent-child relation patterns model, we observed that children who come from equilibrium oriented families- in other

words, authoritative families, have the greatest communication skills and the highest assertiveness. In fact, it can certainly be said that in authoritative families in which all family members have equal opportunity to participate in opinion exercises and decision and policy makings, children enhance their independence and self-esteem and benefit from more socialization and social competence in future.

According to the results, It is incumbent upon parents to acquire sufficient knowledge about the effects of parenting styles on children's mental health and success, chose these styles consciously and intentionally and try to avoid going to extremes in their relationships with their children (by choosing security oriented and freedom oriented patterns). They should choose the best relation pattern- in other words, the decisive and reassuring equilibrium oriented pattern to bring health and wellbeing to their children's lives. Meanwhile, since mothers generally take more responsibility in raising their children, the acquisition of such knowledge is more important for them. By emphasizing the mother's role in developing the child's personality, shaping his views towards life and people and benefiting him mental health and good fate, Levy (1943) considers the study of human's behavior inconclusive without studying their interactions with their mothers in early childhood [5]. It is also incumbent upon mental health authorities to give more attention to the role of effective parenting as an obstacle to the development of psychological problems and even chronic disorders in children and adolescents. According to this, mental health authorities should take action towards running positive parenting programs and increase parents' knowledge and skills about their greatest humane responsibility- in other words, parenting.

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