



Predicting the social-emotional competence of adolescents based on the reflective capacity of the mother, regarding mediating role of family emotional conditions

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Abstract

Aim: The purpose of this research is to predict the socio-emotional competence of adolescents based on the reflective capacity of the mother, taking into account the role of the mediator of the family's emotional atmosphere. **Methods:** The current research is descriptive and correlational. The statistical population of the research is the students of the second secondary level of the 3rd education district of Qom, who were studying in the academic year 2021-22. Using Cochran's formula, the sample size equal to 363 people was selected based on the multi-stage cluster sampling method. In order to collect data, Zhou et al.'s socio-emotional competence questionnaire (2012), Hillburn's emotional atmosphere questionnaire (1964) and Fonagy et al.'s reflective capacity questionnaire (2016) were used. Data analysis and evaluation of the proposed model was done through structural equation modeling and using SPSS and Lisrel software. **Results:** The results showed that the mother's reflective capacity predicts the social-emotional competence of adolescents ($\beta=0.68$, $P<0.001$). Also, based on the findings of this research, the reflective capacity of the mother through the mediating variable of the emotional atmosphere of the family also has a predictive role on the socio-emotional competence of adolescents ($\beta=0.89$, $P<0.001$). **Conclusion:** According to the results of the research, higher levels of reflective capacity of mothers expect higher competence of teenagers in the studied age range and vice versa. Examining the reflective capacity of mothers in the form of existing tools and measures and having a picture of it can be useful in holding courses based on their mentalization.

Keywords: Social-emotional competency, reflective functioning, family emotional conditions, adults, family.

Introduction

Different aspects of psychosocial development, which has a significant effect on the behavior and personality of adolescents, is a process that takes place over a relatively long period of time and that is in the family, and the basis of this formation is determined by the interaction and the type of parent-child relationship and the emotional atmosphere of the family. The values, behaviors and feedback that parents have towards their children form the basis of their vision and attitude (Javadan, 2015). The most important developmental task of adolescence is establishing good relationships and constructive interaction with members of different groups and developing social skills, which is referred to as social competence (Kastelnik, 2012). The concept of social emotional competence consists of the following components: self-awareness (recognition and recognition of one's own and others' emotions); Empathy (the ability to recognize and understand the feelings of others, and the motivation to start and maintain an activity even if it is difficult and associated with the experience of failure); self-regulation of conscious restraint with respect to impulses and emotions); and social skills (such as the ability to form and maintain healthy relationships, participate in social activities, and interact appropriately with people) (Helbersat et al., 2001).

The nature of the emotional atmosphere of the family, which includes the relationships of parents with their children, children with each other, and parents with each other, can facilitate or hinder the adjustment of children and adolescents. Mother is the child's first passage to social life. Deprivation of mother's love and affection leads to the appearance of behavioral disorder symptoms (Ahmadvand, 2013).

In this regard, today, the promotion of mentalization and appropriate evaluation of the results of targeted psycho-social interventions related to it has become one of the educational-therapeutic priorities and can be beneficial for professionals and patients (Allen & Fonagy, 2006). Although the mentalization approach should be the focus of attention from the very beginning of childhood, it is in adolescence that its main importance is revealed because most emotional problems appear in adolescence (Beck et al., 2020). Mentalization problems show themselves clearly in behaviors, especially in adolescent attachment (Chernik et al., 2021). Reflective capacity or the operational definition of mentalizing refers to the ability to explore the inner mental perception of oneself and others (Kavalina et al., 2015). It is a necessary capacity to understand the behavior in the shadow of the mental state and intentions, and on the other hand, it is a clear sign of the person's mentalizing ability (Slade, 2005).

The examination of emotional competence and anxiety of children and adolescents showed that anxious youths are at a low level in effective expression of emotion, understanding and awareness of emotion, and acceptance and self-efficacy, and anxious children use more coping strategies that are accompanied by seeking support. These children also show less adaptive coping strategies (Mathew et al., 2016).

The current research will examine the variables of socio-emotional competence of adolescents under the influence of the variables of mothers' reflective capacity and the emotional atmosphere of the family. The main research question is whether mother's reflective capacity has a significant role in predicting the socio-emotional

competence of adolescents. And does the emotional atmosphere of the family play a mediating role in the relationship between the mother's reflective capacity and the socio-emotional competence of adolescents?

Method

The current research is descriptive and correlational. The statistical population of the research is the students of the second secondary level of the 3rd education district of Qom, who were studying in the academic year 2021-22. Using Cochran's formula, the sample size equal to 363 people was selected based on the multi-stage cluster sampling method. In order to collect data, Zhou et al.'s socio-emotional competence questionnaire (2012), Hillburn's emotional atmosphere questionnaire (1964) and Fonagy et al.'s reflective capacity questionnaire (2016) were used. Data analysis and evaluation of the proposed model was done through structural equation modeling and using SPSS and Lisrel software.

Results

The results showed that the mother's reflective capacity predicts the social-emotional competence of adolescents ($\beta=0.68$, $P<0.001$). Also, based on the findings of this research, the reflective capacity of the mother through the mediating variable of the emotional atmosphere of the family also has a predictive role on the socio-emotional competence of adolescents ($\beta=0.89$, $P<0.001$).

Conclusion

The aim of the current research was to predict the socio-emotional competence of adolescents based on the reflective capacity of the mother, taking into account the role of the mediator of the family's emotional atmosphere. The results of predicting the socio-emotional competence of adolescents are based on the reflective capacity of the mother, taking into account the role of the mediator of the family's emotional atmosphere, the relevant structural model is meaningful according to the results of this research. Based on this, it is possible to infer the predictive role of mother's reflective capacity on the social-emotional competence of adolescents through the mediation of the family's emotional atmosphere.

In explaining the results, it can be said that based on the findings of the current research, the reflective capacity of mothers had a predictive role on the emotional-emotional competence of their children in the age period studied in this research. According to the results of this finding, it is expected that higher levels of reflective capacity of mothers expect higher competence of adolescents in the studied age range and vice versa.

Considering the significance of the proposed model in the role of mothers' reflective capacity in predicting the socio-emotional competence of adolescents, the effect of using courses to improve the mentalizing ability of mothers on their reflective capacity can also be investigated in the same statistical population. Improving mentalization and appropriate evaluation of the results of targeted psycho-social interventions related to it has become one of the educational-therapeutic priorities and can be beneficial for professionals and patients.

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