



Research paper

The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Adolescents Depression Symptoms with the Mediation of Psychological Inflexibility

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and depression symptoms among adolescents, with psychological inflexibility as a mediator. The research method was correlational. The statistical population was all 308 teenagers of Kermanshah city who were selected by random cluster sampling and answered the questionnaires of depression, parenting styles and avoidance and fusion. The findings showed that among the parenting styles, only the authoritative style had a direct effect on depression symptoms. Authoritarian and permissive styles had a direct effect on psychological inflexibility. Psychological inflexibility had a direct effect on depressive symptoms. The indirect results of the paths showed that only authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were significant with the mediation of psychological inflexibility on depression symptoms. It is suggested that the relationship between parenting styles, psychological inflexibility and depression symptoms should be considered in interventions related to adolescent mental health.

Keywords: Depression symptoms, parenting styles, psychological inflexibility.

Introduction

One of the most common psychological problems in adolescence is depression. Depression is associated with listlessness, depressed mood, changes in appetite, guilt, difficulty concentrating, feeling sluggish, and suicidal thoughts. One of the environmental factors influencing the depression symptoms of teenagers is parenting styles (Keijsers, et al., 2020). Baumrind (1971) mentioned three parenting styles (authoritarian style, authoritative style and permissive style). Interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory and family systems theory show that parenting styles influence adolescent mental health (Ronner, et al., 2017). Parents are the main factor in promoting psychological resilience among adolescents (Flojas-Contreras, et al., 2018). Psychological flexibility causes people to change their relationships with private events (thoughts and feelings), not the events themselves (Zhang, et al., 2018). Previous studies have shown that parenting styles predict psychological inflexibility, psychological inflexibility has a mediating role between parenting styles and adolescent mental health (Penn, et al., 2021). The significance of the results of this research is an important contribution to parents' self-awareness of the long-term effects of parenting styles on the mental health of adolescents. Considering the existing gap, the present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the

mediating role of psychological inflexibility in the relationship between parenting styles and adolescent depression symptoms. The hypotheses were:

- Parenting styles have a direct effect on depression symptoms.
- Parenting styles have a direct effect on psychological inflexibility.
- Psychological inflexibility has a positive and direct effect on depression symptoms.
- Parenting styles have an indirect effect on depression symptoms through the mediation of psychological inflexibility.

Method

This descriptive-correlation study was based on structural equation modeling (SEM). The statistical population in this research included all teenagers of Kermanshah city. 308 teenagers were selected by cluster random sampling method. Thus, one district (district three) was randomly selected among all the educational districts of Kermanshah city, then four schools (two girls' and two boys' schools) were randomly selected from among all the schools in district three. Data analysis was done with SPSS version 27 and Amos version 24 software.

Tool

Children's Depression Inventory (CDI): This questionnaire was designed by Kovacs (1985). It includes 27 items and five subscales, including negative mood, interpersonal problems, ineffectiveness, lack of pleasure, and negative self-esteem. Its concurrent validity is 0.60 and its reliability is 0.86 using Cronbach's alpha method (Kovacs, 1985). In the present study, reliability was obtained using Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.85.

Parenting Styles questionnaire: this questionnaire was designed by Baumrind (1991). It includes 30 items and three styles: permissive, authoritative and authoritarian. Baumrind test-retest reliability method of 0.85, 0.92 and 0.85 respectively. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha reliability was obtained for permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative styles as 0.87, 0.79, and 0.81, respectively.

Avoidance and Fusion Questionnaire (AFQ-Y) : Grikor, et al. (2008) created this questionnaire, it has 8 items. According to exploratory factor analysis, only one factor explains 31.4% of the total variance. It also has an acceptable internal validity (0.90). In the present study, reliability was obtained using Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.92.

Results

The assumptions of univariate normality, multivariate normality, non-existence of outlier data and non-collinearity were checked and maintained. The results of Pearson's correlation test (Table 1) showed that there was a significant relationship between authoritative, authoritarian, permissive parenting styles and psychological inflexibility with depression symptoms ($p < 0.05$). A significant relationship was observed between authoritarian and permissive styles with psychological flexibility ($p < 0.05$).

Table 1: Pearson correlation test between research variables along with descriptive statistics

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1.Authoritative style	27.89	5.99	1				
2.Autocratic style	14.53	6.58	-0.13*	1			

3.Permissive style	14.57	5.72	0.08	-0.10	1	
4.Psychological inflexibility	13.11	6.56	0.01	0.14*	0.21**	1
5.Depressive symptoms	15.23	8.60	-0.13*	0.17**	0.23**	0.59** 1

Note: p * = ≥ 0.05 and p ** = ≥ 0.01

The results of Table 2 showed that the direct effect of authoritarian style and permissive style on psychological flexibility was confirmed ($p < 0.05$). The results of the bootstrapping test showed that through the mediation of psychological inflexibility ($p < 0.05$). Permissive style with a coefficient of 0.29 and authoritarian style with a coefficient of 0.22 had the greatest total effect on depression symptoms.

Table 2: The results of direct, indirect and total effects based on the results of the SEM

Path	β	t value	Direct Effect p value	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Authoritative style -> Psychological inflexibility	0.01	0.10	0.922		
Autocratic style -> Psychological inflexibility	0.15	1.99	0.048		
Permissive style -> Psychological inflexibility	0.28	2.74	0.006		
Psychological inflexibility-> Depressive symptoms	0.72	6.45	<0.001		
Authoritative style -> Depressive symptoms	-0.18	-2.99	0.003	-0.01	-0.19
Autocratic style -> Depressive symptoms	0.11	1.69	0.091	0.11*	0.22
Permissive style -> Depressive symptoms	0.09	1.49	0.137	0.20**	0.29

Note: p * = ≥ 0.05 and p ** = ≥ 0.01

Discussion and Conclusion

In explaining the findings of the first hypothesis, it can be said that parents with an authoritative style with love and acceptance and the rules they apply strengthen autonomy, self-esteem, and also the formation of healthy personality traits that prevent the symptoms of depression. Also, by explaining the findings of the second hypothesis, inflexible people with weak mindfulness and also use control and avoidance in stressful situations, which in the long run will aggravate the symptoms of depression. In explaining the findings of the third hypothesis, the rejection or excessive support of the adolescent by the parents hinders the development of more adaptive regulatory strategies and limits psychological flexibility. In explaining the findings of the fourth hypothesis of the treatment based on acceptance and commitment, it has been pointed out that a weak context (including authoritarian style and permissive style) leads to psychological inflexibility, psychological inflexibility is a model of psychopathology, which causes the emergence of private events by controlling and avoiding them Symptoms of depression. Among the limitations of this research, there was no difference between parenting styles of parents and data collection was only based on the perception of teenagers, it is suggested that future studies include measures to evaluate internalization, externalization and health issues of teenagers.

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Conflicts of interest

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