



Research paper

The Mediation Role of Family Function in the Relationship of Personality Dimensions of Temperament and Character with Internalized/Externalized Problems

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the mediation role of family function in the relationship of personality dimensions of temperament and character with internalized and externalized problems. The current research method was correlational. The statistical population consisted of students in the second grade of high school in Andimeshk, Iran, during the academic year of 2020-2021, out of which 326 people (165 girls and 161 boys) were selected by multi-stage cluster sampling method. The youth self-report scale, temperament and character inventory, and family assessment device were used to collect data. Structural equation methods were used to analyze the data. The findings showed that family function had a mediation role in the relationship between temperament and character and internalized and externalized problems of adolescents, so it is recommended that psychologists, through training and interventions, improve family function to prevent, reduce, and improve the adolescents' internalized/externalized problems.

Keywords: Adolescent, family function, internalized/externalized, temperament and character

Introduction

Adolescence is an important time for laying the foundations of mental health. The disorders of this period are usually divided into two categories internalized disorders characterized by social withdrawal, anxiety, and depression, and externalized disorders characterized by conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (Sahithya & Khashyap, 2024). Personality traits are pathological factors in the internalized/externalized symptoms of adolescents (Jallow et al., 2024). According to Cloninger's psychobiological model, personality consists of two dimensions: temperament and character (Svrakic & Cloninger, 2012). Adolescent's personality has a significant relationship with family functioning (Buijs et al, 2023). The family function is also considered a vital factor in the occurrence and continuation of internalized/externalized problems of adolescents (Widysari & Syakarofath, 2024). Considering the family function as an effective variable in the formation, continuation and stabilization of dysfunctional personality traits that lead to the occurrence and exacerbation of mental health problems, so the hypotheses of present study were:

-The family function plays a mediating role in the relationship between temperament and character dimensions and internalized problems of adolescents.

-The family function plays a mediating role in the relationship between temperament and character dimensions and externalized problems of adolescents.

Method

The research method was a correlational structural equation model. The statistical population was all the male and female students of the second-grade high school in Andimeshk City in Iran, during 2020-2021. A sample of 326 people (165 girls and 161 boys) was selected through the multi-stage cluster sampling method. The criteria for entering the research included being engaged in education during research, willingness to participate in the study, and having 15 to 18 years age, and, the criteria for exiting were the questionnaires being distorted. After explaining the importance, objectives, and method of conducting the authenticity of the ethical principles (confidentiality of their identity and their answers, informed consent, and freedom of choice in participation or non-participation) were tested. Data were analyzed by Pearson's correlation coefficients and structural equation models in SPSS24 and AMOS/18 software.

Temperament and Character Inventory: This inventory contains 125 items and measures four dimensions of temperament (novelty seeking, harm avoidance, reward Dependence, Persistence) and three dimensions of character (Self-directedness, Cooperativeness, self-transcendence). Reliability was obtained for temperament 0.77 and character 0.81(Cloninger et al, 1994). The internal consistency of the questionnaire in the present research was obtained with Cronbach's alpha of 0.78.

Youth Self-Report Scale: This scale contains 112 items. The test-retest reliability of this questionnaire was reported to be 0.82 and the internal consistency of each subscale was reported between 0.55 and 0.75 (Aschenbach & Rescorella, 2001). The internal consistency in the present study was obtained with Cronbach's alpha of 0.80.

Family Assessment Device: It is a 60-item self-assessment tool designed to measure family functioning dimensions (Problem-solving, communication, roles, affective responsibility, affective involvement, Behavior control). Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total score instrument is 0.89 and subscales are reported in the range between 0.72 and 0.92 (Epstein et al, 1983). The internal consistency of the questionnaire in the present research was obtained with Cronbach's alpha method of 0.82.

Results

According to the results, the root means square error of approximation (RMSEA) index (0.31), Tucker-Lewis goodness of fit index (TLI) (0.512) and adaptive goodness of fit index (AGFI) (0.955) indicate it was due to the poor fit of the proposed model. After removing the non-significant path in order to improve the fit of the model, the model was tested once more. The results show that the fit indices indicate the excellent fit of the modified model. Figure 1 shows the output of the final model of the paths.

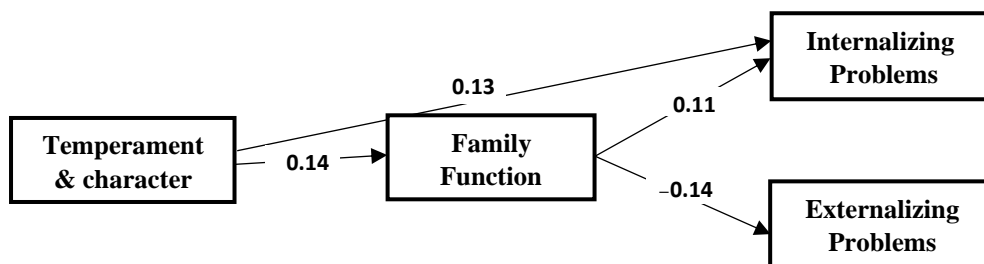


Figure 1: The output of the final model along with the standard coefficients of the paths

Table 1, shows the results of bootstrap and indirected path.

Table 1. The results of bootstrap between independent, dependent and mediator variables

Direction	DATA	Bootstrap value	lower limit	upper limit	standard error	Sig
Temperament and character to internalized \longrightarrow family function	0.017	0.015	0.003	0.039	0.009	0.04
Temperament and character to externalized \longrightarrow family function	-0.015	-0.018	-0.046	-0.004	0.011	0.02

The results show that for both the indirect paths of the effect of Temperament and character on internal/external symptoms through family functioning, zero is outside the confidence interval (lower limit and upper limit) and a significant level has been obtained and it is also less than 0.05. Therefore, two indirect effects are significant and are confirmed.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results showed that family functioning mediates the relationship between personality dimensions and internalized/externalized disorders of adolescents. Personality dimensions can be developed by learning or socialization. The family environment is the key place of socialization of adolescents. Therefore, By establishing affective involvement and appropriate affective responsibility among family members, it is possible to develop the personality emotional dimension, and by creating warm communication without applying dry behavior control, children can faced with the logical consequences of their actions, and by assigning tasks in the form of roles within the family and by teaching efficient problem solving, can developed skills which involve self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement in children and prevented the occurrence of internalized/externalized problems in adolescents. Conducting the research in Andimeshk city and on the students in the second grade of high school were two major limitations of the present study. For future research, it is suggested to conduct similar research on students with different demographic characteristics. From a

practical point of view, clinics and counseling centers can enhance adolescents' mental health with family support training.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.



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