

Psycho-Social Well-being in Female Students: the Role of Perceived Parental Autonomy Support and Warmth

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Abstract

Purpose: According to self-determination theory well-being of individuals rests upon meeting the psychological need to autonomy, competence, and relatedness and the environment which provides the ground to meet these needs can facilitate psychological well-being of people. The goal of present research is to investigate the role of paternal and maternal autonomy support and warmth in psychological and social well-being of female students.

Methodology: The design was correlational studies; 182 female freshmen students of Mashhad Payam-Noor University were selected using multistage random sampling and completed Perceptions of Parents Styles (POPS; Robbins, 1994), psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989) and social well-being (Keyes, 1998) questionnaires. Data analysis was done using correlation coefficients and stepwise regression in SPSS software.

Findings: The findings showed that there was significant and positive relationship between paternal autonomy and social integration. Maternal warmth has positive relationships with self-acceptance, personal growth, social integration and social well-being. Paternal warmth has a positive significant relationship with self-acceptance, personal growth, psychological well-being, social integration, social contribution and social well-being. There was no significant relationship among maternal autonomy support with none of the research variables.

Conclusion: It seems that warm and friendly behavior along with parents' affection toward children can have sustainable impacts on children's well-being.

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1. Introduction

Well-being construct is one of the constructs in the positive psychology which plays an important role in explaining many emotional and behavioral consequences (Ruini et al, 2017; Roslan, et al, 2017). Health is the state of perfect social, mental, and physical well-being, not only the absence of disease. Mental health includes an amount of well-being through which people can identify their abilities, cope with the stresses of daily life, work productively and efficiently, and participate effectively in social activities (WHO, 2004). Accordingly, psychological well-being includes the individual's attempts for perfection and realization of his potential and actual powers (Joshanloo, et al, 2006); and social well-being is the personal report of an individual on the quality of his relationship with other people, the place he lives in, and his society (Keyes, 1998).

The study of well-being has been divided into two streams of research, respectively: the hedonic approach and the eudaimonic approach (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The hedonic approach conceptualizes and defines well-being in terms of happiness and of the presence of pleasure and absence of pain and is reflected in the stream of research on subjective well-being (Diener et al, 1985). The eudaimonic approach equates well-being with human potential that, when realized, results in a person's optimal functioning in life (Ryan & Deci, 2001) and is reflected in the stream of research on psychological (Ryff, 1989) and social (Keyes, 1998) well-being.

Ryff (1989) is of the opinion that some of the aspects of optimum functioning such as one's achieved aims involve legalizations and wide range of attempts. This may even oppose completely to a short-term happiness. He holds that well-being must be considered simplistic but rather as equivalent to additional experience hedonism as against pain. Instead, a well-being embraces an all-round attempt to attain perfection and bring the individual's potentialities to realization. Hence, Ryff had introduced six core dimensions of psychological well-being, specifically: self-acceptance (state of having positive thoughts and feelings about oneself); positive relations with others (ability to engage in warm and trusting relationship with others); autonomy (ability to be independent and coping with social pressure); environmental mastery (ability to adapt, change or create one's environment according to one's needs through physical and mental activities); purpose in life (state of having objectives and goals in life and working towards achieving goal-oriented); and personal growth (continuously growing and developing as oneself) (Roslan, et al, 2017).

A more socially-oriented definition of well-being has been proposed by Keyes (1998). Keyes' multidimensional model of social well-being consists of five dimensions that indicate whether and to what extent individuals are functioning well in their social world: a) social integration (individuals' appraisal of the quality of their own relation with society and community); b) social contribution (the feeling of being a vital member of the society, with something important to offer to the world); c) social acceptance (trusting others, and having favorable opinions about human nature); d) social actualization (the evaluation of a society's potential to improve); e) social coherence (the perception of that the social word is well-organized) (Negovan, 2010). Finally model of psychosocial well-being should include and reflect the interconnectedness of the various aspects of overall well-being (Linley, et al, 2009).

In relation to the causes of well-being, many studies show that self-determination is an important factor in predicting the well-being of individuals (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Roth et al, 2009; Miquelon & Vallerand, 2008; Deci & Ryan 1985; Ryan & Deci 2000a). In this regard, Ryan & Deci (2000b; 2008) in their conceptual model suggest that well-being is a function of environmental factors and the level of self-determination of individuals. In self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2002; 2011a; 2011b; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; 2000b) introduce human as an active creature with special psychological needs and an internal motivation for meeting their needs. His well-being and health rests upon fulfilling three universal and natural needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Grolnick, et al, 1997; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Competence is the psychological need to accomplish mastery in dealing with the environment. The need for autonomy is a basic human propensity to be the origin or agent with respect to action. Relatedness is the

need to experience love and inter personal contact, warmth and affection (Grolnick, et al, 1997). three basic psychological needs must be satisfied across the life span for all age group individuals to experience an ongoing sense of integrity and well-being (Ryan, Deci, & Vansteenkiste, 2016; Kocayoruk, 2012). According to self-determination theory, the context and environment which give support to meet the psychological needs of individuals provides the ground for achieving high levels of psychological well-being among them (Grolnick, et al, 1997). Self-determination theory suggested that the parenting style as a socialization agency played a substantial role in supporting the relationship between perceived need support and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Niemiec, et al, 2006). Parents as an effective factor on children life support the autonomy of children through giving value to their activities, giving freedom of choice, participating them in decision-making, expressing warmth and affection, love, interest, and satisfaction to their children and provide the ground for promoting their level of social and psychological well-being (Chirkov & Ryan, 2001; Niemiec, et al, 2006; Soenens, et al, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2017), Self-determined school motivation (Tanhaye-Reshvanloo & Hejazi, 2010; 2012; 2014), self-esteem (Tanhaye-Reshvanloo, 2011; Tanhaye-Reshvanloo & Hejazi, 2012; Duineveld, et al, 2017) and decrease depression (Chirkov & Ryan, 2001; Niemiec, et al, 2006; Soenens, et al, 2009; Duineveld, et al, 2017; Ryan, Deci, & Vansteenkiste, 2016) and Stress (Clemente, et al, 2016; Yang & Smith, 2017) among them.

Current research suggests parents and adolescents can mutually influence, or co-regulate, each other (Nurmi, 2004; Quoted in Duineveld, et al, 2017). Therefore, a young person's well-being may influence what parenting style is used. However, the mechanisms behind co-regulation are not well defined (Dietrich, et al, 2012; Quoted in Duineveld, et al, 2017). Also Research shows that the effectiveness of mother and father on the well-being of children occurs in a different way (Kim & Rohner, 2002). On the other hand, the effect of supporting the autonomy of children and the warm behavior of parents remains in the adulthood of children (Grolnick et al, 1997). In fact, autonomy support and the warm behavior are positively associated with Children well-being across all ages and gender (Duineveld, et al, 2017).

In general, the relationship between the variables related to parents' perception (supporting the autonomy and warmth of parents) and psychological and social well-being separately has attracted the attention of many researchers, but this relationship has been less studied at the same time. The transition to university is marked by both personal growth and vulnerability to psychosocial maladjustment, with a range of new opportunities and pressures (Knifsend, 2018). Psycho-Social Well-being of university students as a large influential population, which are faced with different experiences in the society, university and family environment is affected by different reasons. One of these effective reasons is the behavior and interaction with the parents. Accordingly, the present study aimed is to investigate the role of supporting the autonomy of children and parent's warmth in predicting the psychological and social well-being among Iranian female students.

2. Methodology

This study was among the correlational studies. The sample which is comprised of 182 female freshmen students of Payam-Noor University of Mashhad was selected through multi-stage random sampling. The average age of participants was $M= 20.31$ in the range of 18 to 22 years old, and its standard deviation was $SD=1.13$. Data collection was done using the following questionnaires:

Perceptions of Parents Styles (POPS): POPS was developed by Robbins (1994). Forty Two items of this scale which are repeated in two halves for the mother and father, is set based on a 7 degrees Likert scale from 'completely incorrect' to 'completely correct', which evaluate six subscales of mother/father involvement, mother/father's support of autonomy, and mother/ father warmth. The validity and reliability of this scale in Iranian sample was confirmed after removing 12 items (Tanhaye-Reshvanloo & Hejazi, 2010). In the present research only four subscales of mother/father support of autonomy (each 9 items) and mother/father warmth (each 6 items) were used. The reliability coefficients for these subscales

varied from .64 to .85 in the present research. The short form of psychological well-being scale: This scale was developed by Ryff (1989). This scale included 18 items in six dimensions of psychological well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal Growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance based on 7 degrees Likert scale from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree'. In the researches in Iran, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was reported from .43 to .60 for all subscales (Joshanloo et al., 2006). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient varied from .61 to .79 for the dimensions of this scale.

The short form of social well-being scale: This scale was designed by Keyes (1998) in 15 items and 5 subscales including social integration, social acceptance, social contribution, social actualization, and social coherence. Responding to the items of this scale is done based on a 7 degrees Likert scale from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree'. The reliability coefficients of social well-being subscales in the study of Joshanloo et al., (2006) which was done for investigating the psychometric properties of this scale were reported from 0.59 to 0.76. In the present research these coefficients were from 0.63 to 0.86.

Data collection was done separately for every individual in one session. Classification of data with descriptive statistical indices and inferential analysis was done using Pearson model and step-by-step regression analysis. In the present research, support of autonomy and parent's warmth as the predictor variables and the psychological and social well-being dimensions as the criteria variables entered the regression equations. SPSS.16 was used for doing statistical analysis.

3. Findings

Results suggested no major violations of statistical assumptions. Some univariate outliers were found and these cases closer to the mean by assigning to them a value that are within the 3-SD boundary. Then, multivariate normality was examined, revealing the presence of 5 outliers, which were deleted.

Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients of variables are presented in table 1. The results of this table show that there is no significant relationship between maternal autonomy support and any of research variables. But the relationship between paternal autonomy supports is positive and significant with social integration ($P \geq 0.05$). Maternal warmth has positive relationships with self-acceptance ($P \geq 0.05$), personal growth ($P \geq 0.01$), social integration ($P \geq 0.01$) and social well-being ($p \geq 0.01$). Paternal warmth has a positive significant relationship with self-acceptance ($P \geq 0.01$), personal growth ($P \geq 0.05$), psychological well-being ($P \geq 0.01$), social integration ($P \geq 0.01$), social contribution ($P \geq 0.01$), and social well-being ($P \geq 0.01$).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlational coefficients of variables

Variables	Paternal parenting styles		Maternal parenting styles		Mean	Standard Deviation
	Autonomy	warmth	Autonomy	warmth		
self- acceptance	.08	.25**	.05	.17*	14.	4.06
purpose life	.01	.13	.04	.10	15.	3.88
environment mastery	.12	.13	-.07	.07	14.	3.52
positive relations with others	.00	.11	.02	.09	13.	2.94
personal growth	.07	.15*	-.02	.19**	16.	3.52
autonomy	.01	.05	-.09	-.14	13.	3.40
Psychological well-being	.08	.21**	.02	.14	88.	12.64
social coherence	.06	.09	-.01	.02	12.	3.92
social integration	.17*	.36**	.05	.25**	14.	3.70
social acceptance	.09	.08	-.03	.08	10.	3.90
social contribution	-.03	.19*	-.03	.15	13.	4.20
social actualization	-.07	.003	-.14	-.01	14.	4.14
Social well-being	.07	.22**	-.05	.15*	66.	12.96
Mean	36.90	30.69	37.79	32.13		
Standard deviation	6.82	8.06	6.23	7.57		
** $P \leq 0.01$		* $P \leq 0.05$				

The results of stepwise regression for predicting psychological and social well-being are represented in table 2.

Table2. Stepwise Regression of psychological and social well-being based on parental autonomy support and warmth

criteria	predictors	B	SEB	β	t	R	R ²	R ² _{Adjusted}	F	P
self-acceptance	Paternal warmth	0.12	0.04	0.25	3.42	0.25	0.06	0.06	11.67	.0001
personal growth	Maternal warmth	0.09	0.03	0.19	2.65	0.19	0.04	0.03	7.04	.0001
psychological well-	Paternal warmth	0.33	0.11	0.21	2.88	0.21	0.04	0.04	8.30	.0001
social integration	Paternal warmth	0.17	0.03	0.37	5.26	0.37	0.13	0.13	27.64	.0001
social contribution	Paternal warmth	0.17	0.05	0.32	3.51	0.26	0.07	0.06	6.24	.0001
	Paternal autonomy	-	0.06	-	-					
social well-being	Paternal warmth	0.35	0.12	0.22	2.98	0.22	0.05	0.04	8.91	.0001

The results of table 2 indicate that paternal warmth can predict self-acceptance ($R^2=0.06$), psychological well-being ($R^2=0.04$), social integration ($R^2=0.13$) and social well-being ($R^2=0.05$) of children. Maternal warmth also predicted personal growth ($R^2=0.04$) in a significant way. Findings showed that paternal warmth and autonomy support explains only 0.07 percent of the variance of social contribution

4. Discussion

The goal of present research was to investigate the determining role of support of autonomy and warmth of father/mother in the psychological and social well-being of children. The results of this research, consistent with previous studies (Chirkov & Ryan, 2001; Niemiec et al., 2006; Soenens et al., 2009) showed that there are relationships between paternal autonomy supports are positive and significant with social integration. Maternal warmth has positive relationships with self-acceptance, personal growth, social integration and social well-being. Paternal warmth has a positive significant relationship with self-acceptance, personal growth, psychological well-being, social integration, social contribution and social well-being. But contrary to the previous research, present findings indicate that no significant relationship exists among mother's support of autonomy with any of the research variables. Kim and Rohner (2002) believe that regarding the importance of family in the traditional cultures and the point that in these cultures the relationships within families are based on respect and obedience, giving freedom of choice and right of decision making to children by father, as the guardian and responsible of family, can have a deeper effect on the need to autonomy in the children.

The results of regression indicated that paternal warmth can predict self-acceptance, psychological well-being, social integration and social well-being of children. Maternal warmth also predicted personal growth in a significant way. Findings showed that paternal warmth and autonomy support explains only 7 percent of the variance of social contribution. According to self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000a; 2000b) the environment which provides support to meet individual's need to autonomy, the freedom of choice and the right of decision-making at least in personal issues, increases the internal motivation and contributes to psychological well-being and health. Moreover, Grolnick et al (1997) believe that individuals need to feel related to their parents and feel safe in their relationships with them. Hence, those parents who are sensitive to the needs of their children and have a warm encouraging behavior toward them will satisfy the need to relatedness by creating mental safety in their children; this will in turn result in high levels of psychological and social well-being and low levels of depression, it also has positive effects on increasing their interactions and social functions.

Accordingly, it seems that those parents who let their children to decide freely on the issues which are directly related to them and have a guiding role for their children, and participate their children in the common decisions of family on the other hand facilitate their need to autonomy and create the necessary ground for development and perfection of personal potentials and increasing the quality of interpersonal relationships in family, educational and social environments. In this regard, the present findings refer to the more significant role of father. This is especially true about freshmen students who are just separated from

their family but they are still dependent in financial terms and taking care of issues such as residence, transportation, etc.

Furthermore, warm and friendly relationship of parents with their children which is accompanied by unconditional acceptance of their feelings creates sense of relatedness, belonging, and safety and provides the ground for having a positive attitude to oneself, having a purpose in life, accepting the new experiences, and establishing warm, satisfactory, and friendly relationship with others from one hand; and a positive attitude to the nature of human and logical trust to others, sense of belonging to the society and being an important part of it, being hopeful to future and society from the other hand. These attitudes in turn lead to relatively sustainable impacts on mental health of children in different ages.

Finally, the results of this study indicated that warmth of mother and father and father's support of autonomy explain a small amount of the variance of psychological and social well-being among first year university students. This means that psychological and social well-being of children in higher ages is affected by other varying sources and the majority of their variance is due to other factors which should be addressed in future studies.



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