



The Role of Marital Satisfaction and Parents' Emotional Maturity in High School Students' Educational Progress

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ABSTRACT

The present research was aimed at investigating the role of marital satisfaction and emotional maturity of parents in educational progress of high school students. Methodology: This is a descriptive correlative research. The statistical population consists of all the employees at Lar City Education Office as well as their children who studied at high school. Of these, 228 employees whose children studied at high school were chosen randomly as samples. For gathering information, the Enrich Marital Satisfaction and Singh and Bhargava's Emotional Maturity Questionnaires were used. Analysis of data was performed through multi-variable regression and Pierson's coefficient of correlation. Results: Data analysis showed there was a significant relationship between parents' emotional maturity and children's educational progress. However, no significant relationship was observed between parents' marital satisfaction and their children's educational progress. According to the results obtained from multi-variable regression, parents' emotional maturity alone can anticipate their children's educational progress. Discussion and Conclusion: Parents' emotional maturity anticipates their children's educational progress whereas marital satisfaction has no significant effect on the children's educational progress.

Keywords: Emotional Maturity, Educational Progress, Marital Satisfaction, Children, Parents.

INTRODUCTION

It is every society's dream to advance and transcend its members and produce intellectual and educated citizens. Obviously, any progress in various cultural, economic, social, and political fields would require creative and critical thinkers who could plan and make correct decisions. All this would further require active dynamic educational systems. It could well be claimed that any kind of progress has its roots in some society's efficient educational system [1]. Today, the sensitivity of education on one hand and the complexity of the world on the other have made clear the importance of educating successful children at different school levels. Surely success in doing so would depend not only on the educational programs at schools, but also on the students' domestic situation at home.

The family environment is where a person's physical and emotional patterns as well as his/her personality are formed, so it plays a crucial role in the person's future progress and development. It is a family's duty to care for and bring up its children, create healthy relations among its members, and help its children to become independent [2]. In the past three decades, studying effective factors on children's educational progress has been topmost on the educational experts' agenda [3]. Atkinson et al. believe educational progress to be an ability acquired from the presented lessons. In other words, they believe it to be an ability nurtured to the person at school that is measured through standardized tests [mentioned in 4]. Shoarinezhad says, "Educational progress consists of general or specialized knowledge of school subjects or skills related to these subjects that is usually measured through tests, symptoms, or both, conducted on students by their teachers [5]. Family environment is the first and most enduring effective factor on the development of one's personality. As we know, a child inherits many characteristics from his/her parents, and in this way, parents prepare the ground for their children's development. However, parents' influence on their children is not limited to the inherited traits since family plays a crucial role in children's social and cultural life as well [6].

One of the effective familial factors on a child's situation is the degree of parents' emotional maturity which can also play a role in their educational situation. Family can be considered as an emotional unit as well as a network of intricate relationships resulting from the marital bond between the parents [7]. By emotional atmosphere in a family, we mean the way its members communicate and behave towards one another. The family members' opinions of one another, the feelings and bonds that are expressed among them, and the existence or lack of interference in one another's affairs, are all indicative of their method of communication [6].

Marital satisfaction is another factor that might influence a child's educational situation. Marital satisfaction refers to the objective feelings of pleasure, contentment, and happiness experienced by a husband and wife upon consideration of all aspects of their life together [8]. Winch describes marital satisfaction as the matching between the ideal and the actual situations in married life and explains that marital satisfaction increases as this matching between the ideal and the actual situations increases, and vice versa [9]. Rothberg et al. showed that the formation of women's emotional identity is related to the emotional atmosphere that exists within their family, i.e., observance of modesty, etc. in the family system [10]. Ahmadi also shows that there is a relationship between the emotional environment in the family and the identity crisis [11]. Rosenberg has found that adolescents with respected social – economic backgrounds are confronted with fewer self-esteem issues [12].

Results from various studies indicate that an individual raised in a family with a suitable emotional environment has positive self-concept, high self-esteem, higher social and economic status, and a better developed identity. Moreover, it is now evident that the test subjects' sex and their being or not being university students play no role in the formation of their identity, and that as they grow older, their search for identity is intensified. Therefore, the present study tried to determine to what degree parents' emotional maturity can anticipate their children's educational achievements [13]. Ebadi et al. has been mentioned that Laurin et al. concluded in their research that the relationship between parents can be significantly deterministic with regard to their children's educational performance [14]. Moreover, Christenson et al.'s results show that parents' high expectations regarding their children's scholastic performance can improve them not only educationally, but also mentally as well [15]. In addition, parents who respond to their children's feelings and emotions and support their progress play an effective role in their educational performance. Atashrouz's et al. research indicates that a child's attachment to his/her mother is a powerful factor in anticipating the child's educational progress. Of all the attachment subscales, a child's trust in his/her mother best explains that child's educational progress [16]. Tobman et al. showed that weak parent-child relationships and lack of encouragement on parents' part can increase the risk of poor educational performance [17]. Sharpe concluded in his research that parents' opinion of their child's success can influence the child's educational success [18].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research is a correlative – descriptive study where marital satisfaction and parents' emotional maturity are taken as anticipatory variables and children's educational performance as the criterion variable. The statistical society is the employees (collectively) of the City of Lar's Office of Education as well as their children who studied at high school level. Of these, 228 persons were randomly selected as the statistical sample. Data analysis was performed by implementing the Pierson's correlation coefficient as well as the multi-variable regression method. The following tools were used for gathering data:

A. The Emotional Maturity Scale: This is a self-reporting, 5-point scale introduced by Singh and Bhargava, which includes five sub-scales, namely, lack of emotional stability, emotional regression, emotional maladjustment, personality collapse, and lack of reasoning. The questions in the questionnaire are so designed that a higher score is indicative of greater emotional immaturity in the individual and vice versa. The stability of the test was calculated as 0.75 upon applying the re-test method to 150 male and female students.

B. The Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire: The Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire was prepared by Olson (1989). It consists of 47 questions and 12 sub-scales. The 5 choices (ranging from "I completely agree" to "I completely disagree") for each item receive scores ranging from 1 to 5, and some items are scored in a reverse order. Olson obtained the stability of this questionnaire as 0.92 [19]. Sharifnia also calculated this stability as 0.92 [20]. Soleimanian obtained the simultaneous stability of the 47-point questionnaire in its original form equal to 0.95 [19].

RESULTS

As can be seen in Table 1, the mean and the standard deviation values obtained are as follows: for the marital satisfaction variable 172.18 and 22.51, for parents' emotional maturity 91.86 and 28.25, and for the children's school average 18.57 and 1.31, respectively .

Table 1. The Mean and Standard Deviation Values Obtained for the Test Subjects' Studied Variables

Variable	N	M	SD
Marital Satisfaction	228	172.18	22.51
Parents' Emotional Maturity	228	91.86	28.25
Child's School Average	228	18.57	228

The results shown in Table 2 indicate that marital satisfaction has no significant relation with the children's educational achievement. However, parents' emotional maturity has a positive significant relation ($r=0.30$) with the children's educational achievement. Moreover, there is a positive significant relation between marital satisfaction and parents' emotional maturity ($r=0.47$).

Table 2. The Correlation Coefficients Matrix for Studied Variables

Variable	Parents' Emotional Maturity	Parents' Marital Satisfaction	Child's Average
Parents' Marital Satisfaction	1		
Parents' Emotional Maturity	0.47***	1	
Child's Average	0.12	0.30***	1

* $P<0.05$ ** $P<0.01$ *** $P<0.001$

Table 3. Summary of Multi-Variable Regression Results in Anticipating Educational Progress

Anticipatory Variables	R ²	R	t	Standard Coefficients	Non-Standard Coefficients		F
				Beta	SE	B	
constant			18.45***	-	0.91	16.879	-
Parents' Emotional Maturity	0.09	0.30	4.48***	0.323	0.003	0.015	23.70***
Parents' Marital Satisfaction			0.42	0.031	0.004	0.002	3.39

To determine the effect of each variable, the multi-variable regression analysis: (The enter method) was used. As can be seen in Table 3, the Beta value (Beta=0.323) shows that parents' emotional maturity can successfully anticipate the child's educational progress. However, marital satisfaction (Beta=0.031) lacks such anticipatory characteristic. Moreover, the $R^2=0.09$ result shows that the marital satisfaction and the emotional maturity variables collectively can explain 0.09 of the variance in the children's educational achievement.

DISCUSSION

Family is among the most important social institutions and provides a safe haven for bringing up children, teaching children basic principles, and giving them an opportunity to reflect their feelings. As directors of such an environment, parents bear a great responsibility in these regards.

The findings of the present study showed that emotional maturity on the parents' part can anticipate their children's educational progress. This could be due to the fact that parents' emotional maturity causes them to pay more attention to their children's educational situation as well as to treat them in accordance with correct methods regarding rearing of children. Thus they familiarize themselves with their children's attitudes, and would bring about better performance at school on the children's part. Therefore, good and healthy parents – child relations would lead to lifting the child's morals and make him/her look hopefully towards the future and his/her education, ultimately making him/her interested in studying and improving at school. These results are in agreement with results of previous researches [13, 15, 16, 17 & 18].

With regard to marital satisfaction, the results showed that it has no significant effect on the children's educational achievements. However, this result is not consistent with one of researches [14]. In explaining this, we must refer to the different cultural backgrounds that exist in different societies. Since in the Iranian society parents seldom exhibit their dissatisfaction with their married life, and even go so far as to pretend they are leading a normal married life by hiding their problems, the children's educational progress may have remained immune from the negative effects of exhibiting such dissatisfaction. In addition, this result agrees with Satear's theory on family therapy. According to this theory, members of a family are not aware of their emotions, and even if they are, they suppress these emotions. That is why family members are either devoid of feelings or do not express them and this would lead to an environment of emotional death, which in turn would bring about exhibition of disease symptoms by one or more family members. In such an environment, members of one family tend to avoid one another and keep themselves busy with other non-familial activities [21].

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