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**PARENTING STYLES AND RESILIENCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF COGNITIVE
EMOTION REGULATION**

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ABSTRACT

In order to determine the effective factors on the resilience of female orphans, the present study examined the mediating role of cognitive emotion regulation regarding the relationship between the elements of parenting styles and resilience. A sample of 210 orphaned women sponsored by State Welfare Organization of Iran was studied. Data collection included cognitive emotion regulation, resilience and parenting styles scales. Simultaneous multivariate regression analysis (suggested by Baron and Kenny) was employed to determine the correlation between the hypothetical model and the empirical data, and to test the hypothesis of the study. Findings of this study indicated that: (1) acceptance-involvement parenting style was a positive predictor of resilience (the direct effect of the model); (2) acceptance-involvement style was a positive predictor of positive cognitive emotion regulation, and a negative predictor of negative cognitive emotion regulation; (3) the mediating role of cognitive emotion regulation in the relationship between the acceptance-involvement style and resilience was confirmed. These findings suggest that the use of positive parenting styles, along with increased use of positive emotion regulation strategies and reduced use of negative strategies in difficult living conditions will lead to increased resilience.

Keywords: Resilience, parenting styles, cognitive emotion regulation, mediating role

INTRODUCTION

So far, different models have been proposed to explain individual differences in vulnerability to psychological stress; many of these models focus on the concept of resilience by discussing protective factors and risk factors, their interaction, and ultimately their impact on people's responses to stressors. In general, the term "resilience" refers to factors and processes that stop the growing trend of risk toward problematic behaviors and psychological disorders, and result in adaptive outcomes despite adverse conditions. Rutter (1987) defines resilience as a supporting mechanism that moderates a person's response to significant threats. Garmezy and Masten (1991) define resilience as a "process of, or capacity for, or the outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging and threatening circumstances" (p. 459). Resilience leads to appropriate adaptation of facing difficulties; thus, it is more than a mere prevention of negative outcomes (Cowan, et al., 1996).

Many researchers have attempted to identify the factors affecting the development of resilience. It is assumed that there are protective factors that can determine the reaction to stress and chronic or traumatic experiences (Fraser, Richman and Galinsky, 1999). These factors can be divided into two

categories: personal factors and environmental factors, all of which are known as resilience protective factors. Family factors can be considered as one of the most important environmental variables of resilience. Studies of family variables associated with the development of resilience are looking for answers to such questions as how people can be resistant to stress and how it affects family variables on the basic ability (Coerner and Fitzpatrick, 2004). In the corresponding literature, various family factors have been mentioned, including parenting styles (Wymen, Cowan, Work & Parker, 1991), warmth and affection among family members (Clark and Ladd, 2000), shared beliefs and values among family members (Walsh, 1996, 2003), and several other processes and features. In this regard, Khodajooy and Aghabakhshi (2012) showed a positive significant relationship between family functioning dimensions (problem solving, emotional interaction, roles, behavior control, communication and overall performance) and resilience. The more healthy and efficient the family functions, the greater the resilience of their children, and vice versa.

Research in the domain of families shows that parenting style is one of the most

important factors in the development of psychological characteristics of individuals. Darling and Steinberg (1993) consider parenting styles as a system of attitudes on children, communicating with children, custody and the emotional atmosphere of their parents' behavior. Steinberg et al. (1992) distinguish three types parenting styles: parental acceptance-involvement, permissive- emotional independence, and monitoring-limited parenthood. Parental acceptance-involvement is based on an individual's perception of parents' attentiveness and accountability. These parents consider their children's beliefs and ideas, and communicate widely with them. Permissive- emotional independence style points to the parents' tolerance toward their children's opinions and the order and the democracy that the parents employ. Monitoring-limited parenthood refers to the parents' limited monitoring of their children. These parents, despite having a lot of discipline, apply many restrictions in dealing with children.

Parental behaviors affect a wide range of children's cognitive and emotional abilities and skills, and are influential in shaping a child's character. For example, parent-child interactions may underlie the profound resilience in dealing with

adversities and obstacles of adulthood. In this regard, Coon et al. (1994) consider the strong bond between parents and children, and feelings of competence and parental mental health as contributing features of resilience. Werner and Smith (1992, quoted by Galligan, 2000) found that children who had been living in difficult conditions, but had the opportunity to establish a secure relationship with one or both parents showed greater resilience. According to Rutter (1993), resilient children have more caring parents.

In spite of the fact that research confirms the roles of the family, especially parenting styles, in fostering resilience in children, the mechanism of this association is questioned. What mechanisms of positive parenting styles cause increased resilience, and conversely, how can negative styles become a platform for reducing resilience among family members? With this regard, the present study examines the role of cognitive emotion regulation on the relationship between parenting styles and resilience.

Cognitive emotion regulation refers to strategies which are used in order to reduce, maintain or increase excitement (Gross, 2007). In fact, as Thompson (1974) states, this type of regulation includes all

“extrinsic and intrinsic processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating and modifying emotional reactions, especially their intensive and temporal features, to accomplish one’s goals” (p.28). Cognitive emotion regulation strategies include positive strategies such as acceptance, positive refocusing, refocusing on planning, positive assessment, considering several aspects of a problem; and negative strategies such as, self-blaming, rumination, catastrophizing, and other-blaming.

Inefficient parenting is characterized by poor supervision, physical punishment and enforcing authority, which results in weakening or negative development of positive strategies of emotional regulation among adolescents. In this regard, Katanin et al. (1997) showed that negative attitudes toward parenting cause negative emotions in children, which in turn, reduces their performance. Garnefski, Boon, & Kraaij (2003) also found that young people who perceive life events more negatively and suffer from depression had more controlling parents and less caring ones. The findings of Samani et al. (2012) suggests that efficient parenting results in a decrease in using negative cognitive emotion regulation to challenge stressing situations among adolescents, which increases their health levels. On the other hand, inefficient

parenting styles lead to an increase of emotional problems in adolescents through increased use of negative cognitive emotion regulation strategies.

In the present study, in addition to the relationship between cognitive emotion regulation and family variables, its relationship with resilience was also important in selecting this variable as a mediator. Similarly, the findings of Bigdeli, Najafi and Rostami (2014) show a significant positive relationship between resilience and positive cognitive emotion self-regulation strategies. Also, based on Chatmn (2006), lacking negative emotion regulation strategies increases resiliency among adolescents. Cohen, et al (2009) also showed that positive emotions are predictors of increased resilience.

Overall, these researches show that effective parenting is likely to increase people’s resilience indirectly through increased use of positive strategies and reduced use of negative cognitive emotion regulation strategies in dealing with problems. It can therefore be expected that compared to those with lower skill in using cognitive emotion regulation strategies, individuals with adaptive skills in using these strategies can handle stressful situations more

effectively and efficiently, or in other words, they can be more resilient.

The statistical population of this study includes orphaned women sponsored by State Welfare Organization of Iran. Due to the nature of their difficult lives, these women have to take care of their children and be the only provider of economic needs of the family. The selection of this sample was based on the definition of the term “resilience” as a concept which refers to handling adverse living conditions (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

METHODOLOGY

The participants of the study consisted of 250 orphaned women who had gone to Shiraz Welfare Organization to receive counseling to other special assistance. Of these, 40 questionnaires were excluded from the analysis due to incomplete response, and the sample was reduced to 210.

Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire

This questionnaire was provided by Garenfski, Kraaij & Spinhoven (2001) and includes two categories of cognitive emotion regulation strategies: positive cognitive emotion regulation strategies (acceptance, the positive re-evaluation and planning, positive evaluation and a broader perspective of a problem) and negative cognitive emotion

regulation strategies (other-blame, self-blame, rumination and catastrophizing). Psychometric properties of the Persian version of this instrument was calculated and reported to be acceptable by Samani and Sadeghi (2011).

Resilience Scale

This study utilized the Persian version of Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (2003) to measure resilience. The scale has 25 items on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from completely false to always true) and it has a total score which measures the different dimensions of resilience.

Validity (factor analysis and convergent-divergent validity) and reliability (test-retest and Cronbach’s alpha) of the scale have been verified by its developers in different groups (normal, high risk) (Connor and Davidson, 2003). In his study, Hashemi (2012) employed this scale in a Persian sample in order to verify its reliability by Cronbach's alpha and test-retest method, and factor analysis to show the validity. He reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 and a reliability of 0.73 in the test-retest (with a two-week interval between tests). Factor analysis of the principal components indicated to the presence of a major factor in the scale.

Parenting Style Scale

Steinberg (1992, 2005) proposed this scale to measure parenting styles. He used factor analysis to determine the validity of the scale, which revealed three factors, namely, acceptance - parental involvement, acceptance - mental independence, and monitoring - parental restrictions (Steinberg et al., 1992; Steinberg, 2005).

The latest edition of Steinberg's Parenting Style Scale (2005) included three 9-item subscales. The first and second subscales contain 18 items in which the odd numbers show acceptance - parental involvement and the even numbers represent acceptance - mental independence. In a study to determine the reliability of Parenting Style Scale, Zakeri and Jokar (2010) reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88 for acceptance-involvement, 0.74 for acceptance- mental independence, and 0.80 for parents' restrictions.

Ethical Considerations

After the consent and cooperation of the participants who visited the Welfare center for assistance and consultations, the objectives and the nature of the study was briefly explained and the participants were assured that their personal identity remained anonymous and the collected data would be exclusively used for this scientific research and would remain confidential. It should be

mentioned that the participants filled out the instruments one at a time.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Correlation matrix of the variables

1. Acceptance-parental involvement, 2. Acceptance-mental independence of the parents, 3- Monitoring- parents' restrictions, 4. Total score of positive cognitive emotion regulation strategies, 5. Total score of negative cognitive emotion regulation strategies, 6. Resiliency (** significant at a level of $p < 0.001$ and * significant at $p < 0.01$)

Simultaneous sequential regression was used to answer the research questions in accordance with the steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). These steps are: 1. Regression of resilience on parenting styles (It should be noted that due to non-significance between resilience and parental acceptance-mental independence and monitoring- parents' restrictions, these variables were not used in the regression equations); 2. Multivariate regression of positive and negative cognitive emotion regulation on acceptance-involvement parenting styles; 3. Simultaneous regression of resilience on acceptance-involvement positive and negative cognitive emotion regulation; 4. Comparison of phase one and two; if the regression coefficients of

resilience on acceptance- involvement of phase two decreases compared to phase one, it indicates the mediating role of cognitive emotion regulation between acceptance- involvement of the parents on resilience. In the fourth phase, the acceptance- involvement parenting of phase one to phase

three were compared, and mediating role of cognitive emotion regulation between resilience and parenting styles was confirmed by the reduction of direct path of acceptance- involvement on resilience between phase three to phase one (from 0.25 to 0.13).

Table 2: Simple linear regression of resilience on parental acceptance-involvement (first step)

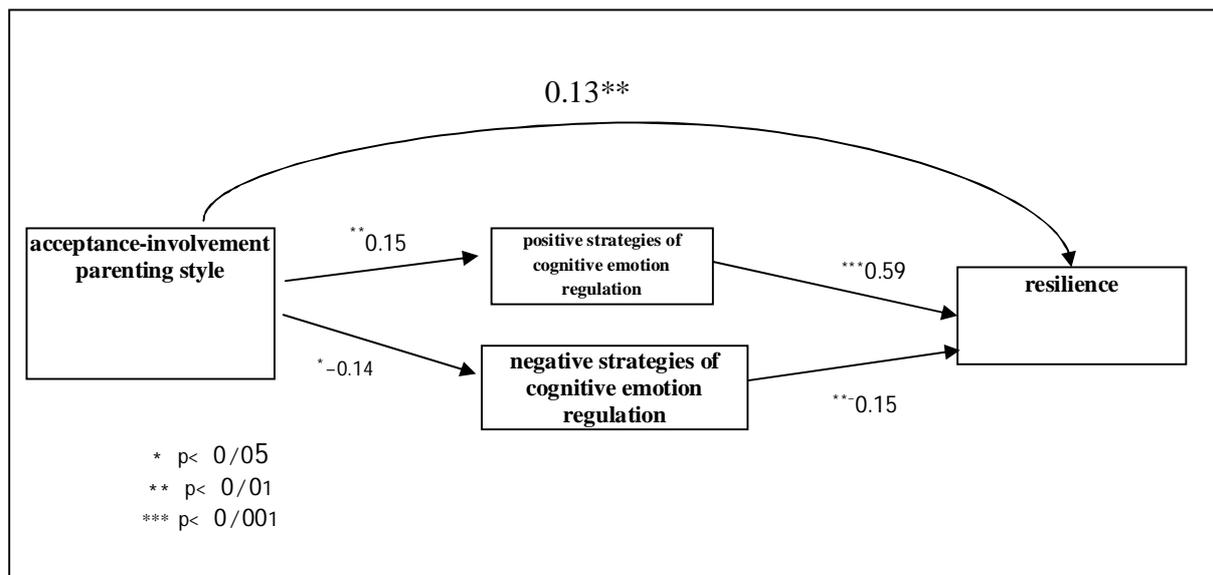
Variable	B	Beta	Sig.	R	R ²	F (significance level)
acceptance-involvement parenting style	0.10	0.24	0.001	0.24	0.06	12.52 (0.001)

Table 3: Multivariate regression of positive and negative cognitive emotion regulation on acceptance-involvement parenting style (second step)

parenting style	cognitive emotion regulation strategies	B	Beta	Sig.	R	R ²	F (significance level)
acceptance-involvement	positive strategies	0.26	0.15	0.03	0.15	0.02	4.64 (0.03)
	negative strategies	-0.17	-0.14	0.05	0.12	0.01	3.09 (0.8)

Table 4: Multiple regression of resilience on parental acceptance-involvement and positive and negative and cognitive emotion regulation strategies

Variables	B	Beta	Sig.	R	R ²	F (significance level)
acceptance-involvement parenting style	0.31	0.13	0.01	0.63	0.40	0.45 (0.001)
positive strategies of cognitive emotion regulation	0.78	0.59	0.001			
negative strategies of cognitive emotion regulation	-0.26	-0.15	0.006			



To calculate the indirect effect of acceptance-involvement on resilience with the positive and negative mediating role of cognitive emotion regulation, the coefficients of the path were multiplied. This value was 0.088 for the indirect effect of acceptance-involvement on resilience with positive cognitive emotion regulation strategies, and the value of acceptance-involvement on resilience with negative mediating strategies of cognitive emotional regulation was 0.021.

CONCLUSION

In order to determine the factors concerning the family characteristics and resilience among children, the present study examined the mediating role of cognitive emotion regulation strategies between parenting styles and resilience. The findings of the study suggest that parenting styles can be both a direct predictor and an indirect predictor of resilience by the mediating role of cognitive emotion regulation. More precisely, the findings confirm that acceptance-involvement parenting style was associated with increased use of positive strategies, which in turn is associated with increased resilience; regarding the negative strategies of emotional regulation, there was a negative correlation between the variables. That is, acceptance-involvement was associated with reduced use of negative strategies leading to

reduced resilience in adverse circumstances. A more detailed discussion of the findings will follow.

The First phase of the analysis shows that parental acceptance-involvement is a direct and significant predictor of resilience, however, acceptance-emotional independence and monitoring-parents' restrictions could not significantly predict resilience.

In line with the findings of Bugental & Cruzcosa (1989), these results suggest that the use of proper parenting styles are associated with child health, and warm and welcoming parenting style, as well as demanding and controlling styles provide a basis for developing resilience. Many researchers believe that the emotional atmosphere of the family, especially when they meet their children's approval of their parent, and the parents' accountability toward their children, strongly increase children's self-esteem (Garmzy, 1983; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman & Hemphill, 1991), which in turn, positively correlates with resilience.

The second stage of the analysis of the findings suggests that acceptance - involvement parenting style is able to predict positive and negative cognitive emotion regulation strategies. Acceptance-

involvement is based on one's perception of parents' attention and accountability. These parents consider their children's ideas and communicate widely with them. Psychoanalysis theorists believe that warm and friendly relationship among children and parents fosters the children's emotional development and helps children control their own emotions and feelings better. Also, expressing affection to children has long-term effects on various aspects of child behavior such as emotional experience, social skills and dealing with problems (Garner, 1994).

To further confirm the results of the present study, it should be mentioned that most psychologists unanimously agree that a family context has a significant effect on social and emotional adjustment of children and adolescents (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers, Robinson, (2007) state that the effects of family context on the development of emotion regulation has three major results: first, children develop emotion regulation through observation (e.g., patterning and social factors); second, exercising parenting and special behaviors (such as emotional guidance and reactions) influence the development of emotion regulation; and finally, emotion regulation is affected

through emotional atmosphere of the family (e.g., attachment, parenting style, and marital relations).

In their model, Morris et al. (2002) state that in addition to these three factors, parental characteristics (for example, mental health and adaptation) and child characteristics (such as depression, anger, fear, and other reactions) also affect the cognitive emotional regulation (Morris et al., 2007; 2002; Bell, Calkins, 2000; Silk, Shaw, Forbes, Lane, Kovacs, 2006). Parental attention and responsiveness, considering the children's opinions, broad communication with them, or in other words, employing acceptance-involvement parenting styles in the upbringing of children leads to pleasant and positive thoughts instead of stressful and destructive thoughts; positive emotional control rather than devastating thoughts; These positive thoughts also provide active thinking about dealing with bad experiences in life, and makes children realize the fact that one can consider good things that can be done in one's life, and change the situation effectively for the better.

The findings of the third phase of the study reveal a relationship among resilience, positive and negative cognitive emotion regulation strategies and parenting styles, so that 40% of the variance in subjects'

resilience can be explained through parenting styles and cognitive emotion regulation. One of the important points in the analysis of the findings of the third phase is that the regression coefficient of parenting styles decreased, which is due to introducing the emotional regression strategies to the extrinsic variables. This indicates that cognitive emotion regulation strategies have a relative mediating role in the relationship between acceptance-involvement parenting style and resilience.

The presence of such mediating role suggests that the proper method of parenting enables a child to control his emotions and will provide a model of emotion regulation. In fact, growing up in a supportive and welcoming atmosphere prepares the children to first use positive strategies cognitively to regulate their emotions when experiencing menacing and stressful situations, and reduces the likelihood of using negative strategies such as self-blame, others-blame, rumination and catastrophizing. Using positive strategies and avoiding negative ones helps to control emotions in such menacing situations and paves the way for showing resilient behaviors.

In fact, it seems that using positive emotional regulation strategies, such as considering the goals leading to negative events, provides a

positive attitude to self-development; comparing negative events with other events, and thinking about the fact that any stressful catastrophe can be used as a bridge toward reinforcement, and considering the fact that one's negative experiences may be very small and unimportant compared to the catastrophes experienced by others, all result in experiencing more positive emotions. Correspondingly, a reduction in the possibility of using negative strategies –such as self-blame, others-blame, rumination and catastrophizing- makes individuals experience less negative emotions, which is a basis for restoration and successful adaptation despite adverse conditions.

All in all, the findings suggest that the more parents employ appropriate and efficient parenting styles, the possibility of using positive cognitive emotion regulation strategies increases, and the likelihood of employing negative strategies decreases. The findings also point that the relationship between parenting styles and resilience is not simple and linear; other variables such as cognitive emotion regulation play an important mediating role.

The target population (orphaned women) and research type (correlation) limits the generalization of the results, conclusions are the causal relations. Illiteracy or low literacy

of the participants of the study also challenges accuracy of the results.

The main suggestion for further studies of the proposed model is expanding the sample and testing other intrinsic variables of the model. For example, in this study, the main emphasis was on resiliency index; however, in future studies, researchers can examine the effects of other variables such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, and self-efficacy of this sample or other samples. Researchers who are interested in this field can also study other family-related variables in the proposed model, such as family interrelationship, flexibility, the type of relationship among family members, communication patterns in families, and attachment. It is worth mentioning that testing other mediating variables in this model can also be of great interest to some scholars. Such studies can provide data for deeper and more accurate knowledge of different functions and interactions among family members, and therefore present educational, therapeutic and consulting solutions, which can effectively be used by assistants and counselors of the welfare organizations.

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