

## MEDIATING EFFECT OF ANXIETY TO PERFORM SOCIAL SKILL ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTER-PARENTAL CONFLICT AND ADOLESCENTS' SELF-EFFICACY



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### Abstract

Despite of importance of self-efficacy in psychological and social well being among adolescent, still numbers of student suffers of low self-efficacy and consequently low academic performance. Therefore, this is important to examine what factors associate with self-efficacy among adolescent. This study aims to determine the relationships between inter-parental conflict, anxiety to perform social skill and self-efficacy among late adolescent students in Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, Iran. This quantitative study used a correlation research design. Participants of this study were 374 female and male collage students aged between 17-19 years old. Participants were identified by probability proportional for size sampling. Self- administered questionnaire were used to collect data. Instruments consist of General Self-Efficacy Scale, The Children's Perception of Inter-parental Conflict Scale, Scale for Interpersonal Behaviour. All the instruments were highly reliable. Descriptive, bi-variate and multivariate statistics were used in data analysis. Pearson's correlation analysis showed that perception of inter-parental conflicts and anxiety to perform social skill were negatively related to adolescent's self-efficacy ( $p < 0.05$ ). The result of study also shows that anxiety to performance of social skill partially mediates the relationships between inter-parental conflicts with self- efficacy among respondents. The result of the present study highlighted the importance of maternal and paternal factors in enhancing self-efficacy among late adolescent students. The nature of anxiety to perform social skill as a mediator implied that self-efficacy of adolescents can be improved if parent-adolescent relationships be improved and adolescent do not experience insecurity and anxiety. High level of warmth parental attachment may have benefit for adolescent's self-efficacy.

*Keywords:* Anxiety, Inter-parental conflict, self-efficacy, adolescent

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doi: 10.15405/ejsbs.168



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## **1. Introduction**

Self-efficacy beliefs illuminate how people think, behave and feel (Bandura, 1994). In addition, it has impact on various health outcomes (Bandura, 1997). During adolescence self-awareness of ability is helpful to make a plan and pursue till achieve the goals (Choi, 2003; Pajares & Schunk, 2002). On the other hands, adolescents with low self-efficacy have weak ambitions and low commitment to the goals they choose to follow (Langendorfer et al., 2006), hesitate about their abilities, and focus on obstacles, personal incompetence and negative results (Bandura, 1986). According to Scott & Dearing (2012) one's hesitate of capability to contact with others, related to negative social relationships and that may cause depression and anxiety to perform social skills. During late adolescence, individuals are preparing for the life choices and responsibilities they will assume during their adult lives. Family is viewed as an initial source of self-efficacy and known as a primary source for their children and adolescent's well-being (Sorkhabi, 2005).

## **2. Research Questions**

Inter-parental conflict is related to parents' withdrawal and negative response of their children needs and reduced parental physical and psychological availability (Cummings & Davies, 1994). Parental conflict has possibilities to infer with child and adolescence development such as conflict between parents may provide a constant pressure that damages modify and erode children's self- efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Cui et al., 2005; Cummings & Davies, 1994; Fosco & Grych 2008; Grych et al., 1992). In social modeling, usually adolescent imitate their parents' behavior to make a pattern of conflictive behavior (Bandura, 1997; Pryor & Pattison, 2007). This pattern affects on late adolescents quality of their social relationships and psychological well-being (Van Doorn et al., 2007). Academic adjustment is related to psychological and social wellbeing among students. Studies have shown low self-efficacy contribute to low academic performance. Therefore, this is important.

## **3. Research Questions**

What factors associate with self-efficacy among late adolescents?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to determine the relationships between inter-parental conflict, anxiety to perform social skill and self-efficacy among late adolescent students in Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, Iran.

## 5. Research Methods

A total of 374, freshman college students were selected randomly from Hamadan University of Medicine and Health Science in Iran. The backward-forward translation method was used to trans- cultural adaptation of study instrument. First, the instruments translated from English into Persian language. Second, two separate local professional translator back- translated instruments from Persian to English. The similarity of meaning and concepts of these two versions of translation were approved by two university's lecturer advisor in Hamadan University of Medicine and Health Science in Iran. The present study has been used the measurements which consisted of the respondents 'demographic background, the Scale for Interpersonal Behavior (SIB) and General Self-efficacy Scale (GSE). Participants were inquired to fulfill a demographic form about their age, gender, ethnicity, level of education, child number, birth order, and student living status moreover, parent's age, education, employment, marriage status and family monthly income.

### 5.1. *The Scale for Interpersonal Behavior (SIB)*

The adolescents' anxiety to performance of social skills was evaluated by The Scale for Interpersonal Behavior (Arrindell et al., 1984). This scale consists of 50 items and assess adolescent' anxiety and frequency to performing of social skills. In current study 46 items ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ) were used to measure anxiety to performance of social skills and items were reverse scored. This scale comprises of four subscales namely expression of negative feelings with 15 items ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ), expression of own limitation or insecurity 14 items ( $\alpha = 0.86$ ), initiating assertiveness consists of 9 items ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ), and positive feeling with 8 items ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ). Items are specified on a 5-point scale varying from 1 (not at all anxious) to 5 (extremely anxious). Higher scores represent of more adaptive of social skills.

### 5.2. *General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)*

The General Self-Efficacy Scale GSE was assessed adolescent's self-efficacy (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) this measure consists of 10 items ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ) and assess a general sense of self- efficacy to predict manage and adjust with daily disturbing situation. This is a 4-point likert type scale from 1 {not true at all of me} to 4 {very true}. High scores on the general self-efficacy shows respondent with moderately high sense of self-efficacy.

Before stating actual data collection, a pilot study was done among 30 students for assessing and performing necessary modification. These students were not included in the study samples. The SPSS version 19 was utilized for data analysis. The bi-variate correlation and Multiple linear Regression (MLR) Analysis were used to examine the relations between variables. The significant level was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

## 6. Findings

There were 69.5% female and 30.5% male. Mean age of respondents was 18.5±6.7 year. The majority of participant’s biological parents, 97.9 recognized as being married. The parents’ age ranged from 37 to 67 years (mothers’ age mean= 45.67, SD= 6.27; fathers’ age mean=50.66, SD=7.28). In term of parents’ education, the level of father’s education was relatively higher than mother’s education. About one third of mothers had tertiary education whereas more than half of fathers had tertiary education. 5.3% of participants reported that mothers obtained a post-graduate degree from university, 32% had Bachelor degree, and 45% completed high school. Meanwhile, 43% of fathers had Bachelor degree, 15% obtained a post-graduate degree from university and 32% completed high school. Parents’ occupation Most of participants’ mothers were housewives (62%) in comparison with 50% of fathers were self-employed, followed by 47.1% government employed.

Table 1 shows that there was a direct significant effect of Inter-parental conflicts on adolescents’ self efficacy (B=-.066, SE=.015, t=-4.412 p<.05) and anxiety to perform social skill (B=.528, SE=.097, t=5.429, p<.05). The relationship between anxiety to perform social skill (mediator) and self efficacy was also significant (B=-.024, SE=.008, t=-3.113, p<.05). The results of multiple regression analysis at the forth step of the multiple regression analysis support the mediation model. The relationship between parental conflict and self efficacy after control for anxiety to perform social skill was reduced (B=-.058, SE=.015, t=-3.712, p<.05).

The amount of mediation was determined by subtracting the regression coefficient of parental conflict to adolescents’ self efficacy in the forth regression (when anxiety to perform social skill controlled) from the regression coefficient of parental conflict to adolescents’ self efficacy in first regression (when anxiety to perform social skill was not controlled). The reduction was -0.066 - (- 0.058)= -0.08.

**Table 1.** Relationship between Inter-parental conflict and adolescent Self-efficacy mediated by Anxiety to perform social skill

Step	IV	DV	B	SE	Beta	t
1	Inter-parental conflict	Self efficacy	-.066**	.015	-.262	-4.412
2	Inter-parental conflict	Anxiety to perform social skill	.528**	.097	.271	5.429
3	Anxiety to perform social skill	Self efficacy	-.024**	.008	-.159	-3.113
4	Inter-parental conflict	Self efficacy	-.058**	.015	-.194	-3.712
		Anxiety to perform social skill	-.016*	.008	-.107	-2.042

Note: B: Unstandardized coefficient, Beta: Standardized coefficient

\*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.01

Sobel test (Baron & Kenny, 1986) was used to check the significance of the indirect effect of parental conflict on self efficacy via anxiety to perform social skill. The result of Sobel test confirmed anxiety to perform social skill significantly mediates the influence of parental conflict to adolescents' self efficacy. (Sobel test:  $a=.528$ ,  $b=-.024$ ,  $Sa=.097$ ,  $Sb=.008$ ,  $z=-2.627$ ,  $SE=0.004$ ,  $p=.008$ . Therefore, the hypothesis is supported).

## **7. Conclusions**

The findings of current study indicate that adolescents with higher inter-parental conflicts have experienced more anxiety to perform social skills and less self efficacy. Due to the multiple social transitions that characterize late adolescence, the influence of inter-parental conflict on emotional and socio-cognitive reactions may be more evident during this life stage (David & Murphy, 2004). Steinberg (1998) found late adolescence to be one of the loneliest periods of the life span, because of the reform of peer relationships and moving to new environments, such as college. It is suggesting that need to focus more attention on late adolescents and young adults. Previous research also suggests that young adults exposed to their parents' interpersonal dysfunction may experience greater anxiety about and avoidance of participating in relationships of their own (Amato, 2000; Riggio, 2004). As a result, they have more difficulty forming stable, satisfying relationships that might be affected on their self efficacy.

Children who observe others obtain desired outcomes as a result of a specific action are likely to imitate the action. If their behavior results in a desired outcome, children are more likely to show it again later. Children's sense of efficacy in the situation will also increase if they are successful in bringing about the desired outcome (Bandura, 1977a). This feedback from the environment therefore influences children's expectancies and beliefs which, in turn, influence future behavior and motivation to exhibit certain behaviors. However, if their behavior brings about undesired outcomes, they are less likely to exhibit the behavior again and their sense of efficacy will decrease due to perceived failure in these situations. In this sense, a reciprocal system is put in place and perceived self-efficacy obtains a causal role in determining behavior (Bandura, 1997; Bandura, et al., 2001).

If socially anxious children are doing poorly in stressful social situations they are more likely to receive negative feedback from the environment on their performance. Since people rely mostly on the environment to inform them if their behavior has been successful (Bandura, 1997), socially anxious children are expected to experience failure if they receive negative or little positive feedback from others. This would, in turn, lead them to have less self-efficacy and expect worse outcomes when they are faced with a similar situation again.

As children begin to interact with peers, this process starts to unfold and they develop beliefs about their ability to bring about certain outcomes in social interactions. Children may experience different levels of anxiety when interacting with others and the anxiety may affect their performance in the situation. Although the developmental trajectory of social anxiety has not yet been fully determined, various findings have indicated that certain temperamental characteristics, such as behavioral inhibition, may make some children more susceptible to experience anxiety in social situations (Ollendick & Hirshfeld-Becker, 2002). The children who do experience anxiety may therefore be less successful at bringing about desired outcomes due to performance inhibition. If they are not successful, they will receive little positive feedback, or even negative feedback, from the environment. Such outcomes will reduce the chances of children exposing themselves to similar social situations in the future. The avoidance will then lead to increased anxiety and even less chance of succeeding in social interactions, which will decrease their self-efficacy even further. A reciprocal cycle is therefore put in place, where social anxiety leads to avoidance of social situations and decreased self-efficacy and outcome expectancy.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author(s) declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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