

Evaluation of Structural Model for Explaining Behavioral and Emotional Disorders in Children Who are Abused Based on Cognitive Flexibility and Adverse Childhood Experiences of Parents Mediated by Personal Self-Concept

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Introduction

In recent decades, one of the topics related to child psychopathology has been the issue of violence against children. Child abuse and or child maltreatment includes all forms of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse (psychologic abuse), and neglect or commercial exploitation of the child, especially by the child's parents or carers which result in actual or potential harm to the health, survival, development or dignity of the child. Therefore, this study was conducted on structural equation modeling (SEM) for predicting behavioral-emotional disorders in children victims of domestic violence based on cognitive flexibility and adverse childhood experiences of parents and with the mediating role of children's self-concept.

Method

This study was a descriptive-correlational study with a path analysis method. 300 children victims of domestic violence referred to the Shahid and Isargar counseling clinic in Khorramabad were selected by available sampling method and completed the Cognitive Flexibility Questionnaire of Dennis and Ventral (2010), Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form (CTQ-SF) of Bernstein et al. (2003), Child Symptoms Questionnaire of Gado and Sprafkin (1999-1994) and the Self-concept Questionnaire of Pierce-Harris (1969). Smart-PLS version 3 software was used for structural equation modeling (SEM) based on variance using the path analysis method and partial least squares.

Results

The results of structural equation modeling (SEM), showed that 81.1% of

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the variance changes of behavioral and emotional disorders in children can be predicted by research variables. The results of path analysis showed that adverse childhood experiences of parents are inversely related to parents' cognitive flexibility and have a significant direct relationship with behavioral and emotional problems of children. Also, the results indicate the indirect effect of adverse childhood experiences and cognitive flexibility of parent's on children's behavioral and emotional disorders with the mediating role of children's self-concept, and it was a direct effect of personal self-concept on children's behavioral and emotional disorders. Assessing the quality of the structural model in this study concerning RMSE, SRMR, d-ULS, chi-square, and NFI showed that the proposed model of the present study has a good fit and acceptable desirability.

Discussion

These results highlighted the importance of the cognitive flexibility and adverse childhood experiences of parents on behavioral and emotional disorders of children victims of domestic violence and the protective role of personal self-concept against the adverse effects of traumatic developmental experiences for mental health professionals especially family and community psychologists and social workers who work with the abuser's families and victims of domestic violence.

Keywords: Cognitive flexibility, Adverse childhood experiences, Behavioral-emotional disorders, Self-concept

Author Contributions: Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of data, data analysis, structuring and writing of this article was done individually by the author.

Acknowledgments: The author thanks all dear children and parents who have helped us in this research.

Conflicts of interest: The author declares there is no conflict of interest in this article.

Funding: This article did not sponsor by any institution and all costs have been borne by the author.
