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Orginal Article

The Relationship between Family Communication Patterns and Psychological Resilience with the Mediation of Primary Maladaptive Schemas and Gender Roles

Sima Molaie[*]
Maryam Kouroshnia[**]
Maryam Zarnaghash[***]

Abstract

The present study aimed to explore the role of family communication patterns, maladaptive schemas, and gender roles in resilience through a comprehensive causal model. Although previous studies have examined these variables separately, sparse research has explored their concurrent relationships within an integrated framework. Thus, this study attempted to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying resilience by considering both internal and external influencing factors. The study utilized a correlational design using causal modeling. The statistical population consisted of students from Shiraz and Kerman universities. Based on Kline's (2015) recommendation on sample size in structural equation modeling, 400 students were selected through a multistage cluster random sampling method. Data were collected through online questionnaires distributed virtually along the COVID-19 outbreak. Family communication patterns were considered external variables, while maladaptive schemas and gender roles were tested as internal variables affecting resilience. The findings indicated that family communication patterns significantly influenced resilience both directly and indirectly through maladaptive schemas and gender roles. Specifically, maladaptive schemas mediated the relationship between communication patterns and resilience. Further, male and female gender roles also played significant mediating roles in explaining resilience. The results further demonstrated that ineffective family communication patterns contribute to the formation of maladaptive schemas and dysfunctional gender role orientations, ultimately reducing individuals' ability to cope effectively with stressful situations. Overall, the findings highlight the important role of family interactions, cognitive structures, and gender-related psychological factors in shaping resilience. The study provides an integrated framework for understanding resilience and offers useful implications for counseling, psychotherapy, as well as preventive interventions aimed at enhancing psychological well-being and adaptive functioning among university students.

Keywords: Communication patterns, Gender roles, Incompatible schemas, Resilience.

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* Ph.D. Student, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht, Iran. *Corresponding Author:* molaiesima1@gmail.com
** Assistant Professor, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht, Iran.
*** Assistant Professor, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht, Iran.

Extended Abstract

Introduction

Previous studies have considered and examined each of the variables separately as underlying factors affecting resilience. Nevertheless, no study was found that identified the underlying factors of resilience within a comprehensive model and provided an integrated perspective on resilience. Thus, the present study attempted to explore the internal and external factors affecting resilience within a causal model. Internal factors included maladaptive schemas and gender roles, whereas external factors included family communication patterns. In the proposed model, family communication patterns were assumed to first influence maladaptive schemas, which would in turn affect the formation of gender roles. Ultimately, these variables lead individuals to respond differently in terms of resilience when confronting problems and stressful situations. Resilience is considered one of the most important psychological constructs associated with successful adaptation to stressful life events and adverse conditions. Those with higher levels of resilience are generally more capable of regulating emotions, maintaining psychological well-being, and effectively coping with environmental challenges. In recent decades, researchers have increasingly focused on identifying the factors that contribute to the development of resilience. Nevertheless, many studies have examined these variables independently and have rarely inspected the interaction between cognitive, familial, and sociocultural dimensions within an integrated framework. Accordingly, understanding the concurrent contribution of internal and external variables to resilience may provide a more comprehensive explanation of individuals' adaptive functioning in stressful situations. Family communication patterns play a significant role in shaping individuals' emotional and cognitive development. Healthy communication within the family environment may provide emotional security, encourage adaptive coping strategies, and lower the likelihood of dysfunctional cognitive structures. Conversely, ineffective family communication patterns may contribute to the development of early maladaptive schemas, negatively influencing individuals' perceptions of themselves and others. These schemas can also affect the formation of gender roles and expectations, which are strongly linked to behavioral and emotional responses to stress. In this regard, gender roles are not merely social expectations, but psychological frameworks that affect coping styles, emotional expression, and interpersonal functioning. Hence, individuals with rigid or maladaptive gender role orientations may exhibit lower flexibility in coping with life stressors and reduced resilience.

Method

The present study was correlational in nature and employed a causal

modeling design. The statistical population consisted of students from Shiraz and Kerman universities. The sample size was determined based on the number of pathways in the model according to Kline (2015), who suggested considering 20 participants for each pathway. Accordingly, a total of 380 participants were required; nevertheless, considering possible missing and outlier data, 400 participants were recruited. A multistage cluster random sampling method was employed to select the participants. Initially, five faculties were selected from Shiraz and Kerman universities. Next, four departments were randomly selected from each faculty, followed by random selection of two classes from each department.

All students in the selected classes participated in the study. Owing to the COVID-19 outbreak, questionnaire links were distributed virtually to students through course instructors. Note that 12 outlier cases were identified and excluded along data analysis.

Results

The findings revealed that congruence significantly affected resilience through maladaptive schemas ($\beta = -0.18$, $p = 0.007$). Further, communication influenced resilience through the male gender role ($\beta = 0.11$, $p = 0.01$). Also, communication affected resilience through the female gender role significantly ($\beta = 0.13$, $p = 0.005$). The results also demonstrated that maladaptive schemas acted as the first mediator and the female gender role served as the second mediator in the relationship between communication and resilience ($\beta = 0.10$, $p = 0.01$). Finally, maladaptive schemas served as the first mediator and the female gender role as the second mediator in the relationship between congruence and resilience.

Discussion

In summary, family communication patterns influence the formation of children's primary schemas. When these communication patterns are ineffective, maladaptive schemas may develop across different dimensions and set the ground for the formation of gender roles. The development of maladaptive schemas, distorted interpretations of the environment, and disruptions in gender roles can lead to a decline in psychological functioning and ultimately diminish resilience. As such, in stressful situations of daily life, individuals may not possess the necessary ability to cope effectively with and resolve problems.

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