



Effect of Psychological Well-Being and Mental Health on the Student's Educational Achievement with the Mediating Role of Resiliency

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ABSTRACT

One of the concerns of parents and education today is students' educational achievement since it is believed that success in education can partially predict individual success in the future. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the effect of psychological well-being and mental health on high school students' educational achievement with the mediating role of resilience. The study population consisted of all high school students in Urmia city in 2015-2016 school year. The samples included 320 individuals who were selected using convenient random sampling method. Four questionnaires were employed for data collection, including Reef's psychological well-being questionnaire (1980), general health questionnaire -28, connor-davidson's resilience questionnaire (2003) and the students' achievement scores. The results indicated the fitness of conceptual model and its approval for public high school students in Urmia city. The direct effect of psychological well-being variable on resiliency (0.68) considering the t-value ($t = 6.42$) at the confidence level of 0.01 is significant. The direct effect of mental health on resiliency (0.69) considering the t-value ($t = 7.12$) at the confidence level of 0.00 is significant. The direct effect of resiliency on the educational achievement (0.54) and considering the t-value ($t = 5.27$) at the confidence level of 0.02 is significant. The indirect effect of psychological well-being on educational achievement with the value of 0.29 and the indirect effect of mental health on educational achievement with the value of 0.37 are significant. It is recommended that the findings of this study, which are indicative of paying more attention to meet the students' mental health in many ways than ever before, be used to identify the students at risk for clinical evaluation and also more comprehensive and better intervention programs be designed and implemented to decrease students' psychological and educational achievement problems.

Keywords: Psychological Well-being, Mental Health, Resilience, Educational Achievement, Students

JEL Classifications: I12, I2

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of mental health, in fact, is an aspect of the general concept of health. The specialists of World Health Organization define mental health as: "Mental health is the ability to communicate with others harmoniously, reforming the individual and the social environment, and resolving the personal conflicts and desires reasonably, fairly and appropriately" (Soleymani and Habibi, 2014). In fact, mental health is a term used to describe a special purpose for society. Based on its own criteria, every culture attempts to provide mental health for the individuals (both children and adults) of its society. In fact the goal of any society is to create conditions that will ensure the health of community members (Milanyfar, 2003). In recent years, a team of researchers in the

field of mental health inspired by positive psychology have chosen different theoretical and research approaches for studying and explaining this concept. They have considered mental health as an equivalent of positive psychological function and conceptualized it in the form of so-called "psychological well-being". This group does not consider 'not having a disease' enough for a sense of healthiness, but believe that having a sense of satisfaction with life, adequate development, efficient and effective interaction with the world and positive progress are characteristics of a healthy person (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Karademas, 2007). The psychological well-being often refers to the mental well-being, but it may also be different. Welfare or well-being is defined in terms of quantity and quality of components in which people find their life enjoyable. In other words, how people evaluate their lives is

concerned with well-being (Diener, 2000; Ashkani and Heydare, 2015; Narimany et al., 2014). Ryff and Singer (1998) considers psychological well-being as an individual's efforts to realize his potential capabilities. Based on Reef's model, psychological well-being is composed of six factors of self-acceptance (having a positive attitude towards themselves), positive relationship with others (warm and friendly relations with others and the ability to empathize), autonomy (independence and ability to withstand social pressures), purposeful life (having a purpose in life and giving meaning to it), personal growth (a feeling of continuous development), and the dominance on environment (ability to manage the environment) (Ryff, 1989; Ryff and Keys, 1995). Another psychological construct that is likely associated with psychological well-being is resiliency. Resiliency is the individual's family and community strength to cope with and bounce of inconsistent positions or the stresses of life that are not immediately effective, but also leads to an increased ability to cope with adversity and hardship in the future (Mikaely et al., 2012). According to Luthar (2003), resiliency is a dynamic evolutionary process that reflects the positive adaptation despite the hardships of life. According to Connor and Davidson (2003), resiliency is a multi-dimensional characteristic and as a person is exposed to different life situations he changes based on various attributes such as age, time, gender and cultural roots and they believe that resiliency is a person's ability to maintain his bio-psychological balance in dangerous conditions. Resilient individuals are aware and alert on the situation; they know their feelings and emotions; therefore they are aware of the cause of these feelings and emotions and manage their lifestyle in healthy ways. Findings of various researches have shown that resiliency promotes mental health (Beasley et al., 2003; Lazarus, 2004; Mikaely et al., 2012). In separate studies Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) and Friberg et al. (2006) showed that people with high resiliency maintain their mental health in stressful conditions and traumatic situations and they retain psychological adaptation. In addition, in their study of the relationship between self-resilient psychological hardiness and mental health Rahimianboger and Asgarnejadfarid (2008) showed that resiliency and psychological hardiness are potentially the significant predictors of mental health. In their study, Steensma, et al. (2007) concluded that resilience training has led to the use of the effective cope-with strategies such as active strategies, seeking social support, self-encouragement and positive thoughts and reduced useless cope-with strategies such as depression reactions, passive and avoidant problem-solving strategy. In other studies, Steinhardt, M. & Dolbier, C. (2008) also found that resilience enhancement program would lead to the enhancement of protective factors such as positive emotions, self-confidence and self-leadership, and reducing negative emotions, stress and depression.

One of the concerns of parents and education today is students' educational achievement since it is believed that success in education can partially predict individual success in the future. Therefore, educational achievement and the factors influencing it, as one of the pivotal variables in education, have always been of interest to researchers and psychologists (Behzadpour, et al., 2013). Educational achievement is defined as the success of a student in passing the lessons and demonstrating the proper

functioning in the society and his life based on what he has learned (Behnody, 2002). One of the factors that can affect students' educational success and failure is the rate of high-risk behavior incidence among them. Today, the high-risk behavior refers to behaviors that put the health and lives of adolescents, youth and other community members at risk (Maher, 2004). The results of several studies show that students who experience more high-risk behaviors, especially using drugs, are more likely at risk of being dropped out of school, getting lower marks in school or escaping from school (Kodjo, et al., 2004; Bachanas et al., 2002). Despite increasing efforts for the prevention and sometimes the treatment, we continue to see growing statistic on the growth in this risky behavior (Behzadpour, et al., 2013). In the study of all aspects of educational achievement researchers have addressed the intrapersonal (psychological) and environmental factors that predict educational achievement (Gay and Valerian, 1997). One of the most important intrapersonal factors, which have been the subject of several studies, is the motivation of progress (Omidvar et al., 2014). Educational motivation is an academic engagement; in other words, a cognitive, emotional and behavioral investment for development in education based on institutional goals (Hafezi, 2002). The theory of achievement motivation is based on Hoop, Sears, McClelland and Atkinson's earlier research. This theory focuses on the goal in the students' success and failure (Glaver and Broning, 2001). The construct of achievement motivation in school refers to behaviors that are related to learning and development (Hausent, 1992). Hausen (1994) confines achievement motivation more to that dimension of motivation that is called intrinsic motivation of the student. Intrinsic motivation is a psychological state that is attained when human beings consider themselves to have sufficiency and self-control. Kormen (1997) considers achievement motivation as the desire to outshine in a particular manner that has become a criterion. In other words, a desire or interest in the overall success or success in a field of activity is called achievement motivation (Gage and Berliner, 1992). Many teachers classify good students' features in characteristics such as hard work, cooperation and interest and some others confine these features to the motivation of students (Spalding, 1992). One of the factors associated with academic achievement is educational self-perception. Self-perception is the main construct in psychological and educational research and its relationship with educational achievement is still one of the hot research issues (Basharpour et al., 2015). Self-perception is defined as one's perceptions in different levels of characteristics or dimensions. Previous studies considered it as a general construct - without any distinct dimensions (Rosenberg, 1965). But others have emphasized on the multi-dimensionality of this construct (Martin, A.J., Marsh, H.W. (2006). According to Basharpour (2015), there is a positive relationship between self-perception and educational achievement (as cited in Basharpour et al., 2015). In a meta-analysis on the relationship between self-perception and educational achievement Huang (2011) observed that high self-perception was associated with high educational achievement and vice versa. Among the factors that could affect students achievement and motivation is mental health (Omidvar et al., 2014). World Health Organization experts have defined mental health as the ability to communicate harmoniously and in concert with others, to modify the personal and social environments and to solve the personal conflicts and

desires reasonably, fairly and appropriately. They also believe that mental health is not simply the absence of mental illness but it is the ability to react flexibly and significantly to a variety of life experiences (Salehi, et al., 2007). Due to the main concerns to other health priorities, including epidemic and infectious diseases or chronic diseases, less attention has been paid to the psychological dimension of health in many countries, especially the third world countries. However, the figures published about the prevalence of mental disorders in different countries indicate that mental health is in the critical situation (Omidvar et al., 2014). Therefore, with respect to the abovementioned issues this study aims to address the following assumptions: (1) Psychological well-being has a direct effect on resiliency. (2) Mental health has a direct effect on resiliency. (3) Resiliency has a direct effect on educational achievement. (4) Psychological well-being has an indirect effect on educational achievement through mediating role of resiliency. (5) Mental health has an indirect effect on educational achievement through mediating role of resiliency.

2. METHODOLOGY

In terms of its objectives the present study is of an applied research type, which, first, makes the level of components of the variables to be measured in the school environment. In terms of its nature and methodology this study is of a descriptive-correlational type. In this study the relationship between mental health and psychological well-being and their impact on resiliency and educational achievement is measured. The study population consisted of all high school students in Urmia city in 2015-2016 school year. The samples included 320 individuals who were selected using convenient random sampling method. The data were collected using field study and a combination of 4 closed-answer questionnaires. The scales in all parts of the model are based on the likert scale.

Psychological well-being scale: This scale was designed by Reef in 1980. Psychological well-being scale consists of 54 items and 6 subscales, including self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, purposeful life, personal growth and dominance on the environment. The validity and reliability of the scales of psychological well-being have been reported as 'proper' in several studies. Dierendonck (2005) reported the internal consistency of subscales as 'appropriate' and calculated their Cronbach's alpha as 0.77 - 0.90. Ryff, C. D. & Singer, B. (1998) reported the internal consistency of psychological well-being scales as 0.82 - 0.90. In another study Reef reported the internal consistency coefficient of the scales as 0.86 - 0.93. In this study, the internal consistency of psychological well-being scales was also calculated as 0.73 - 0.89. The validity of the persian version of the questionnaire was report as 'proper' in the study conducted by Bayane et al. (2008). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.84 - 0.93.

2.1. General Health Questionnaire (GHQ)

(GHQ-28) is the most recognized screening test that has a huge impact on the progress of research in psychiatry. The questionnaire consisted of 28 items and is designed in 4 distinct components that include physical signs, anxiety symptoms, social dysfunction

and symptoms of depression. The questionnaire is in the 4-option likert scale. Montazeri et al. (2002) reported the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha coefficient as 0.87. In the present study, the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated as 0.85 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

2.2. Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale

Connor-Davidson resiliency scale (2003) is a 25-item tool that measures the construct of resiliency on the likert scale from 0 to 4. The results of initial study on the psychometric properties of the scale have confirmed its validity and reliability (Connor and Davidson, 2003). Internal consistency, test-retest reliability and convergent and divergent validity of the scale have been reported as 'appropriate'. Reliability and validity of the Persian version of resiliency scale was examined and confirmed in pilot studies for normal subjects and patients (Besharat, 2006). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.86 that confirmed the reliability of the questionnaire at an acceptable level. The validity of this construct has been confirmed by Besharat (2006) in Iran. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was equal to 0.83.

2.3. Educational Achievement Scale

The educational achievement of students in this study was measured by the students' self-report average score.

Since each of the questionnaires used in this research have been employed by various researchers, and that according to the researchers, the constituent items of the tools are exactly measuring the variables of interest in research, then the validity of the tools can be confirmed.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this study, path analysis has been employed to examine the direct and indirect effects of psychological well-being and mental health variables and resiliency on each other and on the students' educational achievement, and also testing the research hypotheses. In addition, in this study the hypotheses were simultaneously examined in the framework of the initial model and finally the fitness characteristics of the model and the graphs of fitted model are presented. The research model examined is presented in Figure 1.

As it is shown in Table 1, the direct effect of psychological well-being on resiliency is 0.68 and considering the t-value ($t = 6.41$) in the $P = 0.01$ this effect is significant. The direct effect of mental health on resiliency is 0.69 and considering the t-value ($t = 7.12$) in the $P = 0.00$ this effect is significant. The direct effect of resiliency on educational achievement is 0.54 and considering the t-value ($t = 5.27$) in the $P = 0.02$ this effect is significant.

As it is shown in Table 2, the indirect effect of psychological well-being on educational achievement is 0.36 and considering the t-value ($t = 4.02$) in the $P = 0.03$ this effect is significant. The indirect effect of mental health on educational achievement is 0.37 and considering the t-value ($t = 4.18$) in the $P = 0.02$ this effect is significant. Given that this effect is mediated

through resiliency it can be claimed that this variable has a mediating role between psychological well-being, mental health and educational achievement. Another feature of path analysis is comparing the effects of all variables on each other, comparing the direct effects and the indirect effects as well as measuring the variance determined by each of the endogenous variables in the model (Sarmady, 2016). Accordingly, the direct effects, indirect effects, and the total effects and the determined variance of variables on students' achievement are reported in Table 3.

According to Table 3, the indirect effect of psychological well-being on educational achievement is equal to 0.29 and the indirect effect of mental health on educational achievement is equal to 0.37 and so they are significant.

Table 1: The estimates of direct effect size

Variables	Standardized parameter	SEM	t
The direct effect of psychological well-being on resiliency	0.68*	0.01	6.41
The direct effect of mental health on resiliency	0.69*	0.00	7.12
The direct effect of resiliency on educational achievement	0.54**	0.02	5.27

*P<0.01, **P<0.05, SEM: Standard error of mean

Table 2: The estimates of indirect effect size of psychological well-being and mental health on students' educational achievement

Variables	Standardized parameter	SEM	t
The indirect effect of psychological well-being on educational achievement	0.36**	0.03	4.02
The indirect effect of mental health on educational achievement	0.37**	0.02	4.18

*P<0.01, **P<0.05, SEM: Standard error of mean

Table 3: The Standardized coefficients of the direct and indirect effects and total effects of variables on educational achievement and their determined variances

Variables	Direct effects	Indirect effects	Total effects	Determined variance
Psychological well-being	-	0.36**	0.36**	0.29
Mental health	-	0.37**	0.37**	0.37
Resiliency	0.54**	-	0.54**	-

The indicators proposed by sarmadi (2016) were used to evaluate the degree of fitness of the examined model. These indicators are as follows: X2/d.f. in which the values < 9 are acceptable; goodness of fit index (GFI); the comparative fit index in which the values > 0.9 indicate proper fit of the model; the adjusted GFI (AGFI) in which the values > 0.8 are acceptable; parsimonious normed fit index in which the values > 0.6 indicate the proper fit of the model; and root mean square error of approximation in which the values < 0.08 represent good fit of the model. According to the goodness of fit reported in Table 4, the fitness of prediction model of research variables is at a good level. These characteristics indicate a consistency of fitted model with theoretical community of the study.

4. DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

The present study aimed at examining the effect of psychological empowerment and mental health on high school students' educational achievement with the mediating role of resiliency in 2015-2016 school year in the city of Urmia. As it can be seen from the statistical analysis and results of analyses, it can be said that there is a significant positive relationship between the variables. In addition to having a significant and positive relationship with psychological empowerment and mental health, they both have direct effect on resiliency as well as indirect effect on academic achievement through resiliency. In addition, resiliency has both a positive relationship with the variables and a significant effect on educational achievement. The results of the present study are along and consistent with the research results of Ryan and Deci (2000), Huang (2011), Basharpour (2015), Karademas (2007), Diener (2000), Ryff (1989), Ryff and Keys (1995), Mikaely et al. (2012), Losar (2003), Beasley et al. (2003), Lazarus (2004), Mikaely et al. (2012), Kormen (1997), Gay and Valerian (1997), Bachanas et al. (2002), Kodjo et al. (2004), Steinhart, M. & Dolbier, C. (2008) Steensma et al. (2007), Tugade and Fredrickson (2004), Friborg et al. (2006), Salehi et al. (2007), Rahimianboger and Asgarnejadfarid (2008), Maher (2004), Omidvar et al. (2014),

Figure 1: The examined research model

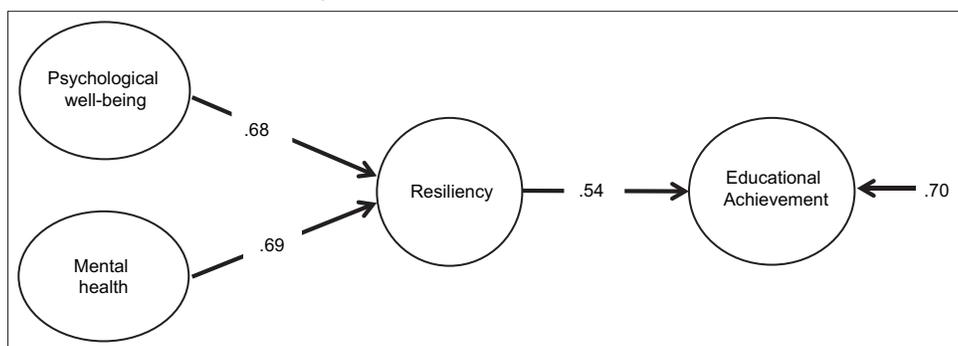


Table 4: The fit indices of the examined model of the study

RMSEA	PNFI	AGFI	CFI	GFI	X ² /d.f
0.05	0.79	0.91	0.92	0.98	4.11

GFI: Goodness of fit index, AGFI: Adjusted GFI, RMSEA: Root mean square error of approximation, PNFI: Parsimony normed fit index

Hafezi (2002), Basharpou et al. (2015), Mikaely et al. (2012), Narimany et al. (2014) and the Ashkani and Heydare (2015).

Since people with high mental health show higher levels of resiliency, it can be concluded that the provision of protective elements (such as religion and spirituality) for improving mental health and spiritual intelligence can lead to resilience enhancement (Hamid et al., 2012).

In their treatment reports Seligman et al. (2006) believe that positive psychotherapy, not only by reducing the negative symptoms but also effectively and directly, can lead to change the vulnerability of resiliency through the creation of positive emotions, disposition capabilities, and meaning. Positive psychotherapy can not only create a positive resource, but also can have an interactive effect on negative symptoms as well as a barrier to their reoccurrence. So it can be said that people who are mentally at a desirable level are more resilient in the face of difficulties and have more success.

One of the results of this study was the relationship and the effect of resiliency on educational achievement which turned out to be positive and significant. In explaining this finding it can be argued that students with high resiliency have features such as discipline, optimism, problem solving skills, autonomy, intelligence, hardiness, and high self-esteem (Medi and Khoshaba, 2005) and since different researches have confirmed the relationship between self-esteem and educational achievement (Porshafey, 1991; Biabangard, 1995; Sadrolsadat and Shams, 2001; Ross and Broh, 2002; El-Anzi and Freih, 2005) so it can be stated that students with high resiliency have high educational achievement as well.

According to the study of Rahimi (2015), it can be argued that resiliency can predict educational achievement and by increasing resiliency the educational achievement also increases. This consistency with other research studies can be a strong evidence of a causal relationship between the two variables.

According to the results of the present study, including the interactive correlation between mental health and educational performance, the increased mental health problems and the prevalence of mental disorders in children, special and urgent attention is required to this issue in order to solve the students' mental health problems and the establishment of counseling centers for the students. Therefore, the contributions of consultants and experts, comprehensive planning, and intervention in mental health promotion for the prevention and treatment of psychological disorders will be effective in students' educational achievement.

Finally, it can be concluded that the results of the correlation between mental health and educational performance are fully justifiable and acceptable, because according to Parvizrad et al. (2013), either educational failure can cause damage to mental health

or the mental disorders can cause poor educational performance. On the other hand, serious attention should be paid to this issue in order to solve the problems of students' mental health and to establish the students' counseling centers. It is also recommended that along with conducting extensive studies, serious steps should be taken to reduce the risk factors via consulting with psychologists and psychiatrists and authorities' contributions. In addition, the results of present study can draw attentions of the authorities of Ministry of Health and Medical Universities and Education Ministry on the importance of planning for the prevention of mental disorders in students. Other recommendations of this study are: Identifying psychological problems among students by the counselors at schools, conducting training and empowerment workshops on mental health and self-management, promoting students' life skills, paying more serious attention to the counselors by increasing their level of skills and motivations, and establishing more cohesive bond between this group of counselors and student counseling centers.

It is recommended that the findings of this study, which increasingly urge special attention to meet the students' mental health in many ways, be employed for identifying students at risk for clinical evaluation and also better and comprehensive interventional programs be designed and implemented for decreasing students' psychological and educational achievement problems.

This study had some limitations that include the participants less understanding in terms of answering questions and also the schools being distantly dispersed in the city of Urmia. Finally, special thanks are given to school and education staff members in the city of Urmia for their sincere efforts.

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