

The comparison of hardiness and feminist masculinity between normal and orphan (father loss) children

Hojatolah Shayeghifard*, Zhaleh Refahi and Dariush Esfandiari

Department of Counseling, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht, Iran

Corresponding author: Hojatolah Shayeghifard

ABSTRACT: Objective: The present study compared hardiness and masculinity-femininity of the fatherless students and normal students in secondary schools of the city of Fasa. **Methods:** Based on the population under study (5730 normal students and 250 fatherless students), 300 participants (150 normal students and 150 students who were deprived of father) were randomly selected as the sample with regard to the principle of cloning. The participants were administered the Ahvaz (AHI) hardiness and MMPI2 masculinity and femininity (MF) questionnaires. **Results:** The analysis of the results showed that there is no significant difference between normal and fatherless students (considering a significance level of 5/0 for hardiness; $p > 0/05$, $t = -.57$) with regard to hardiness. On the other hand the significant level of 0/0001 for femininity and masculinity ($t = -4 / 3$, $p < 0.05$) indicate that there is a significant differences in femininity-masculinity between the two groups. In other words, fatherless students have lower levels of femininity and masculinity compared with normal children. **Conclusion:** The results of this study emphasize the important role of fathers in normal development of children in the context of life.

Keywords: Father Loss, hardiness, femininity and masculinity.

INTRODUCTION

Fathers and mothers are essential to ensure the psychosocial development of their children by creating a safe and healthy environment. The absence of either of the parents stirs the balance in the family and has adverse effects on the normal development of children. In recent decades, the issue of "father loss" has attracted the attention of many researchers in education and psychology. Research conducted in this area has led to modification of traditional perspectives (Ahali-abadeh, 2002).

Parents play an vital role in the life and destiny of their children within the family's educational system. Lack or absence of any of them will have detrimental effects on the children and the family (Keramati and Moradi, 2005). Aply (1971) argues that babies between 8 to 18 months begin to attend and experience their father as the second person after the mother. To some researchers, this new relationship is very important. For example Mirlo, (1968) emphasized the importance of this relationship and argued that fathers are the connecting bridges to the outside world and transmitting the emotions from mother to father in any way will be a role model for many of the child's subsequent social relationships and will determine the future direction of the child's efforts to communicate and transmit emotions (Adams et al., 1991).

The loss of father can pave the way for some disorders and influence the course and prognosis of them. Thus it is important to examine the prevalence of behavioral disorders among fatherless children. Research on over 108 cases who had repeatedly committed rape revealed that 60% of them had come from families that did not live with their fathers (Prntky, 1993).

There are many factors that can interfere in the natural process of mental development of children and one of them is the loss of their parents during the early years of growth. A lot of research has emphasized the importance of the presence of father and the role it plays in children's mental health alongside the maternal role and there is no evidence for considering a less important role for father than the mother in family. The process of children's belonging

to the father begins in the first year of life and then increases over the years. The presence of fathers in these years lead to an increase in compatibility and a reduction of aggression among boys and can also play an important role in the appropriate sexual orientation of both boys and the girls. The loss of father during the early years of growth can cause irreparable damage to mental health in children. Brown et al, (1997) found a significant relationship between the absence or loss of a parent, especially a father, before the age of 10 and depression in subsequent years(Brown et al, 1997).

Several studies have pointed out the social, cognitive and emotional defections that occur in families without a father. These include poor academic performance and achievement motivation, behavioral problems and delinquency, and difficulty in having and maintaining relationship with others (Hipman, Donna and karlos, 2002).

Guy, (1991), Japanese psychiatrist, is of the opinion that the acquisition of masculine characteristics is considered to be among the critical stages of growth. Boys wholose their fathers, the loss being either physical or psychological, are influenced in their acquisition of masculine characteristics and face trouble in this process.

Many theorists of women's issues believe that there are clear distinction between sex and gender and that the complications and consequences of gender can not be attributed solely to sex, although the specific biological and physiological characteristics of a particular sex has caused the consideration of special social and traditional gender-specific criteria for that person. Sex is just a biological concept meaning that it clarifies whether a person is physically a man or woman. But gender is a set of attributes, behaviors and social and cultural characteristics that are decided by the society and attributed to a man or a woman. Sex is biologically determined while gender is constructed by culture and society (wood hills and Samuels, 2004).

Most children can get a clear picture of themselves when it comes to the gender identity as a male or female. But in most cultures the biological distinctions between men and women appears as a wide network of beliefs and rituals that influences almost all areas of human activity (Atkinson et al., 2006).

Regarding the role of the father in the family, researchers have concluded that father has a positive effect on the academic achievement, cognitive development, moral development, sex role development and the prevention of mental impairment and his absence is associated with disorders in any of these areas. In addition to their conventional role (i.e. mother's support), father plays the specific role of the fundamental development of the child's character that realizes "I". Because whenever the child experiences severe anxiety due to the separation from the mother, father can help reduce it. In this respect it seems that the lack a father can have a great influence in shaping the child's personality (Adams et al.,1991).

The concept of hardiness is rooted in the existential psychology. This word means patience, ability to tolerate difficult and tough situations, bravery, courage ,recklessness, and hardiness. Victor Frankel as one of the theorists of existential psychology was looking for the reasons behind the survival and maintenance of health among people under severe pressure and proposed the theory of meaning. Regarding his personal experience and those who were able to survive under extreme conditions, he found that being purposeful and meaningful even in the face of hardships and problems could lead to life durability. People with hardiness characteristics can remain intact even under stress because they faceth estress more appropriately and are less likely to become anxious and exasperated in these events. Therefore the complex process that can start from stress and lead to disease is never created in the first place(Jmhry, 2002; Azkhadm quoted Hosseini, 2010).

Kobasa, (1997) stated that tough and resistant people have the following characteristics in the face of stress factors:

- 1 - They have less fight with the negative aspects of their lives and they rely more on the positive rather than negative events.
- 2 - They do not ignore or underestimate the importance of the problems; rather they actively confront the problems and try to solve them.
- 3 - They believe that they will be rewarded personally and through their actions and that their remuneration is under their authority. In other words, they have the internal locus of control.
- 4 - They have a clear value system and believe in the meaningfulness of their lives.
- 5 –These people have social skills and they enjoy the support of a strong network of family and friends so that they can refer to them in the case of any problems.

People with hardy characters are quite resistant to stress, have high self-esteem, positive self-image, they are curious and optimistic, they enjoy the new ideas and are willing to experiment new methods to solve problems (clinic, 1998, quoted AztqyzadeTabassi, 2006).

In this study the effect of being deprived of father on hardiness and masculinity-femininity has been examined. Since deprivation of father can be a risk factor for mental disorders, identifying these disorders and providing guidance and psychological services may contribute to reducing the occurrence of such behavioral disorders.

Therefore this study is an attempt to compare the children who are deprived of father with normal children with regard to masculinity-femininity and hardiness in order to answer the following questions:

- Is there any significant difference between hardiness and femininity - masculinity of students who are deprived of father and normal students?
- Is there any significant difference between hardiness and femininity - masculinity of students who are deprived of father and normal students based on their gender?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Method:

Subjects

The population of the study involved all secondary father less students in the city of Fasa (n = 250) and their normal counterparts (n=5730) who were studying in the 2009-2010 academic year. This consists of a total of 5980 students. Regarding the topic under study, two groups of students (fatherless and normal) were investigated. Fatherless children involved 150 participants (75 females and 75 males) and there were also 150 normal children (75 girls and 75 boys).

To select from among the fatherless students, arrangement were made with the department of education, relief and welfare and 150 students were randomly selected as the sample size. In addition the same numbers of normal students were also selected from the schools where fatherless children came from. All in all, a total of 300 participants constituted the research sample.

Instruments

The psychological Hardiness questionnaires. This questionnaire has 27 items. Participants answer the items through four option of never, rarely, sometimes, and often. Their answers will be graded based on the values 0, 1, 2, and 3. Of course the scoring is reversed for items 6, 7, 10, 13, 17, and 21. This test provides a total score of hardiness in individuals and lacks any items on commitment, control and challenge. Scores range from 0 to 81 in this questionnaire. Obtaining a high score on this scale indicates high psychological hardiness of the person. To assess the validity of the questionnaire four inventories were used as the criterion: anxiety, depression, self-actualization, and structural definition of psychological hardiness questionnaires. The hardiness questionnaire has significant relationships with the anxiety Inventory ($r = -0/55$), Depression Inventory ($r = -0/62$), self actualization ($r = -0/55$) and the structural definition of hardiness ($r = -0 / 5$) which help satisfy the validity of our instrument. To calculate the reliability, test-retest and internal consistency methods were applied. Reliability coefficients obtained between participants' scores on the two occasions (pre-test and post-test) was 0/84 for all subjects, 0/85 for female and 0/84 for the male participants. (Kyamrsy, 1998).

Femininity-masculinity questionnaire. The scale is used for both male and female participants. 52 of the items are scored exactly in the same manner for both genders while the 4 remaining items which are clearly related to the gender issues are reversed. This measure indicates the extent to which participants confirm the roles traditionally ascribed to men or women. High scores also correlate with a person's intelligence or education level. Therefore men who are college-educated usually get relatively high scores and women with higher education typically have relatively low scores. So the educational level of participants should be considered when interpreting the results. Considerable changes about the roles and behaviors of men and women in society have occurred since the formulation of this scale. This and other factors regarding the construction of this scale has questioned the validity of this scale (Maranat, translation by NikxuSharifi, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

According to Table 2 and the observed significance level (0/5) it can be found that the value of t is not significant (significance level greater than the 0.05). This means that there is no significant difference between normal and fatherless students with regard to the hardiness. Observing Table 3, it can be said that the significance level is not significant in any of the rows ($p > 0/05$). Therefore hardiness between male and female individuals as well as fatherless and normal ones and the interaction between these two factors is not significantly different. As it can be seen, the results in Table 1 confirm these findings.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of hardness for normal and fatherless students

group	number	gender	mean	standard deviation
Fatherless	75	m	67/9	7/06
Normal	75	m	68/7	5/7
Total	150		68/3	7 /2
Fatherless	75	f	69/1	10/4
Normal	75	f	69/5	8/4
Total	150		69/3	9/4
Fatherless	75		68/5	8/9
Normal	75		69/1	7/9
Total	150		68/8	8/4

Table 2. group differences in hardness

Group	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	degrees of freedom	significance level
Fatherless	150	68/5	8/9	-0/57	298	0/5
Normal	150	69/1	7/9			

Table 3. Two way analysis of variance for hardness based on gender

Source of the changes	total squares	degrees of freedom	mean squares	f	significance level
Gender	74	1	74	1/02	0/3
Group	24/08	1	24/08	0/3	0/5
Gender *Group	21/8	1	2/8	0/03	0/8

Considering Table 5, and the observed significance level (000/1), it can be seen that the t-value is significant (the significance level is less than level 0/05), and this means that there are significant differences between normal students and those deprived of father with regard to femininity - masculinity. Results indicate higher levels of this variable in normal students compared to the fatherless ones. It should be mentioned that high level of femininity and masculinity in men and women is undesirable and raises the possibility of sexual concerns and problems.

Based on the analysis of variance in Table 6, it can be concluded that there is a significant level regarding the sex effect ($p < 0/05$). In addition the group effect was also found to be significant at the significance level ($p < 0/05$). However, the interaction between gender and group is not significant ($p > 0/05$). Therefore there are significant differences regarding femininity - masculinity between male and female students as well as normal and fatherless ones. Therefore, being deprived of father influences femininity-masculinity in both males and females and gender is not a necessary mediating variable with this respect.

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation of femininity-masculinity in fatherless student s based on gender

number	Gender	group	the mean	standard deviation
75	m	fatherless	24/4	3/9
75	m	normal	27/2	6/6
150	m	total	25/8	5/6
75	f	fatherless	27/3	4/4
75	f	normal	29/5	3/5
150	f	total	28/4	4/1
75	m/f	fatherless	25/9	4/4
75	m/f	normal	28/4	5/4
150	m/f	total	27/1	5/1

Table 5. Differences between masculinity and femininity group

Group	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	degrees of freedom	significance level
Fatherless	150	25/9	4/4	- 4/3	298	0/0001
Normal	150	28/4	5/4			

Table 6. Two way analysis of Variance for masculinity-femininity based on gender

Source of the changes	total squares	degrees of freedom	meansquares	f	significance level
Gender	517/4	1	517/4	22/5	0/0001
Group	461/2	1	461/2	20/09	0/0001
Gender * Group	5/8	1	5/8	0/25	0/6

Table 7. Evaluation of the differential scores of hardiness and femininity-masculinity in normal and fatherless boys

Gender	variables	N	M	SD	t	degrees of freedom	Significance level
Fatherless	Hardiness	75	24/4	3/9	-3/08	148	0/002
Normal		75	27/2	6/6			
Femininity	masculinity	75	67/9	7/06	-0/63	148	0/5
Normal		75	68/7	7/5			

According to Table 7 and the observed values and the significant levels, it can be found that the observed t on masculinity - femininity is significant (significance level of less than 0/05) but it is not significant for the variable hardiness. This means that regarding masculinity – femininity, there is a significant difference between normal and fatherless boys (higher levels of these variables among normal boys). But there is no significant difference between the two groups with regard to hardiness. The analysis of variance was performed to confirm the results of Tables 3 and 6.

Table 8. Evaluation of the differential scores of hardiness and femininity-masculinity in normal and fatherless girls

Gender	variables	N	M	SD	t	degrees of freedom	Significance level
Fatherless	Hardiness	75	27/3	27/3	-3/3	148	0/001
Normal	face	75	29/5	29/5			
Femininity	Femininity	75	69/1	69/1	-0/14	148	0/8
Normal	male	75	69/5	69/5			

Based on table 8 and regarding the significance level, it can be seen that the t value is significant with respect to the masculinity – femininity (the significance level is less than 0/05) but it is not significant regarding the variable hardiness. This means that the variable masculinity - femininity is significantly different between normal and fatherless girls (higher levels of these variables among normal girls). But there is no significant difference between the two groups with regard to hardiness. The analysis of variance was performed to confirm the results of Tables 3 and 6.

Discussion and Conclusion

Although no research was found comparing psychological hardiness between fatherless and normal children, a group of psychologists and other researchers like Cuba, (1997), Khvshaba, (1994) abroad and Ghorbani, (1995), Kalantar, (1998), Beigifard, (1999), Taghani and Farzane, (2005), Sharifi et al., (2005) and Baghani, (2006) in Iran all emphasized the positive and proactive role of hardiness in stress, hypertension, mental disease, mental health, and family functioning. We can say that when it comes to psychological hardiness, the special role of the family and parenting style on the development of the components of hardiness (commitment, control and challenge) cannot be ignored (Shayeghifard, 2010).

Taghizadeh, (2006) in his studies states that the authoritative parenting style is positively correlated with hardiness. On the other hand there is negative relationship between the dictatorship, permissive, and rejecting parenting styles and hardiness. He also states that people belonging to the upper and middle classes of the society are harder and they face more challenging life events, but no relationship has been found with regard to aspects of control and commitment. He also states that studies have shown that hardiness, more or less, is an acquired trait and it can be gradually formed in people.

It can be said that hardiness is the result of a piece of knowledge based on which the person would have access to more resources to respond to stressful situations and leads the person to be realistic and generous in the faces of these situations. In other words, hardiness is a basic conception of control that gives people access to a list of useful techniques to come over stress. In fact it is a buffer against severe physiological arousal caused by stress which researchers believe is a factor behind vulnerability to the diseases. And we can teach this hardiness to our children from the very early years of their lives so that they can survive in conditions such as being deprived of father (Broomand, 2009).

In explaining the lack of a significant differences in hardiness between normal and father less students, regardless of the role of intervening variables such as personality, skills and social support, and individual differences noted by researchers ,it seems that in line with Kobasa, (1997), we should recognize the limitations of the self-assessments made through pencil and paper and include other methods of data collection in measuring the hardiness.

Considering masculinity and femininity, it can be said that for father deprivation to have an effect on femininity-masculinity no intervention of the variable gender is required and it has the same effect on both genders. The results of the comparison of femininity - masculinity among children, especially fatherless boys versus normal ones is not

consistent with those of Rice (translated Foroughan, 2007), Soltanpour, (2000) and treasure, (1999) and the alignment theory is not confirmed in this case.

In explaining these findings, we can say that although femininity and masculinity that is most affected by biological inheritance, other factors such as demographic factors, environmental factors such as reinforcement, punishment, reward, imitation, family and parenting, toys, and school teachers and peers, gender related patterns are among the ones that some researchers have studied.

In this study, perhaps because of the existing culture in the city of Fasa in the absence of fathers, boys receive the traditional character of masculinity from other men in the family, especially the uncle and cousin even more fanatically than if their father was present. With no changes in the patterns of femininity and the absence of masculinity, girls from families with no father, still have a personal identification with the mother and this replication continues to complete the process of learning the feminine identity and the related roles.

With regard to the lack of any significant difference between fatherless boys and girls and their normal counterparts, on the one hand it seems that the loving and protectionist practices of the relatives may be related to the component of hardiness (commitment, control and challenge-seeking) is connected and on the other hand, after the creation of a secure environment following a new stressful situation, the psychological hardiness of the person may not be seriously affected.

Considering masculinity and femininity, it can be said that for father deprivation to have an effect on femininity-masculinity no intervention of the variable gender is required and it has the same effect on both genders. Here, too, the environmental impact of gender differences on people is evident. Moreover, other factors such as social and cultural issues should not be ignored.

REFERENCES

- Adams M. 1991. The Psychology of fatherless children: translated by Bagheri, K. and Attaran, M. Tehran: Tarbiat.
- Ahaliabadeh A. 2002. Comparing the control psychological profile of adolescents whose mothers had remarried and control adolescents whose mothers have not remarried. Unpublished master's thesis in counseling, university of Alzahra.
- Atkinson R, Atkinson RC. 2006, Hilgard psychology, translated by Baraheni M. N. et al. Tehran: Roshd.
- Baghani T. 2007. On the relationship between hardiness and SCL-90-R psychiatric disorders in high school of Sabzevar. Proceedings education agency: KhorasanRazavi.
- Beigifard S. 1999. Investigating the relationship between personality characteristics of hardiness, social support and burnout among staff in Shiraz rehabilitation Centers. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences, Shiraz.
- Broomand I. 2010. Comparing the psychological characteristics of diabetic patients and healthy subjects. Unpublished master's thesis, Department of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Arsanjan.
- Brown CW, Harris T, Copeland JR. 1997. Depression and loss. *British journal of psychiatry*.jan; 130:1-8.
- Ganji H. 1999. The Psychology of Individual Differences. Tehran: Bist.
- Ghorbani N. 1985. Hardiness associated with type A behavior pattern and coronary disease risk behavior (type 2). Unpublished MA thesis in general psychology, Tehran: TarbiatModarres University.
- Guy C. 1991. Absent fathers, lost sons: the search for masculine identify. Shambhala publications.
- Hippmann W, Donna and Carlos A. 2002. A program to treat external locus of control and poor achievement motivation in male children raised in father less homes. Dissertation Abstracts.
- Hosseini H, Bakhtiari F. 2006. West and the phenomenon of single-parent families; Tehran: Women's magazine, (24).
- Kalantar Z. 1998. Examining the relationship between type A and stress hardiness variables. Unpublished MA thesis, Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz.
- Keramati H & Moradi A. 2005. Comparison of psychological aspects of family functioning and control children. *Journal of Educational Innovations*.11 (4), 89-108.
- Khadim HM. 2010. Scientific study of the reliability, validity and application access hardiness personality questionnaire. Unpublished MA thesis in the department of psychology and social sciences, University of Tehran.
- Kobasa S. 1997. Stressful life events, personality, and Health: An inquiry into hardiness. *Journal of personality and social psychology*. 37, 1-11.
- Maddi SR and Khoshaba DM. 1994. Hardiness and mental Health. *Journal of personality Assessment*. 63, (2), 265-278.
- Marl G. 2006. Psychological assessment guidelines; translated by: Sharifi, H. & Pasha, N. (second edition), Tehran: Roshd.
- Prentki M. 1993. Hand book of child psychopathology. New york: plenum.
- Rice P. 2007. The psychology of human development from birth to death, translated by Foroughan, M. Tehran: Arjmand.
- Taghizadeh TA. 2010. Examining the relationship between parenting style features and hardiness. Unpublished Master's thesis, Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Alzahra.
- Taghavi M, Shaheen F. 2009. Examining the relationship between hardiness and mental health among students of Shiraz University. Proceedings of Psychiatry and Psychology Research Congress of Iran, Tehran, May 28.
- Sharifi K, Arizi HR and Namdari K. 2005. Examining the relationship between family functioning and psychological hardiness of students. *Monthly Journal of Shahed University*, No. 10 (8), 85-90.

- Shayeghifard H. 2010. Comparison of motivation, hardiness, femininity, masculinity and self-esteem among middle school and high school fatherless and normal students of Fasa. Unpublished master's thesis in counseling and psychology, University of Marvdasht.
- Soltanpour A. 2000. Single-headed children. Tehran: Journal of women inquiry, 102.
- Woodhill BM and Samuels CA. 2004. Desirable and undesirable androgyny : A prescription for the twenty-first century. *journal of gender studies* vol.13,pp.15-28.