

A comparison of family communication patterns and time management between two groups of students with either academic success or failure

Zabihalla Rousta^{1*}, Dariush Esfandiari Bayat² and Alireza Ayyazi Nia¹

1- MA in General Psychology, Counselor at Fars office of education

2- MA in counseling, Counselor at Fars office of education

Corresponding author: Zabihalla Rousta

ABSTRACT: The present study was designed to compare the patterns of family communication with time management between two groups of first-year secondary school students with either academic achievement or failure in the city of Shiraz. The statistical population was male high school freshmen. The participants were 60 patients who were selected based on the convenient sampling procedure. Based on their average score of the first semester, participants were then divided into two groups with high academic achievement ($n=30$) and academic failure ($n = 30$). To collect data two questionnaires were used namely the family communication patterns questionnaire by Koerner and Fitzpatrick and time management questionnaire by Saketi and Taheri. To analyze the data, mean and standard deviation were calculated for descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used for inferential statistics. In addition, the Cronbach's Alpha was used to validate the questionnaire. The results showed that there is a statistically significant difference between students with academic achievement and those with academic failure in terms of family communication patterns (conversation and conformity orientation) and time management (Choosing the objectives, prioritization of objectives, time - scheduling, and commitment to the program).

Keywords: family communication patterns, time management, academic achievement, academic failure.

INTRODUCTION

Family is more than a collection of individuals who live together in a physical and psychological environment. The family is a natural social system with its own characteristics which is considered as the earliest institution in any society. It is in fact the center of the emergence of human emotions and cordial relations between the individual members. It can be said that family functioning directly influences functioning of the society t large (Mazaheri, 2008). Researchers believe that the best possible criterion in analyzing the ethical, social, and psychological quality of the individuals is in fact the network of family members and the set of regulations governing the family environment and atmosphere (Molla Sharifi, 2005). One aspect of family efficiency is embodied in the academic performance of their children. Academic success or failure could be attributed to either the healthy or unhealthy functions of the family. However, this concept (academic success or failure) is multi-dimensional and factors such as personal, inner and outer organizational ones can play a role in it (Tamanaifar, 2007). Education constitutes an important part of everybody's life in today's world and accordingly it is nearly a century that professional groups and psychologists have extensively attended to the various aspects of education in an attempt to identify predictors of academic achievement.

Among the predictors related to the family and peers are family support , relation with a community -friendly individual, the informal networks of friends, peer responsibility towards education, empowering and vigilant parents, and joining the community -friendly institutions. There is a large range of experimental evidence (Gonzalez and Padilla, 1997; Catterall, 1998; Voydanoff and Donnelly, 1999; Wayman, 2002), which emphasize the role of these

factors as predictors of consistent growth, competence and academic achievement. Family is one of the areas that has a considerable influence on the educational progress of children. When there is a diverse growth among children with regard to areas related to the family, these areas are regarded as the most important factors in their physical and mental growth. The family has many functions and it influences the children based on these very functions to determine their behavior in the environment. Family Communication Pattern is one of the functions that is capable of influencing children (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002).

Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990) examined the hypothesis made by McLeod and Chaffee (1972) used the two dimensions of society and concept orientations to describe communications within the family. They managed to identify two basic dimensions of dialogue and conformity orientations in family communication patterns. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) have emphasized the dialogue orientation to the extent that it creates free space and comfort for family members to participate in various issues. Conformity orientation is also the extent to which families emphasize the same attitudes, values and beliefs. Combining these two dimensions creates four family relationship schemata that are called family communication patterns. According to the classification made by Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1994), each pattern describes a particular type of family. These four types of patterns or families are made from a combination of high or low status on dimensions of dialogue and conformity orientations and include: consensual, pluralistic, protective and laissez families.

Lopez (2001) examined the relationship between family structure, psychological separation and academic adjustment. He found that there is a positive relationship between the odds of a student-parent involvement and their academic adjustment (Quoted from the Stoeber 2004). Gerdes & Mallickrodt (1994) too found that emotional or psychological factors may be associated with the adaptation of students. Issues such as anxiety, depression, disagreements and poor relationships between students and their parents can have a negative influence on a large number of counter factors such as academic adjustment, personal and social adjustment, social skills, decision making skills, mental health and social support. In sum these studies showed that family communication patterns play an important role in adjustment, adaptation and academic success of students. In addition, family communication patterns, particularly effective communication between students and parents helps to develop and enhance students' self-efficacy and their confidence in dealing effectively with assignments and academic challenges (Lent, Brown and Gorge, 1997). In general it can be suggested that both educational success and failure are to do with the quantity and particularly the quality of the current relationship between students, parents, and the family. The findings of previous research suggest that facilitating wider and warmer relationships between students, parents and other family members has significant impacts on improving the academic status of students (Mazaheri, 2008).

Among the individual predictors, time management is one of the factors that can affect academic achievement. Time management is not to control every second of time but it includes methods through which people apply the time in an attempt to improve their lives (Mackenzie, 1990). Some common features in definitions of time management refer to planning the behavior in decision making regarding doing tasks, prioritizing tasks, and the effective management of the possible time lag (Claessens, van Eerde, Rutte and Roe, 2004, 2007). Time management, as one of the most important skills in academic achievement of the students (Collinz, 2010), refers to the time control and taking care of your own work. In fact we do not let the events and affairs to take control of us. In time management, it is very important to clarify work priorities to put the urgent and more important matters as first in order (Ferner, 1995; translated by Javaheri, 2002). One of the principles of time management is the 20-80 principle, which is to use 20% of your time to do 80% of your work. Success in correct time management depends on accurate diagnosis of important affairs (Trisi, 2000; translated by Ahmadi, 2003). Since time is one of the limited resources, optimal time management is of considerable importance especially in educational settings and for the students. Time management can also influence students' activities. It seems that the optimal use of time for student studying and learning can be influenced by the methods selected for study and students' academic achievement motivation (Baldrig, 2007, translated by Seif, 2009). Time management skills are among the criteria which students attempt to succeed based upon them and this is referred to as the academic achievement motivation. On the other hand, it is indicated that issues such as that teachers' assessment of their students, students' attempt to achieve educational goals, trying to get high scores, too much assignment, some stressful relationships with school staff, the pressure due to the lack of time, relationship with friends, eating and sleeping habits, financial problems, job prospects for the future, psychic dependences, beliefs and mental challenges and socio-political issues prevailing in schools are the ones that students are faced with (Frydenberg, 1999; Roshan and Shairi, 2003). Naturally these issues create problems for students in achieving their goals. Therefore it is necessary to develop the students' repertoire of counteractive measures. Research by Stewart and Lombard (2010), Garcia and Perez (2005), and Seibert and Getinger (2002) show that there is a statistically significant relationship between time management skills and the academic success of students. Britton & Glynn (1989) reported that people can have high academic achievement by selecting academic objectives, timing, and acting within a specific time frame with a special attitude towards time.

Britton and Tesser (1991) in their study showed that time management trainings are effective in the development of self- efficacy beliefs and academic achievement. Terry (2002) showed that there is a positive relationship between time management, self-regulation and self-efficacy. VanEerde (2003) demonstrated that time management training leads to reducing laziness and regulating students to do their assignments which are both predictors of academic achievement. Macan (1996) showed that training in time management has significant effect on stress reduction, improved academic performance, job performance and job satisfaction.

Hence academia is one of the most important parts of a person's life that can influence their upbringing, effective and successful learning in which capacities and abilities are realized and scientific improvements are made. But in daily educational life, students are faced with a variety of challenges, obstacles and pressures related to this time (such as poor grades, stress levels, threatened confidence in the face of performance, reduced motivation and engagement, etc.). Some students are successful in the face of these obstacles and challenges, but others may fail in this regard. Accordingly this study was conducted to determine the family and individual factors as the basic elements which can affect student academic achievement. More specifically, present study aimed to examine the role of family communication patterns and time management in two groups of students with academic success and failure. Based on the issues raised in the introduction, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- 1 - There are significant differences between students with academic success and those with academic failure in terms of family communication patterns.
- 2 - There are significant differences between students with academic success and those with academic failure in terms of time management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Method

This is an applied piece of research with a causal-comparative design in which family communication patterns and time management are examined in two groups of students with either academic achievement or failure. The population consisted of all male students of first grade secondary school in the educational year 2013-2014. A total of 60 participants were selected through convenient sampling. They were divided into two groups based on their total average score in first semester, one with high academic achievement (average: 17 to 20, n=30) and the other with academic failure (average: 10 to 14, n=30). To assess family communication patterns, the revised questionnaire of family communication patterns (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2002) was used. This scale contains 26 items with five options of totally agree (score of five) to totally disagree (score one). 15 items (1 to 15) assess the dialogue dimension while 11 items (16 to 26) measure the conformity dimension. The reliability of the instrument based on Cronbach's alpha is 0.89 and for the dialogue dimension it is 0.79. In addition the test-retest reliability coefficient for conformity is 0.99 while it is reported to be something between 0.73 and 0.93 for the dialogue dimension. Kooroshnia (2006) reported the alpha coefficient for the dialogue dimension to be 0.87 and he reported good validity levels for factor analysis and internal consistency. Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) held that this test has good validity from all three perspectives of content, criterion and construct validity. In addition the time management questionnaire by Saketi and Taheri (2007) was applied. This questionnaire has 28 items and measures four subscales (setting goals, prioritizing the objectives and activities, time scheduling, and commitment to the program). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient derived from measuring the internal consistency coefficients for the subscales of the personal skills in four dimensions amounted to 0.53 for setting goals, 0.73 for prioritizing the objectives and activities, and 0.78 for commitment to the program. The reliability coefficient for the program was measured to be 0.74 and while it was 0.88 for the total questionnaire respectively.

Collected data was entered into SPSS program to be analyzed. In this respect, mean and standard deviation were calculated for descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used for inferential statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation scores of family communication patterns and time management

Variable	Subscales	groups	mean	standard deviation
Communication patterns	dialogue	Success	50.36	13.33
		Failure	40.9	7.27
	conformity	Success	21.76	4.62
		Failure	28.96	7.64
Time management	Setting goals	Success	27.33	0.92
		Failure	22.36	0.92
	prioritizing	Success	16.33	0.44
		Failure	13.9	0.44
	Time schedule	Success	34.66	0.94
		Failure	30.83	0.94
	implementation	Success	34.93	0.68
		Failure	25.93	0.68

The First hypothesis stated that there are significant differences between students with academic success and those with academic failure in terms of family communication patterns. To test this hypothesis, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used . The results can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on the scores of family communication patterns on students' academic achievement and academic failure

Test	result	f	Hypothesis df	Error df	p
Pilai effect	0.392	18.35	2	57	0.001
Wilks Lambda	0.608	18.35	2	57	0.001
Hotling effect	0.644	18.35	2	57	0.001
Largest root	0.644	18.35	2	57	0.001

Wilks Lambda test results showed that the group effect is meaningful to the combined effect of family communication patterns ($P < 0.001$, $F = 18.35$, $\text{Lambda Wilks} = 0.608$). These tests warrant the use of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Results showed that there are significant differences between the two groups regarding at least one of the family communication patterns.

Table 3. Results of between subjects' effects on family communication patterns in students with academic success and failure

scattering source	family communication patterns	sum of squares	degrees of freedom	mean-square	F	P	Eta squared
group	dialogue	1344.26	1	1344.26	11.65	0.001	0.167
	conformity	777.6	1	777.6	19.45	0.001	0.251

The results of this test indicated that there are significant differences between students with academic achievement and those with failure regarding family communication patterns (dialogue and conformity dimensions) ($p < 0.0001$).

The second hypothesis stated that there are significant differences between students with academic success and those with academic failure in terms of time management. To test this hypothesis, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used . The results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on scores regarding the components of time management between students with academic achievement or failure

Test	result	f	Hypothesis df	Error df	p
Pilai effect	0.624	22.82	4	55	0.001
Wilks Lambda	0.376	22.82	4	55	0.001
Hotling effect	1.66	22.82	4	55	0.001
Largest root	1.66	22.82	4	55	0.001

Wilks Lambda test results showed that the group effect on the combined time management is a significant ($P < 0.001$, $F = 22.82$, $\text{Lambda Wilks} = 0.376$). These tests warrants the use of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). In fact the results showed that there is a significant difference between the two groups regarding at least one of the components of time management.

Table 5. Results of between subjects' effects on the components of time management in students with academic success and failure

scattering source	Time management	sum of squares	degrees of freedom	mean-square	F	P	Eta squared
group	Setting goals	370	1	370	14.46	0.001	0.20
	prioritizing	8.81	1	88.81	14.74	0.001	0.20
	Time schedule	220.41	1	220.41	8.22	0.001	0.12
	implementation	1215	1	1215	85.96	0.0001	0.59

The results of this test indicated that there are significant differences between students with academic success and those with academic failure with regard to time management components (setting goals, prioritizing objectives, time schedule, and actual implementation), ($p < 0.0001$).

Discussion and conclusions

This study was set to examine the family communication patterns and time management in two groups of students with either academic achievement or failure. Results indicated that there are significant differences between the two groups regarding both dimensions of family communication patterns (dialogue and conformity) with the advantage of the academically successful group of students. This finding is consistent with the findings of other researchers such as Wayman (2002), Voydanoff and Donnelly (1999), Catterall (1998), Gonzalez and Padilla (1997), and Mazaheri (2008).

Dialogue orientation refers to the extent to which families create an environment in which family members are persuaded to participate freely in a wide range of discussions and interactions. Among the features of families with high levels of dialogue orientation are warm and intimate relationship and freedom to express feelings and consults with others. Accordingly, children in these families feel that they are accepted by their families and their ideas are considered in family decisions in the face of difficult situations and challenges. People from these families, therefore, have the ability to solve problems and make decisions (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 1997) and high levels of self-confidence (Huang, 1999). They are not afraid of facing the challenges and they have a remarkable ability in adaptability, resilience, and actual performance (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 1997). Hence in families with high dialogue orientation levels, there are considerable levels of compatibility, suitable performance, ability to adapt to the challenges of academia, resilience, self-confidence, problem-solving skills, and proper social relationship with the peers. It seems that mutual understanding and compatibility with parents is transmitted to out of home environments such as the academia. So that those students who are accepted by their parents are better able to accept the external environment and have an adaptive interaction with the circumstances of the society. In fact, it can be expected that dialogue orientation lead to academic achievement.

Conformity orientation, on the other hand, refers to the idea that family relations are based on similar attitudes and beliefs so as to avoid conflict with other family members which leads to the denial of dependence by teenagers (Fitzpatrick, 2004). Disagreement and conflict with parents can impose psychological problems on the individual and may lead to psychological issues and maladaptive behaviors in teenagers. In cases in which the teenager adapts himself to the family circumstances and becomes an obedient person and when this obedience leads to parental approval, his behavior will be directed toward what parents are expecting. In this situation the person will not be armed with a matured personality and suitable behavior in dealing with the environment. These results can be explained by considering the collectivist Iranian culture and the individualistic Western one. Since previous studies have shown that the Iranians are oriented more or less towards the collectivist culture (Hofstede, 1981). However, within each community, there are people who are oriented towards any of the collectivist or individualistic cultures (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, and Lucca, 1988). So in collectivist cultures (such as Iran) that are likely to have higher conformity orientation (Samani, 2002), autonomy and adolescent development inappropriately lead to uncoordinated results. In addition since in Iranian families different communication patterns are used at certain points in time, children may make use of other family communication patterns. According to the results mentioned above, students from families with warm, welcoming and friendly environments have strong positive self-concept, goal orientation and ability to cope with their peers at school.

In an attempt to investigate the second hypothesis, it was found that that there are significant differences between students with academic success and those with academic failure in terms of time management components (setting goals, prioritizing objectives, time schedule, and actual implementation) to the benefit of academically successful students. These results are concomitant with those of Stewart and Lombard (2010), Garcia and Perez (2005) and Vanird (2003), Seibert and Getinger (2002), Terry (2002), Macan (1996), Britton and Tesser (1991), Britton and Glynn (1989) and Alavi (1993). Based on these results, it can be stated that school students can minimize the time

which is spent in vain by managing it to lower their concerns. This way they can reduce the stress disorder caused by work related concerns that can deteriorate their mind and soul and make them feel obsolete. Thus having a sense of control over their time creates a sense of competence and accomplishment which results in feelings of personal adequacy, progress and prosperity and students will be successful in their social affairs and academic performance. A person who feels capable and has control over his time and affairs gets away from hopelessness and depressive thoughts do not impede his efforts and effectiveness. Someone who is successful for his capabilities can also succeed in social and academic issues leading to further developments. Yet another explanation with this regard is that students who are academically successful usually feel less psychological pressure due to their use of time management strategies, specific academic targets, prioritizing the objectives, time schedule, and commitment to realize the objectives. Therefore they can focus on their studies with a relatively comfortable mind.

Regarding the superior performance of students with academic achievement in terms of time management skills than students with academic failure, it is necessary to pay attention to this issue among the students and set the academic goal orientation as a template for any student in order to attend to other aspects of time management based on the predefined objectives. In the area of family communication patterns it is important to educate the parents and clarify the role of student-parent relationships in educational progress of students. This way it is possible to pave the way for more academic achievements and fewer cases of failure.

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