A CORRELATION STUDY ON MOTHER’S PERSONALITY TRAITS, TEMPERAMENT AND ANXIETY AMONG PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT
The relationship between mother’s personality traits with temperament and anxiety syndrome in preschool children was investigated. Two hundred and fifty mothers were selected by convenience sampling method from a group of mothers with children (boys) age 4-6 years in Karaj. They completed NEO Five-Factor Inventory, the Preschool Anxiety Scale and Preschool Temperament and Character Inventory. The results obtained from regression analysis and correlation showed that children’s anxiety was related to mother’s personality traits. In general mother’s personality traits explained 14.7% of anxiety variance. Children’s temperament was related to mother’s personality traits. In general mother’s personality traits explained 8.2% of the cooperativeness, 8.5% of harm avoidance, 13.6% of reward dependence, 15.6% of the persistence, 25.7% of the self-directed and 12.8% of the self transcendence variance.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Anxiety, Temperament, Preschool Children, Mother

INTRODUCTION
From birth and perhaps to end of life, the most important relationship that every human experiences, is relationship with the parents. Maternal personality made a significant contribution to shared affective ambience and maternal responsiveness, and a marginal contribution to maternal consistent tracking of the child (Kochanska et al., 2004). Physical and mental health of the mother in creating a favorable atmosphere in the family as the primary base of education is the most fundamental factors shaping the child's personality (Abela et al., 2006).

A review of researches in the field of the effect of mother’s abnormal features on child disorders showed that in the evolution of the personality, the child inherits characteristics from their parents and grandparents. Also environmental factors play an important role in shaping and unlocking every kind of the talent and personality traits. Most theories about child development, both in personality and physical believe in the interaction of nature with the environment. In general, parental personality traits may directly be related to children's development through two possible mechanisms (Kochanska et al., 1997). First, children may inherit certain personality characteristics that may lead to elevated levels of externalizing behaviors. Second, parents with certain personality traits may model aggressive and unregulated behaviors to their child, and subsequently their child may imitate these behaviors (Bandura et al., 1961; Campbell et al., 2000).

In recent years has been paid special attention to two essential dimension theory of the structure of the natural character: A) Five factors that lead to the preparation of The NEO personality inventory revised (Costa & McCrae, 1992), B) seven-factor model of biological psychology that the result was Temperament and character inventory (TCI) (Reti et al., 2002).

According to trait theory of personality, human being has extensive predisposition that named traits and responds to stimulus in certain ways. All trait theorists agree that traits are the main element of human personality. In addition, trait theorists agree that human behavior and character traits can be organized in a hierarchy (Pervin and John, 2001).
Costa and McCrae in their five-factor model in addition to being placed on a biological basis declared that these factors affect the various constructs such as self-concept, self-efficacy and compatibility features such as attitudes and personal goals and also individuals choices and decisions (Costa & McCrae, 1992). In this regard, the relationship between parent’s personality traits and children’s behavioral problems can be studied.

Temperament is the term used to describe individual differences in the inhibition and perceptual habits (Cloninger, 1994). Stability of temperament traits and strong effects of genetic and environmental factors in the study of childhood psychiatric disorders has been emphasized (Rettew and McKee, 2005). While some researchers considered the environment (Kyrios and Prior, 1990) and Early Life Stress (Lewis and Olsson, 2011) important in the development of temperament, some researchers pointed out the role of factors such as birth weight (Schraeder and Tobey, 1989) and genetic factors (Plomin and Rowe, 1977). In any case, temperament, whether inherited or caused by environmental factors, can affect the social adjustment (Mobley and Pullis, 1991) and cognitive issues (Sakimura et al., 2008).

Pediatric anxiety is a serious condition affecting approximately 6–10% of young children and adolescents (Verhulst, 2001), which can follow a chronic pathway into adulthood (Hadwin et al., 2006; Merikangas et al., 2003).

Anxiety disorders produce considerable acute suffering and increase the risk for long-term adverse outcomes. Most adult anxiety disorders begin in childhood or adolescence, with exceedingly common rates between 5% and 10% (Essau et al., 1999; McGee et al., 1990).

Andrew and Craig (2011) in the Longitudinal Study showed that Stressful family environments experienced in the infant’s first year of life (high versus low) and high reactive, avoidant, and impulsive temperament styles directly and independently predicted anxiety and depressive problems in children at 4 years of age.

In this context, Yurdusen et al., (2013) maternal anxiety but not maternal depression explained variability in preschool children internalizing and externalizing their problems. Other researchers have also pointed out that Children with anxiety disorders in the past 6 months, had experienced more stressful life events and their mothers had higher rate of current anxiety disorders (Dougherty et al., 2013).

Brajsa and Hanzec (2013) in a study showed When predicting children’s prosaically behavior, significant predictors were mothers’ inductive reasoning and warmth, and children’s age and temperament shyness. Huver et al., (2010) found that As regards parenting styles, extraverted, agreeable, and less emotionally stable individuals were most likely to be authoritative parents. Van et al., (2007) examined the mediating role of parenting on the relation between parental personality and toddlers’ externalizing behaviors and emotional stability was the only parental personality trait that was related to children’s externalizing behaviors.

In summary, studies have investigated the relationship between certain aspects of personality such as neuroticism or a particular group of childhood disorders have been considered. The aim of present study was investigating the relationship between mother’s personality traits with temperament and anxiety syndrome in preschool children.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Participants and Procedures**

This study is correlation and cross-sectional. Two hundred and fifty mothers were selected by convenience sampling method from a group of mothers with children (boys) age 4-6 years in 2014 in Karaj. Two hundred and fifty mothers responded to the tests and 242 responses without confounding were analyzed. Therefore, the study sample consisted of 242 children (4 to 6 years boy) and their mothers (22 to 47 years). Mothers who agreed to participate in the study completed NEO Five-Factor Inventory, the Preschool Anxiety Scale and Preschool Temperament and Character Inventory. 92.1% of mothers were married and 7.9% were divorced or widowed. Around 54% of mothers held some form of university degree, and at least 94% had completed 12 years of education. Their occupational classification showed 37.6% of mothers were employed and 62.4% were homemaker.
Measures

Preschool Temperament and Character Inventory

The psTCI (74-item) measure the seven factors of personality assessed on the Temperament and Character Inventory (Cloninger and Svrakic, 1997). Rather than simple rewording of the TCI questions for each dimension were developed to be relevant for preschool children and unambiguous for parents or caregivers to answer. Each item is rated on a 5-point scale (from ‘definitely false’ to ‘definitely true’), and contributes to the reported scale score of only one of the factors in the seven factor model. Some of the items for each factor are reverse scored, except in the case of the self transcendence subscale. The preschool TCI demonstrated high internal consistency for each of the seven factors (Cronbach's α value: 0.70–0.93).

Inter-individual differences in novelty seeking, reward dependence and cooperativeness were highly preserved (Pearson's r values 0.75, 0.64 and 0.80, respectively) in 29 subjects who were studied over a 3-year period from toddlerhood to early school age (Constantino et al., 2002).

NEO Five-Factor Inventory

This is a 60-item self-report inventory measuring the five dimensions of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. Each scale includes 12 items on a 5-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Two-week, test-retest reliability of individual scales range from 0.86 to 0.90 (Robins, Fraley, Roberts, and Trzesneiwski, 2001). Internal consistency of the five scales ranges from 0.68 to 0.86 (Costa & McCrae, 1992), indicating that this scale has adequate psychometric properties.

Preschool Anxiety Scale

Preschool Anxiety Scale (parent report) assesses anxiety symptoms consistent with the dimensions of anxiety disorder outlined in DSM-IV. These dimensions are generalized anxiety, panic/agoraphobia, social phobia, separation anxiety obsessive compulsive disorder and physical injury fears. The total scale and 4 subscales (social anxiety, generalized anxiety, separation anxiety, specific fears) showed strong internal consistency (alphas = .72-.92), 12-month stability y (rs = .60-.75) and maternal/paternal agreement (rs = .60-.75). Scores on the scale also showed expected correlations with a measure of emotional distress, diagnosed anxiety disorders, and behavioral indicators of anxiety (Edwards et al., 2010).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data obtained from questionnaires "Preschool Anxiety Scale" and “NEO Five-Factor Inventory” and “Preschool Temperament and Character Inventory” were evaluated using the SPSS software. According to table 1, Skewness / Kurtosis were less than |2| and p was more than 0.05 in Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, so assumption of normality of the data is set. Then regression was calculated.

As shown in table 2, model (which included neuroticism, extraversion, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness) explained 14.7% of anxiety, 8.2% of the cooperativeness, 8.5% of harm avoidance, 13.6% of reward dependence, 15.6% of the persistence, 25.7% of the self-directed and 12.8% of the self transcendence variance.

Table 1: Tests of Normality: Skewness, Kurtosis and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cooperativeness</td>
<td>-.149</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>-.483</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harm avoidance</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.071</td>
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<tr>
<td>novelty seeking</td>
<td>.437</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.426</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.081</td>
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<tr>
<td>reward dependence</td>
<td>-.536</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>-.216</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persistence</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self- directed</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>-.164</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self transcendence</td>
<td>-.350</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anxiety</td>
<td>.616</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>.071</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Regression analysis on mother’s Personality Traits Data and child’s Temperament and anxiety Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>r²</th>
<th>P</th>
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<tr>
<td>cooperativeness</td>
<td>-.183</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>harm avoidance</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>-.108</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>-.127</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>novelty seeking</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>-.055</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reward dependence</td>
<td>-.078</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>persistence</td>
<td>-.223</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>-.136</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>self- directed</td>
<td>-.289</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.222</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>self transcendence</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.285</td>
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<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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<td>anxiety</td>
<td>.302</td>
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<td>.085</td>
<td>-.016</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>.147</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictors: (Constant), neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), openness (O), agreeableness (A), conscientiousness(C). β indicates standardized β coefficient; r², the square of the semi partial correlation of the variable and the dependent variable, controlling for the other predictors; ns, not significant

The results of this study provide support for our hypothesis that mother’s personality traits predict temperament and anxiety among preschool children. This research indicated that mother’s personality traits affect on child’s anxiety. As shown in Table 2 the most powerful variable in explaining anxiety when the variance of the unique contribution by all other variables in the model is controlled, is neuroticism. As a whole, maternal personality made a significant contribution to shared affective ambience and maternal responsiveness. Mother’s neuroticism has significant positive relationship with child’s anxiety. Neurotic individuals are described as anxious, depressed, ingrained, irrational and quirky (Schultz, 2005). Possible explanations related to the impact of neuroticism, anxiety, and depression on maternal responsiveness. These symptoms, especially if they are severe, make type of concern and internal conflict, and the mother cannot provide the necessary support and access to the emotional needs of the child.

The result showed that mother’s personality traits predict child’s temperament. Two mother’s personality traits were the most powerful variable in explaining temperament when the variance of the unique contribution by all other variables in the model is controlled. Mother’s neuroticism has significant positive relationship with child’s harm avoidance and negative relationship with child’s cooperativeness and self- directed. Mother’s conscientiousness has significant positive relationship with child’s reward dependence and persistence and self transcendence.

As expected, mothers high on Neuroticism created a less positive affective ambience with their infants, actually mothers who were less emotionally stable, provided less support to their child (Belsky and Barends, 2002). Maybe the child, modeled his mother and imitated her behaviors. So the child become cautious and timid, irresponsible and solitary.

Conscientious people are efficient and organized as opposed to easy-going and disorderly. They exhibit a tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and aim for achievement. A possible explanation for these results might be that when the systematic mother is sensitive to the needs of her child when she express warm feelings and when her requests are reasonable and understandable to the child, children are likely to feel secure and accepted and, thereby, to follow mothers’ suggestions (Chen et al., 2003). When the child is likely to feel safe and accepted, can have independent self image and be diligent and adaptable to unforeseen circumstances.

Several limitations of this study should be noted. The study sample only consisted of boys, it is better that future studies will also encompass girls. Also we just estimated mother’s personality traits although the effects of father’s personality traits can be study. In this study, a convenience sample was used. As such, the generalizability of these findings to other groups remains to be determined.
In sum, the results of this study suggest that mother’s personality traits affect on child’s behavior, temperament and anxiety and can increase a child's appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Finally, as regards children are the assets of any society, it is better that pay special attention to the interaction between mother and child to prevent psycho social trauma, or creating healthy and dynamic society.

REFERENCES


Research Article


