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A Comparative Study of Early Maladaptive Schemas, Behavioral Problems and Self-Esteem between Single Parent and Two Parent Female Adolescents

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ACOMPARATIVESTUDYOFEARLYMALADAPTIVESCHEMASBEHAVIORALPROBLEMSANDSELFESTEEMBETWEENSINGLEPARENTANDTWOPARENTFEMALEADOLESCENTS

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A Comparative Study of Early Maladaptive Schemas, Behavioral Problems and Self-Esteem between Single Parent and Two Parent Female Adolescents

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Abstract- The present study aimed to investigate early maladaptive schemas, behavioral difficulties and self-esteem among female adolescents with single and two parent status in Bonab city. In this causal- comparative study, 52 students with single parent and 52 with two parent status were selected. In order to gather the data, Achenbach Youth Self-Report (YSR), Short Form of Young Schema Questionnaire (YSQSF), and Cooper Smith (CSE) Self Esteem scale were administered. Analysis of variance and t-test for independent groups were used for analyzing the data. The results showed that there was significant difference in terms of social isolation/alienation, failure, dependence/incompetence, vulnerability to harm or illness, subjugation and self-sacrifice schemas between the two groups. Additionally, the results revealed that there was a significant difference in subscales of anxious/depressed, withdrawn/depressed, social problems, attention problems, and aggressive behavior between the two groups. Finally, the findings showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups in terms of social self-esteem. This research has some implications for future studies on investigating the role of family structure on psychological status of adolescents.

Keywords: single parent, two parent, early maladaptive schema, self-esteem, behavioral difficulties and adolescents.

I. Introduction

Family is a basic unit of society that has evolved along with changes in the needs and demands of the individuals and society (Kozlowska & Hanney, 2002). Single-parent family is a kind of family in which either the father or mother is absent because of divorce, marital separation, out of –wedlock pregnancy, or death (Greenberg, 2002). Single parent status affects children mentally, emotionally and psychologically (Singh & Kiran, 2012). Several recent studies confirm that the change in family structure might increase problems in children and adolescents. These children are at higher risk of health problems (Scharte & Bolte, 2013; Nunes-Costa, Lamella & Figueiredo, 2009), mental health problems (Shenoy, lee & trieu, 2016; Luecken & Roubinov, 2012), psychological problems (Falana, Olatunji Bada& Ayodele, 2 012; Shenoy, Lee & Trieu, 2016), problems in social relationship (Hatherington, Cox& Cox, 2010; F alana, Olatunji Bada& Ayodele, 2012), low educational perform ance (Lange, Dronkers & Wolbers, 2013; Park, 2008), and more behavioral problems (Ryan, Claessens & Markowitz, 2015; Kerami, Bolhari& Asgharnejad, 2007).

Family structure is an important factor in the development of behavioral problems in children (Ryan, Claessens & Markowiz,2015).Studies revealed that children in single-parent families showed more behavioral problems than children of two parent families (Srivastava, 2005; Seifollah Poor- Bonab & Keshavarzy –Arshady, 2015). Children and adolescents of single parent families exhibited more problems in terms of depression (Larson & Halfon, 2013), anxiety (Fagan and Churchill, 2012), aggression (Usakli, 2013), somatization symptoms and conduct disorder (Seifollah Poor- Bonab & Keshavarzy –Arshady, 2015), withdrawal (Liu, Guo, Okawa, Zhai, Uchiyama, Neiderhiser & Kurita, 2000), antisocial behavior and hyperactivity (Strohschein, 2012) in comparison with those of intact families. On the other hand, some studies indicated no serious behavioral problems in children of single-parent families compared with children of two-parent families (Hakim Shooshtray, Panaghy & Hajebi, 2008). There is an important research gap based on the contradictory findings obtained from studying behavioral problems in single-parent and two-parent adolescents. Several factors affect behavioral problems, including parental behaviors, family interactions, socio-economic factors (Slobodska, 2015),stress and identity status (Burt& Paysnick, 2014), objective quality of life (Shek, 2005), and early maladaptive schemas (Demehri, Movallai & Ahmadi, 2015). Yong (1999) alsoemphasized the relationship between behavioral problems and early maladaptive schemas.

Early maladaptive schemas are formed in early childhood based on early experiences derived mainly from the parental or the caregiver's environment (Young, Klosko & Weishaar, 2010; Hoffart, Sexton, Hedley, Wang

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& Holthe, 2005). These Schemas arise in childhood or adolescence as a result of interaction between the child's emotional mood and terrible events (Young, Klosko & Weishaar, 2003). Parental origins of schemas are important because they indicate that family schemas have developed (Jalili, Zargar, Salavati& Kakavand, 2011). Studies showed that the fatherless adolescent schemas were very inconsistent (Khdabkhshy-Kolaee, Alizadeh, Mansoor, Pour-Ebrahim, & Falsafinejad, 2015). There were differences in dysfunctional schemas based on adolescent's gender and age. Thus, adolescents experienced a greater degree of maladaptive schemas (Zafiropoulou,Avagianou & Vassiliadou, 2014). Some other researches showed that there were meaningful relationships between items of early maladaptive schemas and symptom somatization (shahamat, 2011), eating disorders (Cooper, 1997), substance use disorders (Ball & Cecero, 2001), depression (Renner, Lobbestael, Peeters, Arntz & Huibers, 2012), anxiety (Ghamkhar Fard, Schneider, Hudson, Habibi, Pooravari & hjii heidari, 2014), and self-esteem (Kirsch, 2009; Quoted from Mojallal, Khosrojavid, Pakzad,& Ghanbari ,2014).

In addition to behavioral problems and early maladaptive schemas, it seems that adolescents of single-parent and two-parent families are different in terms of self-esteem. Self-esteem is a psychological term which refers to a person's overall evaluation or appraisal of his or her own worth (Kiran, 2003).Many factors affect children's self-esteem. Sock and Shin (2010) compared the factors influencing children's self-esteem in two parent families and single parent families. The results showed that internal control, problematic behavior, school record, and parent-child comm.-. unication significantly predicted the level of self-esteem in two parent families. On the other hand, social support, family hardiness, internal control, problematic behavior, school record, and parent-child communication significantly predicted the level of self-esteem in single parent families. Researchers examined self-esteem in children of single-parent families. Whereas some researches showed that the children from single parent families had lower self-esteem compared with peers from two parent families (Kevorkian, 2010; Glennon, 2002; Wineburgh, 2000; Mandara& Murray, 2000), some other researches indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the level of self-esteem among students from single parent families and those from two parent families (Kinga, Kimani & Muriithi, 2014).

Due to the contradictory findings in self-esteem and behavioral problems in single parent children and lack of enough research about early maladaptive schemas in this group, a comparison between the early maladaptive schemas, behavioral problems and self-esteem in single-parent and two-parent adolescents seems to be essential to address the research gaps. Identification of the factors related to single-parent status and the underlying differences in single-parent and two-parent adolescents can be helpful in creating suitable conditions for education. Therefore, this study attempts to examine this question: "*Is there a significant difference in early maladaptive schemas, behavioral problems and self-esteem between single-parent and two-parent adolescents?*".

II. Method

The study employed a causal comparative research (ex post facto) design, in which the population was composed of all female high school students in the second semester of 2015-2016 school year in Bonab city. The sample, including 52 female students, consisted of single-parent students who were identified by the screening method and selected using the convenience sampling method. The screening tests performed on the single-parent students were used to randomly select the same number of two-parent students from the same school and the same classroom (both groups were thus matched in terms of early maladaptive schemas, behavioral problems and self-esteem). Therefore, a total of 104 single-parent or two-parent students were studied (52 in each group).

III. Procedure

After preparing the required instruments (including *Youth Self-Report Scale* (YRS), *Short form of young Schema Questionnaire*(YSQSF) and *Self Esteem scale from Cooper Smith* (CSE)), the researcher personally attended the girls' schools to identify the single-parent adolescents with the help of school officials, once permission was obtained from Bonab's Department of Education. Then, the same number of two-parent students were randomly selected from the same school and classroom. After providing relevant descriptions, we distributed the questionnaires, which after being completed, were collected from the students on the next day.

IV. Research Instruments

The following questionnaires were used in this study:

i. *Young Schema Questionnaire - Short form (YSQSF):* The scale is a 75-item questionnaire evaluating 15 schemas in five domains, including disconnection/ rejection (which includes abandonment/instability, mistrust/abuse, emotional Deprivation, Defective-ness/Shame, Social Isolation/Alienation schemas); impaired autonomy and performance (which includes dependence/incompetence, vulnerability to harm or illness, enmeshment/undeveloped self, failure schemas); impaired limits (which includes entitlement/grandiosity, insufficient self-control and/ or self-discipline schemas); other-directedness

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(which includes subjugation, self-sacrifice schema); over vigilance and inhibition (which includes emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards/hyper criticalness schemas). Each question is graded on a scale of 6 degrees (1= completely false, 2= false, 3= more true than false, 4= somewhat true, 5= true, 6= completely true). Various studies have supported YSQ-SF's validity and reliability in Iranian samples (Ahi, Mohammadi Far & Besharat, 2007). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha for each schema was obtained. It was 0.72 for emotional deprivation, 0.82 for abandonment/instability, 0.71 for mistrust/abuse, 0.76 for social isolation/ alienation, 0.76 for defectiveness/shame, 0.78 for failure to achieve, 0.77 for dependence/ incompetence, 0.69 for vulnerability to harm of illness, 0.49 for enmeshment/undeveloped self, 0.69 for subjugation, 0.69 for self-sacrifice, 0.71 for emotional inhibition, 0.67 for unrelenting standards, 0.75 for entitlement/grandiosity, and 0.70 for insufficient self-control.

ii. *Cooper Smith Self Esteem Inventory (CSE):* The scale has 58 items. 50 items of this scale are related to four sub-scales (public, family, education and social self-esteems) and 8 items are related to the question of lie detector .Self-esteem of participants is determined based on yes/no answers. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was obtained for each of the subscales. It was 0.84 for public self-esteem, 0.76 for family self-esteem, 0.71 for education self-esteem, 0.69 for social self-esteem, and also 0.72 for total self-esteem.

iii. *Youth Self-Report Scale (YSR)*: The scale, developed by Achenbach, is a self-report scale for ages 11 to 18, consisting of Competencies and Symptoms sections. The Symptoms section of the questionnaire, containing 113 three-option items (0 = false, 1 = somewhat or sometimes true, and 2 = completely or often true) was completed in this study by the adolescents on the basis of their status during the last six months. Total scores for these 113 questions is reported as the overall behavior problems (Achenbach and Rescorla, 2001). This questionnaire has been normalized by Minaei for Iranian society. Construct validity of this scale in Iran was examined using factor analysis and the 8-factor structure of the scale was confirmed. The convergent validity of the scale with the Junior Eysenck personality questionnaire (J-EPQ) and Rutter behavior problems scale was satisfactory. The validity of the YSR was obtained for the boys and girls using Cronbach's alpha (0.89 and 0.94) and using the split-half method (0.84 and 0.87). The subscales of anxious/depressed, withdrawn/ depressed, somatic complaints, social problems, thought problems, attention problems, rule-breaking behavior, aggressive behavior, and general problems had Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.83, 0.85, 0.78, 0.79, 0.66, 0.78, 0.64, 0.87 and 0.79, respectively, and split-half reliability coefficients of 0.77, 0.71, 0.68, 0.86, 0.67, 0.87, 0.69, 0.86 and 0.83, respectively (Minaei, 2005). In this study Cronbach's alpha was also calculated for the subscales of anxious/depressed (0.79), withdrawn/ depressed (0.71), somatic complaints (0.64), social problems (0.64), thought problems (0.68), attention problems (0.59), rule-breaking behavior (0.51), aggressive behavior (0.73), and other problems (0.58).

V. Results

The average performance of the single-parent and two-parent adolescents and the standard deviations of scores on each of the variables, for both groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Means and standard deviations for female adolescents with single parents and two parent status.

	Single-parent female adolescent		two-parent female adolescent	
	mean	std. deviation	mean	std. deviation
age	16.35	0.98	16.31	0.91
emotional deprivation	12.55	6.30	13.41	5.95
abandonment/instability	15.03	7.77	15.51	7.12
mistrust/abuse	12.68	5.95	11.17	4.68
social isolation/alienation	12.33	6.12	9.56	4.40
defectiveness/shame	10.13	5.04	9.52	4.94
failure to achieve	10.59	5.20	8.61	3.76
dependence/incompetence	10.86	4.94	8.48	3.42
vulnerability to harm of illness	11.65	5.64	9.60	4.17
enmeshment/undeveloped self	12.14	5.34	10.49	3.81
subjugation	13.41	6.40	10.80	3.80
self-sacrifice	18.22	5.80	16.09	3.66
emotional inhibition	13.93	7.59	12.38	5.22

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unrelenting standards	18.28	5.64	19.43	5.32
hypocriticalness	16.97	6.72	17.84	6.08
entitlement/grandiosity	14.96	5.71	14.00	4.77
insufficient self-control self-discipline	3.42	1.22	3.70	1.00
public self-esteem	12.90	2.10	12.84	2.12
family self-esteem	4.78	1.34	4.77	1.24
education self-esteem	4.79	0.89	5.41	0.89
social self-esteem	3.38	1.09	3.44	1.12
total self-esteem	25.86	2.79	26.48	2.86
anxious/depressed	9.22	5.21	6.74	4.03
withdrawn/depressed	5.92	3.48	4.50	3.00
somatic complaints	5.06	4.43	4.60	4.01
social problems	5.75	3.53	4.26	2.65
thought problems	8.65	4.41	7.83	3.42
attention problems	7.03	3.19	5.70	2.69
rule-breaking behavior	5.99	3.55	5.12	2.01
aggressive behavior	8.77	4.54	7.07	4.40
other behavioral problems	12.47	4.19	12.48	3.92

In order to examine differences in Early Maladaptive Schemas between two groups, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used by taking other assumptions of MANOVA into account (Table 2).

Table 2: Results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) for Early Maladaptive Schemas in female adolescents with single parent and two parent families

effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	sig
Pillai's Trace	0.29	2.39^b	15.00	88.00	0.006
Willis' Lambda	0.71	2.39^b	15.00	88.00	0.006
Hoteling's Trace	0.40	2.39^b	15.00	88.00	0.006
Roy's Largest Root	0.40	2.39^b	15.00	88.00	0.006

MANOVA showed that there is a significant difference between female adolescent with single-parent and two parent in Early Maladaptive Schemas (Wilks' lambda=0.71, F=2.39, P=0.006) (Table 2).

Table 3: Results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) for Early Maladaptive Schemas in female adolescent from single parents and two parent families

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	sig
emotional deprivation	19.12	1	19.12	0.50	0.478
abandonment/instability	5.95	1	5.95	0.10	0.744
mistrust/abuse	59.36	1	59.36	2.07	0.153
social isolation/alienation	200.32	1	200.32	7.03	0.009
defectiveness/shame	9.76	1	9.76	0.39	0.533
failure to achieve	101.85	1	101.85	4.93	0.029
dependence/incompetence	146.83	1	146.83	8.11	0.005
vulnerability to harm of illness	109.12	1	109.12	4.43	0.038
enmeshment/undeveloped self	70.94	1	70.94	3.28	0.073
subjugation	176.68	1	176.68	6.36	0.013
self-sacrifice	118.20	1	118.20	5.02	0.027
emotional inhibition	62.65	1	62.65	1.47	0.227
unrelenting standards hypocriticalness	34.75	1	34.75	1.15	0.285
entitlement/grandiosity	19.63	1	19.63	0.47	0.491
insufficient self-control self-discipline	23.96	1	23.96	0.86	0.355

The results (Table 3) showed that schemas of social isolation/alienation (F= 7.03, DF= 1, 102, P= 0.009), failure (F= 4.93, DF= 1, 102; P= 0.029), dependence/incompetence (F= 8.11; DF= 1, 102; P= 0.005), vulnerability to harm or illness (F= 4.43, DF= 1, 102, P= 0.038), subjugation (F= 6.36; DF= 1, 102, P= 0.013) and self-sacrifice (F= 5.02, DF= 1, 102; P= 0.02) schemas were higher in single parent female adolescent. Compered with two parents female adolescent.

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In order to examine differences in behavioral problems between two groups, the multivariate analysis of variance was used, given the normal distribution of data and other assumptions of variance analysis (Table 4).

Table 4: The results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) for behavioral problems in female adolescents with single parents and two parent families

effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	sig
Pillai's Trace	0.12	0.69^b	9.00	0.048
Willis' Lambda	0.87	0.69^b	9.00	0.048
Hoteling's Trace	0.14	0.69^b	9.00	0.048
Roy's Largest Root	0.14	0.69^b	9.00	0.048

MANOVA showed that two groups had a significant difference in the behavioral problems (p=0.048, F= 1.69, Lambda Wilks=0.48).

Table 5: Results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) for behavioral problems domains in female dolescents with single parents and two parent families

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	sig
Anxious/depressed	180.66	1	180.66	8.30	0.005
Withdrawn/depressed	59.11	1	59.11	5.59	0.020
Somatic complaints	6.29	1	6.29	0.35	0.554
Social problems	65.12	1	65.12	6.66	0.011
Thought problems	19.83	1	19.83	1.26	0.262
Attention problems	52.11	1	52.11	5.96	0.016
Rule-breaking behavior	21.94	1	21.94	2.62	0.108
Aggressive behavior	85.47	1	85.47	4.26	0.041
Other problems	0.004	1	0.004	0.00	0.988

The results showed that Anxious/depressed (F= 8.30, DF= 1, 102; P= 0.005),withdrawn/depressed (F= 5.59, DF= 1, 102; P=0.02),social problems (F= 6.66, DF= 1, 102; P= 0.011), attention problems (F= 5.96, DF= 1, 102; P= 0.016), and aggressive behavior(F= 4.26, DF= 1, 102; P= 0.041) are signify-cantly different between female adolescents in single parent families and two parents families (table 5). In other words, female adolescents from single parent families obtained significantly higher scores than female adolescents with two parent status in these domains.

In order to examine differences in self-esteem between two groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted (Table 6).

Table 6: The results of t-test for self-esteem in female adolescents from single parents and two parent status

	Levene's test for equality of variances		t-test for equality of means		
	F	sig	T	df	sig
Self-esteem Equal variances assumed	0.03	0.84	-1.10	102	0.270
Equal variances not assumed			-1.10	101.94	0.270

Given a violation of Levene's test for homogeneity of variances, F (1,102) =0.03, p = 0.84, a t-test assuming homogeneous variances was calculated. The average score on total self-esteem in the single-parent adolescents (SD = 2.79 and M = 28.86) was compared, using the independent groups t-test, with two-parent adolescents (SD = 2.86 and M = 26.48). The comparison showed no significant difference between the single-parent and two-parent adolescents (p< 0.270 and t (192) = -1.10).

The results of MANOVA for self-esteem's domains in single parent and two parent female adolescents are displyed in table 7 & 8.

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Table 7: The results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) for self-esteem domains in female adolescents from single parents and two parent families

effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	sig
Pillai's Trace	0.11	3.25^b	4.00	99.00	0.015
Willis' Lambda	0.88	3.25^b	4.00	99.00	0.015
Hoteling's Trace	0.13	3.25^b	4.00	99.00	0.015
Roy's Largest Root	0.13	3.25^b	4.00	99.00	0.015

The results of Wilks Lambda test ($p < 0.015$ and F (3.25 and 4) = 0.88) show a significant difference between the two groups in at least one of the subscales of self-esteem domains (public self-esteem, family self-esteem, education self-esteem, and social self-esteem) (Table7).

Table 8: Results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) for self-esteem domains in female adolescent from single parents and two parent families

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	sig
public self-esteem	0.089	1	0.089	0.020	0.888
family self-esteem	0.009	1	0.009	0.005	0.943
social self-esteem	10.293	1	10.293	12.83	0.001
education self-esteem	0.104	1	0.104	0.085	0.772

The results showed that Social self-esteem (F=12.83; df=1,102; P=0.001) is significantly different between female adolescents in single parent families and two parents families (table 8).In other words, from single parent families obtained significantly lower scores on Social self-esteem subscale than female adolescents from two-parent families.

VI. Discussion

The aim of this study was to compare maladaptive schemes, behavioral problems and self-esteem in female adolescents with single-parent and two parent status. The results indicated that female adolescents with single parent condition obtained higher scores in social isolation/alienation, failure, dependence/ incompetence, vulnerability to harm or illness, subjugation and self-sacrifice schemas compared to female adolescents from two parent families. The results are in line wish the findings of Khodabkhshy Kolaee et al. (2015). According to Young et al. (2003), early maladaptive schemas are formed as a result of interaction between children's emotional mood and terrible events in childhood or adolescence. One of the toughest life events for children was separation or divorce of parents, as well as the death of father or mother (Neuman and Romanowski, 1999). Therefore, obviously, schemas of single-parent female adolescents were more maladaptive than those of two parent female adolescents.

According to the findings, single parent adolescents obtained higher scores in scales of anxious/depressed, withdrawn/depressed, social problems, attention problems, and aggressive behavior compared with two parent ones. These results were consistent with the findings of Kerami, Bolhari, & Asgharnejad, (2007), Ryan, Claessens & Markowitz, (2015). Maginnis, (1997) and Liu, X. Guo, Ch. Okawa, Zhai, Uchiyama, Neiderhiser & Kurita, (2000). These results were in contrastwith the findings of researchers such as Hakim Shooshtray, Panaghy & Hajebi (2008). In Coleman's theory (1980), each of youth issues in a particular chronological age reaches its maximum or peak tension in a particular chronological. This age varies according to different people and different issues of adolescence. Adolescents have difficulties when they are at the age of peak tension. In a situation like this, more behavioral problems arise in adolescents. The co-occurrence of these tensions with problems and tensions associated with single parent status causes more behavior problems in adolescents from single parent families than in adolescents from two parent families.

The results indicated that female adolescents from single parent families had lower social self-esteem compared to female adolescents from two-parent families. The results are consistent with the findings of Atindanbila & Winifred (2012), Kevorkian (2010), Glennon (2002), Wineburgh (2000), Mandara & Murray (2000), and these results were in contrast with the findings of researchers such as Kinga, Kimani and Muriithi (2014). According to Coopersmith(1968), childhood events affect a person's self-esteem. According toBean, Clark, Clemes (1929), solidarity is one of the four conditions of self-esteem. The feeling of solidarity occurs when the adolescent is satisfied with the links that are important to him and approved by others. So it is not surprising that a female who experiences a parent's absencehas lower self-esteem.

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The limitations of this study should be taken into accounts the researcher was unable to identify all adolescents with single parent status in Bonab city, and also the population of adolescents was limited only to Bonab city. According to the findings, it is suggested that single-parent families should be provided with counseling services. In addition, education should take action to identify single parent students and provide this vulnerable group with consulting and training service. Moreover, cultural and educational centers should hold training session for head parent of household to train them to deal with single parent adolescents. Future studies can use single parent adolescents who are not enrolled as students as their subjects. In future research, these variables can be examined on children and the young from single parent families.

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