

The relationship of family functioning and self-control to religious orientation among mothers of autistic children

Atousa Kafashpour Marandi¹, Anahita Khodabakhshi -Koolae^{2*}

1- Department of counseling and guidance, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

2- Department of Psychology and Education, Faculty of Humanities, Khatam University, Tehran, Iran.

*Correspondence should be addressed to Mrs. Anahita Khodabakhshi –Koolae; Email: a.khodabakhshid@khatam.ac.ir

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Self-control in religious texts is a comprehensive and unique system, which is derived from the surveillance of God upon one's actions and control of one's own actions. Since self-control in Islamic teachings plays a decisive role in human life, this study aimed to examine the correlations among family functioning, self-control and religious orientation among mothers of children with autism.

Method: This descriptive correlational study used a convenience sampling technique. 100 mothers of autistic children participated in this study in years 1394 and 1395. The Participants completed 3 questionnaires: Tangney Self-control Scale, General Functioning subscale of the MC Master Family Assessment Device (FAD), and Allport Religious Orientation Scale. Data analysis was performed using multiple regression analysis and Pearson correlation coefficient. All ethical issues were observed in this research and the researchers declared no conflict of interests.

Results: The findings indicated a significant positive correlation between self-control and religious orientation and also between self-control and family functioning ($p < 0.05$). This means that the more self-control, the higher religious orientation, and vice versa. Furthermore, with increase in family functioning, self-control increased and the other way round ($p < 0.05$). No relationship between family functioning and internal and external religious orientation was found.

Conclusion: The findings of the present study highlight the relationship between religious-orientation and self-control. Therefore, preventive measures, education, and religious interventions along with self-control need to be considered more than before.

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Summary

Background and Objective: As a general rule of thumb, each family prepares itself for changes brought by the birth of a new child (1) yet the disability of children is one of the factors causing anxiety, fear, or feelings of being sinful among parents (2), undermining their performance (3,4). Family is the first institution and the mainstay of society; given that, its disruption can threaten the health of the community, thus exacerbating the situation and even the collapse of the society. Probably because of this, concerns among parents and especially the mothers of exceptional

children are observed more than others (5). One of the major problems is autism, which is characterized by stereotypes; destructive behaviors of irritability and disadvantage in social communications (6). Having such a child is both unacceptable and difficult for families since they don't have solutions to deal with the disorder (1). Research has shown these children are the source of the stress in their relationship with their mothers, affecting their mental health and compatibility (8). Therefore, self-control skills of mothers in the management of time, stress, control of anger, and control of emotions as well as emotional awareness can facilitate their thinking (9). Of course, the high level of religiosity of human, in terms of giving meaning to

himself and the world, can be self-controlling (10). Additionally, in recent years, spiritual self-care has also been the most important form of self-care and it is a practice that a person uses his spiritual beliefs and teachings as a source of control and protects his health (11). It has been emphasized in Islamic teachings that human should be careful about what he does; that is, if he decides to do a good job, he should immediately implement this decision, and if he decides to do something bad, he needs to change his mind immediately (12). Despite the importance that Islamic texts have given to self-control and family status, few studies have explored this issue. Therefore, considering the importance of self-control and better performance of autistic children's mothers, finding new ways to improve their self-control and better performance in the family has an important place and benefits. Thus, with this goal in mind, this study set out to determine the relationship of family assessment device and self-control with religious orientation in mothers with autistic children in Tehran (1394-1395).

Method: This descriptive study is correlational in nature. The population includes the community of mothers with autism children who were already registered as members in Tehran Autistic Community or in Tehran Charity Foundation for Autism in years 1394 and 1395. 100 mothers were chosen from among these mothers through convenience sampling considering Tabachnick & Fidell's formula. Participants met these criteria:

they had at least one autistic child, diagnosed by a psychiatrist;

they were at least diploma holders, a threshold of literacy to be able to understand the items;

they were between 35 and 45 years old.

Exit criteria were:

mothers with another sick child, apart from the autistic one;

mothers who were divorced or were the head of their family;

unmotivated mothers who were not interested to answer the questions;

mothers with severe mental and physical illness, either diagnosed by doctor or self-reported.

Research instruments included:

1) **Allport Religious Orientation Questionnaire:** This questionnaire based on Likert scale of 4 degrees and its reliability was obtained in the Janbozorgi's research (1377) was reported to be: Cronbach's alpha=0/71, retest=0/74 (13).

2) **Family Functioning Questionnaire:** Alpha coefficient range of 7 Subscales in this test was found to be 0/72-0/92. This test had a moderate correlation with Lock Wallace's Marital Satisfaction Scale (14).

3) **Tangney Self-control Questionnaire:** This self-report questionnaire Consists of 36 item. It is based on Lickert scale from 1 to 5, its reliability was obtained in the Arianpour and et al (Cronbach's alpha =0/89) (15). Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression) were used to

analyze the data.

Results: The results showed that there is no significant relationship between family functioning and internal religious orientation ($r=0/075$), external religious orientation ($r=0/034$) and general religious orientation ($r=-0/012$) with ($p>0.05$). However, there was a significant relationship between self-control and internal religious orientation ($r= 0.303$), external ($r= 0.233$) and general ($r= 0.342$) and family functioning ($r= 0.378$) with ($p<0.05$). The findings indicated a significant positive correlation (0.378) between family functioning and self-control. That is, with increase in family functioning, self-control increased among mothers and the other way round ($p<0.05$).

The results of regression analysis also showed that self-control ($\beta = 0.23$, $t = 2.12$, $p <0.05$) was a predictor of religious orientation while family functioning ($\beta = -0.06$, $t = -0.54$, $p > 0.05$) could not predict it.

Conclusion: Self-control is the ability to control the person's desires, behaviors and emotions when facing external demands in order to deliver the best performance in the community (16). One of the most important benefits of self-control is piety, their effect on each other being direct (17). Therefore, to illustrate, it can be said that since self-control is defined as the ability to follow a reasonable request, modifying a behavior in accordance with a position, delaying the satisfaction of a request in a socially accepted framework, without direct intervention and direct guidance of another person, and it is based on the individual's ability to control the voluntary internal processes and behavioral outsiders (18). As a result, a mother who has a lot of control, her family's functioning is also high. Taken together, it can be stated that the identification of structures and methods that lead to self-control of humans is likely to be beneficial for autistic children's mothers. With regard to the research conducted in recent decades, the role of religion and spirituality are highlighted; thus, mothers of these children who often spend more time with their children play a determining role in this case. If they have the ability to control themselves, they are more likely to be able to deal with the disabilities of their children and the consequences, having a significant impact on the recovery of their children in order to bring about a generation. Therefore, it is expected that more attention be paid to religion in educational programs related to autistic children's mothers.

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