

# Research Paper: The Relationship Between Family Communication Patterns and Adjustment With Resiliency in Children



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**Citation** Mashalpoore Fard M. The Relationship Between Family Communication Patterns and Adjustment With Resiliency in Children. Journal of Research & Health. 2020; 10(4):267-274. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32598/JRH.10.4.1484.1>

**doi**: <http://dx.doi.org/10.32598/JRH.10.4.1484.1>



## Article info:

Received: 16 Dec 2017

Accepted: 30 Aug 2018

Publish: 01 Jul 2020

## Keywords:

Family communication patterns, Adjustment, Resiliency

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The family is one of the most important factors in the all-round development of the children. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between family communication patterns and adjustment with resiliency in children.

**Methods:** This study was descriptive and correlational. The study population comprised all sixth-grade elementary school students in Ahvaz City, Iran in the 2016-2017 academic year. The study sample was selected by a multi-stage cluster sampling method. The revised family communication patterns instrument of Koerner and Fitzpatrick, Connor-Davidson resilience scale, and multidimensional adjustment scale were employed in this study. To analyze the data, the Pearson correlation and systematic regression were used.

**Results:** In this study, conversation orientation with resiliency ( $r=0.22$ ) and adjustment has a positive and significant relationship. Besides, the adjustment ( $\beta=0.26$ ) was also a positive and significant predictor of the family communication pattern. Therefore, the results showed that conversation orientation ( $\beta=0.19$ ) and resiliency ( $\beta=0.19$ ) are the positive and significant predictors of the adjustment. Finally, the results showed that family communication patterns and adjustment were the best predictors of student resilience ( $P \leq 0.01$ ). However, there was no significant relationship between resiliency and adjustment with an orientation of conformity ( $P \leq 0.01$ ).

**Conclusion:** Results suggested that predicting variables can increase resiliency and adjustment of students.

## 1. Introduction

The family is one of the most important educational environments that play a crucial role in maintaining mental, social, and physical health. Psychological conditions

such as parents-children, child-child, and parent-parent emotional relationships have facilitating or inhibiting effects on mental health and adjustment, social skills development, career development, and progress of children [1]. Family is a social unit which forms the foundation of human relationship and wife and husband freely

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cooperate to build an active unit called family [2]. Researches have shown that both conversation- and conformity-oriented families have a significant impact on the family members through relational interactions. Specifically, they shape the worldview of their children through verbal and nonverbal behavior [3, 4].

Families create a shared reality using a combination of two orientations: conversation, and conformity [5]. Akbari Booreng (2017) stated that family communication is also very essential since wrong communication creates tension in the family and affects children. Recognizing and defining family communication patterns, which are the ways for family members to interact with one another is, of high importance [6].

Researchers have tried to define family communications and categorized their styles and patterns. Research on parent-child communication has consistently demonstrated that parent-child interactions are characterized by open communication, warm and supportive behavior. The firm and consistent enforcement of developmentally appropriate expectations positively influence child adjustment [6]. Hostile, angry, and conflictual interactions, on the other hand, are associated with poorer adjustment. Various labels have been employed to describe these different types of parenting, including Baumrind's authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglecting parenting [7] and Koerner and Fitzpatrick's conversation orientation and conformity orientation [8].

The conformity dimension emphasizes coordination, avoidance of conflicts and contrasts, dependence, and unity of family members [8]. It urges members to unify their attitudes, values, and beliefs [9]. Such studies show that each dimension may have certain outcomes and effects. In this regard, Fitzpatrick and Ritchie stated that the dimensions of conversation orientation and conformity orientation determine to what extent the members of a family talk about their thoughts and feelings and share them [3].

In the conversation dimension, all family members are encouraged to discuss and share their ideas about a wide range of subjects [10] and spontaneously interact with each other [11]. Resilience represents the personal qualities that enable one to thrive in the face of adversity [4]. Resilience may be viewed as a measure of stress coping ability and, as such, could be an important target of treatment in anxiety, depression, and stress. Because of this interaction, it is expected that a supportive center is established for children who gain higher degrees of resilience. Family's unwillingness to discuss adoption is

associated with individual difficulties and family connectedness, including feeling adoption as deviant [12].

The question that always has come to mind while observing children is that why some children have certain flexibility in dealing with factors which cause stress but others have the problem to handle stress factor. Answer to this question directs us to the family environment and a new concept, which is called resilience [1]. Resilience refers to a person's ability to adapt successfully to acute stress, trauma, or other forms of adversity that are chronic reactions [13, 14]. Some views consider resiliency as a response to a specific event and one's ability to maintain a stable psychological equilibrium; this is the opposite of psychological vulnerability [15]. However, Grych, Hamby, and Banyard describe resilience as an enhancement in psychological wellbeing following an adverse experience [16]. Faircloth indicated that the study's main variables related to the expected directions and that resilience partially mediated the relationships between negative life events and the six indices of wellbeing [17].

Concluding from this overwhelming evidence, we expect that parent-child interaction plays a similarly relevant role in children's adjustment. Family interaction has a close influence on child and adolescent adjustment. Furthermore, the family's structure and the factors already identified as associated with children's adjustment are, compared with family interaction, more distal factors whose impact on adjustment is moderated by family interaction. The particular context that interacts with family interaction processes to determine child adjustment is very crucial [18]. Finally, those with histories of high-quality interpersonal relationships are likely to be better adjusted as adults [19].

This study may promote the psychology knowledge and its results provide suggestions and recommendations about the education and finally, because of the importance of conversation and the relationship between parents and their children, and their impact on the resiliency of the children, is the gap of this research, and findings of this study can be helpful on an understanding of more parent-child relationships. The question is whether a relationship exists between family communication patterns and adjustability with resilience among the sixth-grade students of elementary schools in Ahvaz City, Iran.

## 2. Methods

The research was a correlational study, and the study population comprised all sixth-grade elementary school students in Ahvaz City, Iran in 2016-2017. The subjects

were selected by a multi-stage sampling method. To select the schools and students, the simple random sampling method was employed. At first, five district education offices were selected. In the second stage, schools were selected from each district cluster. Three districts were selected using the probability proportion method based on their size. Then, from each district, four schools were selected randomly using probability proportional to size sampling method. Just from the sixth grade of each school selected randomly with the simple random sampling method.

Finally, using the class attendance list, the study students were selected with the simple random sampling method. In general, out of these six classes, 200 students were recruited. The inclusion criteria were being sixth-grade students, girls, with a minimum age of 10 years. The students with divorced parents and students with behavioral disorders and learning disability problems based on the report of the teachers were excluded. Subsequently, the results were analyzed. In this study, descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and frequency percentage and inferential statistics, including analysis of the Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regressions were used.

### Study tools

#### Revised family communication patterns instrument (RFCP)

This scale was introduced by Koerner and Fitzpatrick [20] and evaluates the degree of respondents' agreement on 26 items on family communications on a Likert-type scale from completely agree to completely disagree.

The first 11 items were related to conformity orientation. (e.g. In our home, my parents usually have the last word, or my parents often say that children should not argue with adults) The next 15 items refer to conversation orientation. (e.g. In our family, we often talk about our feelings and emotions or my parents encourage me to challenge their ideas and beliefs) Koerner and Fitzpatrick reported the reliability of this scale (the Cronbach alpha coefficient) for the conversation dimension as 0.89 (ranging from 0.92 to 0.82) and for the conformity dimension as 0.79 (ranging from 0.84 to 0.73). In Iran, Jowkar and Rahimi [21], and Sabri et al. [22] estimated the validity (factor analysis) and reliability (the Cronbach coefficient) of this scale and reported it as sufficient. In this study, the Cronbach coefficient was used to determine the reliability, 0.82 and 0.83 calculated for conversation and conformity dimensions, respectively.

#### Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC)

It is a self-report measure of resilience consisting of 25 items. The content of the scale reflects hardiness, control, commitment, personal, or collective goals. Change or stress is viewed as a challenge/opportunity, strengthening the effect of stress. Past successes, recognition of limits to control, engaging the support of others, and self-efficacy. Optimism, action orientation, self-esteem/confidence, adaptability, and tolerance of negative affect. Problem-solving skills, humor in the face of stress. Patience, faith, secure bonds to others. The scale rates participants over the past month with a total score of the CD-RISC varying from 0 to 100. The items scored on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores reflecting higher resilience. Mohammadi is using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, 0/89 reliability scale achieved, the validity of each item with the total score by using correlation coefficients between 0.41 to 0.64 achieved [23]. Samani, Sahragard, in a study among students of Shiraz achieved scale reliability by Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.87 [24].

#### Multidimensional Adjustment Scale (MAS)

Multidimensional adjustment scale has 15 questions for measuring compatibility and consistency in five dimensions. To assess the ability to adjust in different areas, Sohrabi and Samani developed a Multidimensional Adjustment Scale (MAS) [25]. It assesses five areas of adjustment: academic, social, family, job, and personal. The MAS consisted of 15 items. Every three items assess an area or dimension of adjustment (Appendix A). Sohrabi and Samani designed MAS based on Mundt et al. who developed an adjustment scale to assess work and social adjustment. The Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS) consisted of five items with a 9-point scale from not at all (0) to very severely [26].

Like WSAS, the lower score in the MAS shows a better level of adjustment [27]. The alpha coefficient for the subscales of MAS ranges from 0.69 to 0.82 and this value for the total score was 0.90 [25]. Also, the scores of the MAS showed negative correlation coefficients with the depression, anxiety, and stress scale [26].

### 3. Results

According to Table 1, there is a significant relationship between family communication patterns (conversation orientation) and adjustment with the resilience of female students. Also, there is a significant correlation between the dimensions of family communication patterns and resiliency and adjustment. Thus, conversation orienta-

tion with resiliency ( $r=0.22$ ) and adjustment has a positive and significant relationship. There is also a negative correlation between the conformity orientation with resiliency ( $r=-0.23$ ) and with the adjustment ( $r=-0.23$ ). In addition, there is a positive and significant correlation between resilience and adjustment ( $r=0.48$ ).

According to the results, the dimension of dialogue has a positive and significant relationship with resilience ( $r=0.73$ ,  $P\leq 0.001$ ), but the next step is the resignation of the negative relationship ( $r=-0.27$ ,  $P\leq 0.001$ ).

Based on Table 2, the correlation coefficient is 0.25 and the coefficient of determination is 0.62. This result shows that 25% of the variance of adjustment is explained by the variables of the dimensions of the family communication pattern. The comparison of beta coefficients showed that conversation orientation ( $\beta=0.26$ ) is a positive and significant predictor of adjustment, but conformity orientation ( $-0.17$ ) is not significant for adjustment prediction. Besides, the adjustment ( $\beta=0.26$ ) is also a positive and significant predictor of dimensions of the family communication pattern.

According to Table 3, the correlation coefficient is 0.31 and the coefficient of determination is 0.9. This result showed that 31% of the variance of resiliency is explained by the variables of the dimensions of the family communication pattern. The comparison of beta coefficients showed that conversation orientation ( $\beta=0.19$ ) is a positive and significant predictor of resiliency, but conformity orientation ( $-0.22$ ) is not significant for resiliency prediction. Also, the resiliency ( $\beta=0.19$ ) is a posi-

tive and significant predictor of dimensions of family communication patterns.

Based on Table 4, the correlation coefficient was 0.57 and the coefficient of determination was 0.32. This result shows that 32% of the variance of adjustment is explained by the variables of the dimensions of family communication pattern and resiliency. The comparison of beta coefficients showed that conversation orientation ( $\beta=0.19$ ) is a positive and significant predictor of adjustment, but the predictive power of conformity orientation is not significant for adjustment. Besides, the resiliency ( $\beta=0.19$ ) is also a positive and significant predictor of adjustment.

#### 4. Discussion

The results showed a significant relationship between resiliency with communication patterns, family orientated dialogue, and compatibility. There was no significant relationship between resiliency and adjustment with the orientation of conformity. On the other hand, the orientation of conversation and resiliency were able to predict the adjustment in the students. These results are consistent with the study results of [28, 29, 1]. According to the study results of Akbari et al., promoting conversation orientation and resilience and decreasing conformity orientation would lead to a reduction of test anxiety in the first-grade high school male students.

People with more resilience belong to the family that has high levels of dialogue. In other words, open communication and interaction among family members and valuing individuals to decide freely on the dialogue provides the context for responsible behavior that is a factor

Table 1. Dimensions of family communication patterns, adjustment, and resiliency with the coefficient (Mean±SD)

Variables	Mean±SD	1	2	3	4	
Family communication patterns	Conversation	39.77±13.4	1			
	Conformity	26.2±10.19	32*	1		
	Resiliency	40.3±27.4	22*	-0.23*	1	
	Adjustment	39.3±25.03	34*	-0.23*	0.48*	1

\* All coefficients are significant at the level of  $P\leq 0.01$ .



Table 2. The regression of adjustment on family communication patterns

Predictor Variables	Criterion Variable	F	P <	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	T	P <
Conversation	Adjustment	13.3	0.01	0.25	0.62	0.26	3.7	0.01
Conformity						-0.17	5.2	0.05



**Table 3.** The regression of resiliency on family communication patterns

Predictor Variables	Criterion Variable	F	P <	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	T	P <
Conversation	Resiliency	21.3	0.01	0.31	0.9	0.19	5.7	0.01
Conformity						-0.22	4.2	0.05

**Table 4.** Regression of adjustment on dimensions of family communication patterns and resilience

Predictor Variables	Criterion Variable	F	P <	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	T	P <
Conversation	Adjustment	23.6	0.01	0.57	0.32	0.19	1.7	0.01
Conformity						-0.9	5.8	0.05
Resiliency						0.43	5.55	0.01



in adjustment [28]. Also, Rusta and colleagues showed a statistically significant difference between students with academic achievement and those with academic failure in terms of family communication patterns (conversation and conformity orientation) [29]. In a study, Zarei et al. examined family communication patterns with the flexibility and quality of life for high school girls and showed that both of the family communication patterns (conversation and conformity) and resiliency were significant predictors of life quality [1].

Furthermore, according to Mathibe, parents who employ the authoritative parenting style are strict, consistent, and loving [30]. Authoritative parents are flexible in adjusting expectations they place on the child to suit the needs of the child [31]. Increasing conversation in the family contributes to the participation of children in the decisions, thus giving them the feeling of independence and self-expression [32]. According to our results, there is no significant relationship between resilience and communication patterns conformity.

The research by Keshtkaran has shown that the dimension of dialogue is a positive predictor of resilience, but then the conformity is a negative predictor of resilience, and the link between the dimension of dialogue is because parent relationships and relationships with are effective in their compatibility and coping strategies [9]. The researcher found a relationship between family communication patterns and mental health. In this way, the pattern of dialogue needs to predict mental health positively and meaningfully, and this expected to be predictable with respect to this pattern of male communication patterns and compatibility [33].

Communicational skills will improve social resiliency and educational progress [34]. These patterns are distinguished from each other and their recognition of some aspects helps family performance. Besides description, to predict and explain the families functioned and recommendations and prescriptions help [35]. In explaining this finding, we can say that the orientation of dialogue can affect mental health and compatibility [36] as well as academic self-efficacy [37] and happiness [21] and reduction of the level of anxiety and depression [36] is effective in children. Also, courageously and higher resilience [38] overcome difficulties and problems. William Good believed that the family as the most important institution of society succeeds in following ways in the child's socialization process: having effective relationships with the child, known authority, having a role model, sustaining relationships, giving freedom to the child, communication with explanation and reason, punishment and appropriate encouragement [39].

The current study has some limitations. Firstly, self-report tools were used for this analysis, which may introduce some bias. In this research, the sample of the research comprised only the girl children of the sixth grade and that is a limitation for the generalization of the results.

## 5. Conclusion

According to our results, the conversation can provide a good place for co-operation and better information exchange at home, due to the impact that it can have on the communication and interaction of parents and children, which can lead to more and more children's alleviation. Parents' behaviors at home can have a huge impact on the interaction between parents and children, and this in-

teraction can be a good opportunity to learn positive and negative social behaviors. Parents by giving guidance on how they treated with others affect the relationships of their children. Thus parents who have warm and sincere relationships with their children can better understand the recommendations and experiences of parents in improving social communication [28-34].

## Ethical Considerations

### Compliance with ethical guidelines

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Payame Noor University (Ethical No: IR.PNU.REC.1396.6716323).

### Funding

This research did not receive any grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

### Conflict of interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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