

# Effectiveness of the Democratic Relation Instruction to Mothers on the Psychological Capital of Daughters

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Psychological capital is one of the new concepts discussed nowadays. In fact, the design of this approach reflects its significance in the field of social capital. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of teaching democratic relationships to parents on female high school students' psychological capital.

**Methods:** The present study was conducted through the quasi-experimental method using pre and posttest and control group. The statistical population of this study includes all mothers and female high school students residing in district 4 of Tehran in 2015-16, from which, 42 subjects were selected using the cluster random method. Finally, they were randomly placed in two groups with 21 members (control and experiment). The research data was collected using Luthans psychological capital questionnaire. The experimental group attended ten 90-minute sessions of democratic relationships training, while the control group attended none. The collected data was analyzed using ANCOVA in descriptive statistics.

**Results:** Findings indicate that there is a significant difference in the psychological capital of the control and experimental group, showing that teaching democratic relationships to mothers was effective in increasing their daughters' psychological capital.

**Conclusion:** Based on the mentioned findings, it can be concluded that psychological capital is a personality trait with growing and developing capabilities, and it is affected by several factors including teaching democratic relationships to parents.

**Keywords:** Psychological Capital, Teaching Democratic Relationships, Female Students

## Introduction

In recent decades, with the emergence of positive psychology, the psychology field has been considerably changed, and effective studies have been conducted in various behavioral fields. One of the critical concepts in this field which has attracted serious attentions to itself in recent years is "Psychological capital", which is a relatively novel concept and new to academic studies. Psychological capital is a high-level positive ability with four conceptual dimensions capable of growing and evolving; self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency [1].

According to Luthans [1], psychological capital goes beyond social-capital (emphasizing on who do you know?), economic capital (emphasizing on what do you have?), human capital (emphasizing on what do you know?) and it stresses on the questions "who are you?", and "Who can you become?". In other words, psychological capital is an advancing movement from the real self (social, human and psychological capital) to the possible self [1].

Psychologists and sociologists believe that the family and parents bear three major responsibilities: 1) child support and protection duty, 2) emotional duty, and 3) socializing duty [2]. Moreover, Adler in 1960; cited from Dinkmeyer & Mc Key [3] claimed that one creates one's fundamental concepts of self and life during different growth stages in family; one experiences cooperation or conflict, courage or discouragement, equality, sense of inferiority or worthiness for the first time in family. Also, one discovers how much one can contribute and engage, trust and be trusted, and create concepts of possible competitions or unions.

Dreikurs & Silts [4] discuss that the biological reality of being a parent solely does not provide parents with effective parent skills. Parenting during each time period always seems as one of the difficult responsibilities of parents. Nowadays, parents understand that mixing love and affection with the traditional parenting method is no longer effective. Furthermore, with the dominant democratic atmosphere and such a social structure in which children have gained a social status equal to adults', having the skill of making democratic relationships and stressing on mutual respect by parents has become necessary [5]. Thus, parents should consider being trained for making effective relationships with their children as much as they do for their education, as their manner with their child will be the groundwork of their rearing and their empowerment. In the contemporary era, we should accept that creating (parent-child) relationship takes skill, it needs to be learnt and parents should not believe that they have inherited this skill from their own parents. Adler believes teaching the improvement of human relationships and mutual respect between parents and children (democratic relationship) is necessary [3]. In democratic relationships, Adler points to creating the sense of belonging and encouragement in children which leads to self-worth, trust in others (optimism), sense of cooperation, strength of testing new things, divergent thinking, courage to overcome failure (resiliency), confidence (self-efficacy), and positive self-concept (optimism) in individuals [5]. In investigating another common belief based on the significance of learning only during the early years of growth and underestimation of personality trait and behavioral change affected by learning, particularly in adolescence and the years after it: Adler [3] has referred to training effectiveness not only on childhood, but on adolescence as well, because adolescence is a critical and effective era of human's personal and social life. During this period, a major part of unique talents of the individual emerges and learning capability is at its optimum level. For the maximum efficiency of teenagers, cultivation of psychological capital can be considered as a personality trait with growth and eloquence potentials, as this capability can be cultivated in each stage of growth, even adolescence and its next stages.

Various efforts have discussed the effectiveness of parents' method of behavior with their children on the growth of their children's characteristics. Some of them are described here: Sabri, Fouladchang, Mohammadi

Dehaqani & Golzar [6] emphasis on the relationship of family communication patterns with resiliency, and emotional intelligence. Mister & Moris (2004), and Pajars (2002) showed the effectiveness of parenting methods on self-efficacy. In Touzandehjani, Tavakolizadeh & Legzban's [7] study, they proved that parenting has a strong effect on academic achievement, and academic motivation and self-efficacy of students. Borjali (2010) showed in his study that children coming from authoritative families are more psychologically and socially efficient compared to their peers coming from permissive and neglectful families. It has been proven that these children are responsible, adaptive, creative, curious and self-confident. Kustiah & Gufran [8] claimed that positive parenting has a positive relationship with the children's independence. In other words, parents' child rearing pattern affects and increases their children's independence. The study of Armstrong, Mackey, & Streisand [9] indicates that in early adolescence, parents' critical behaviors are related to psychological well-being of their children; as the children of such parents show more depression signs, less self-efficacy and self-care behaviors.

Considering what was mentioned, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of teaching democratic relationships to mothers on increasing their daughters' psychological capitals.

## Methods

This research is a quasi-experimental study with a pre and posttest and control group design. The statistical population includes the parents and female high school students of District 4 of Tehran city in 2015-16. Sampling was conducted using multistage cluster random method, which 42 individuals were selected, from which, 21 were the parents (experimental group) undergoing training and the other 21 individuals were the students whose parents had received no training and were placed in the control group.

### The used instruments in this study are as follows:

**Psychological capital questionnaire:** This questionnaire was created by Luthans in 2007 and has 24 items. Jacqueline [5] in his investigation has measured the validity of Luthans questionnaire through the relationship of this questionnaire with job satisfaction and self-rated performance questionnaires, and states that this questionnaire has a stable construct and a sound measuring tool for evaluation of psychological capital. Moreover, in Iran, Ghane Sangatash, Mirzazadeh, Azimzadeh, & Abdolmaleki, [10] confirmed the structural validity of the questionnaire in their research through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Furthermore, in this study, the reliability of Luthans psychological capital questionnaire was reported 0.84 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This reliability was reported 0.85 by Jafar Bahadori Khosroshah, Hashemi Nosratabad [11] Naderian [12] measured this item as 0.87 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Using the same method, this research found its reliability to be 0.80.

After making arrangements, acquiring the necessary licenses, referring to schools and selecting the statistical sample, 21 individuals were randomly placed in the experimental group, and another 21 in a control group. In addition to communicating the goals of the study to the parents, they were asked to attend the training courses. Before the beginning of the intervention, the daughters of the mothers in both groups completed the pretest phase.

After the intervention, the daughters of the experimental group individuals once again completed the psychological capital questionnaire as our posttest. Democratic relationship training was conducted in 10 ninety-minute sessions. Table 1 shows the contents of the training sessions which is taken from the Systematic Training for Effective Parenting book (STEP) (3) based on Adler's theory.

**Table 1.** Contents of democratic relationships training intervention sessions

<b>purpose</b>	<b>Content</b>
Session 1: introduction to democratic relationship training goals, stating the regulations on sessions, and the method of execution (duration: 90 minutes)	Defining democratic relationships and the necessity of its instruction because of the democratic atmosphere dominant in the society, the necessity of continuous presence in sessions, description of concepts presented in each session and an ask and answer time at the end of each session (in 20 minutes)
Session 2: introduction to concepts and statement of necessity of parents education in democratic relationships (duration: 90 minutes)	Defining parenting styles, authoritative style (democratic relationships) and the advantages of this parenting style against others (70 minutes), ask and answer time at the end of each session (in 20 minutes)
Session 3: correction of common beliefs in parents (duration: 90 minutes)	Explaining common beliefs in parents and their method of affecting on behavior and their judgment in facing their teenage child, relationship with their peers, non-stop parents monitoring, application of external control for changing the behaviors of their child (70 minutes) ask and answer time at the end of each session (in 20 minutes)
Session 4: defining common concepts in democratic relationships and valuing these concepts (duration: 90 minutes)	Defining encouragement and sense of belonging and other basic concepts in democratic relationships (children's involvement in legislation, mutual respect, win-win problem solving, active listening, and mutual understanding, ...) (70 minutes), ask and answer time at the end of each session (in 20 minutes)
Session 5: communicating adolescence and puberty trends (duration: 90 minutes)	Introduction to puberty signs including: personal-story, legend of Cinderella, mood swing; teenagers individual differences, trust seeking, invitation to challenge, snap decisions (70 minutes), ask and answer time at the end of each session (in 20 minutes)
Session 6: purposes of children mal-behavior (duration: 90 minutes)	Describing the purposes of children's mal-behavior; drawing attention, seeking power, revenge, isolation and support seeking (70 minutes), ask and answer time at the end of each session (in 20 minutes)
Session 7: suggesting practical solutions for parents when faced with the purposes of their children's mal-behavior. (duration: 90 minutes)	Identification of the purposes of children's mal-behavior and its coping solutions (ignoring the mal-behavior, anger control, encouraging positive and effective behaviors, conversing with the individual and being an active listener, realistic understanding of the individual's demands, not using punishment, threat, humiliation, overcoming the constraints of communication with children (70 minutes) ask and answer time at the end of each session (in 20 minutes)
Session 8: statement of the basic needs and identity creation of teenagers (duration: 90 minutes)	Describing the method of identity creation and identity crisis in adolescence, statement of special trends of adolescence (personal story, inclination to peers, mood swing, impulsivity, snap decisions, ...) (70 minutes) ask and answer time at the end of each session (in 20 minutes)
Session 9: the method of meeting teenagers' needs in democratic relationships (duration: 90 minutes).	The need to be heard, involvement of children in decision makings and legislations in the family space, attention to children's needs and talents without comparing them with their peers, respecting their demands, allowing for test and error and facing with the rational consequence of behaviors, etc. (70 minutes) ask and answer time at the end of each session (in 20 minutes)
Session 10: reviewing the instructional contents of former sessions and conclusion (duration: 90 minutes)	Conclusion of the subjects covered in previous sessions (40 minutes) and presenting notes about the contents of former sessions to attendants and answering the parents' questions (40 minutes), and seeking the opinions of them (10 minutes in written form)

**Results**

Table 2 shows the results of the usage of descriptive statistics for investigating the average and standard deviation values of the experimental and control groups in the two assessment stages of pre and posttest.

As it is apparent in Table 2, there are differences in the value of pre and posttest between groups. An appropriate test was used for investigating the significance of these differences.

Considering the research plan and application of pre and posttest in it, ANCOVA was adopted for controlling the effect of pretest, and for data analysis. Its presumptions were checked before the test. Results indicated that all presumptions were observed.

For investigating the differences between the two groups, while controlling the effect of pretest, ANCOVA

was utilized. Table 3 shows the results of this test.

The results of the above Table show that when the effect of the psychological capital pretest effect is controlled as an auxiliary variable, the difference between the experimental and control groups becomes significant. As it is apparent, ANCOVA results indicate that the group's effect was significant. In other words, there is a difference between the dependent variable (i.e. psychological capital) of the two groups ( $p < 0/001$ ). Given the Eta squared, it can be said that 54% of this change is due to the independent (intervention) variable effect. The total corrected effect size is 54% for the experimental group. Considering the information provided in Table 2, it can be said that the intervention of teaching democratic relationships to parents was effective in improving their children's psychological capital.

**Table 2.** Mean and Standard deviation of Psychological Capital

Group	Assessments	Psychological Capital	
		Mean	SD
Experiment	Pretest	101.71	24.62
	Posttest	113.00	9.16
Control	Pretest	93.67	8.61
	Posttest	93.48	8.66

**Table 3.** Results of ANCOVA to compare posttest of psychological capital in two groups

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	Effect size	Observed power
Pretest	195.877	1	195.877	2.561	.118	.06	.345
Group	3444.063	1	3444.063	45.023	<.001	.54	1.000
Error	2983.361	39	76.496				

**Discussion**

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of teaching democratic relationships to parents on the psychological capital of female high school students. Results of the present research indicate that teaching democratic relationships to parents has a positive and significant effect on students' psychological capital. The findings of this study is parallel with ones with Gardner [13], Smith (2007), Aunola, & Nurmi [14], Sabri, Fouladchang, Muhammadi Dehaqani & Golzar [6]. In explaining the concluding results, it can be said that we all have a system of beliefs providing the structure of our world which gives meaning to our experiences, without which we would be confused and errant [15]. The purpose of teaching democratic relationships to today's parents is to correct traditional parenting beliefs which seems to be inherited from their antecedents and is now ineffective. The democratic atmosphere dominant on a family (creating democratic relationships) cultivates efficient beliefs in children of that household. Bandura believes that self-efficacy as one's perceived ability (capability) in accomplishing a desired task or coping with a specific situation is the most axial mechanism among human mental mechanisms [15]. When our self-efficacy beliefs are formed, they affect human performance quality in different ways. In general, the more people expect themselves to do something more appropriately (optimism), they tend to put effort and endurance (resiliency) when faced with problems [14, 16]. Family studies nowadays are more concerned with how one can

endure and cope with stress factors, and how family affects this basic capability of individuals. Thus, family communication patterns and individuals' life quality affects their resiliency. Parents playing a better role in raising their child would have a more resilient child [17]. Although hope is considered as a tendency and mood quality that is not easily changed [18], but it is presented as a developable state [19, 20]. This component is developed as well under the effect of relationships created by parents with their children. Finally, it is the optimism component which is cultivated under the effect of the democratic mood dominant on family.

**Conclusion**

Culbertson, Fullagar, & Mills [21] discussed that optimism is avoiding unfavorable events of life, which consequently leads to the reduction of depression, sense of guilt and hopelessness. Also, in an uncertain environment conditions, it keeps employees' motivation, effort and performance at the same level. Optimism can be provoked and developed by pursuing personal goals. Generally, this parenting style facilitates the ground for cultivating children's psychological capital in their families [13, 22, 23].

The significance of teaching democratic relationships to parents is that mixing the traditional method with love and affection is no longer effective in parenting; social constructs based on democracy has undergone increasing changes. Therefore, educating and preparing individuals for a growing society is necessary. Accurate instruction,

cultivating the power of reason and judgment, the capability of facing with problems and the method of appropriate interactions with individuals for meeting one's needs is one of the most important necessities of today. Through this way, one can distinguish the right path from wrong. Parents are the most important individuals in one's life and they can play a considerable role in cultivating their children's psychological capital. Thus, parents' education for achieving this goal is necessitated more than before. Students entering the third millennium need to be able to think for themselves, have the skill of self-instruction, self-regulation, self-direction and rational judgment. In other words, they should be equipped with psychological capital. Similar to other studies, this research was faced with some limitations, including educating parents in a limited number of sessions with insufficient time, and the possibility of conducting the instructional plan in a limited number of schools. Therefore, the following is suggested: for the purpose of cultivating children's psychological capital, parents should always be provided with professional consultation services for being aware of the democratic relationships effectiveness in the family space, and after approved by the experts of this field, the instructional contents of this study and similar ones should be provided for efficient teachers in schools for equalization of the instructional plan, so that a similar instructional plan is utilized for parents throughout the whole educational year (not just a temporary period).

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