







The University of Tehran Press

The Mediating Role of Suicidal Ideation in the Relationship between Parenting Styles, Basic Psychological Needs and Perceived Burdensomeness with Non-Suicidal Self-Injury among Adolescents

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Extended Abstract

Aim

Over the past two decades, there has been a growing focus on non-suicidal self-injury a deliberate and direct destruction of body tissue, such as cutting, scratching, or burning the skin, as well as hitting oneself without the intent of suicide (Esposito et al., 2019; Liu, 2017). This trend has escalated to become a significant concern (Lim et al., 2019). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the mediating role of suicidal ideation in the relationship between parenting styles, basic psychological needs, perceived burdensomeness, and non-suicidal self-injury among adolescents.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational approach, utilizing structural equation modeling for data analysis. The population comprised high school students in Tehran during the academic year 2019-2020, totaling 224,400 individuals. Through cluster random sampling, 420 students were selected. Tehran was divided into five regions—north, south, west, east, and central—each with two districts randomly chosen through a lottery system: districts 1 and 2 from the north, districts 17 and 18 from the south, districts 4 and 8 from the east, districts 5 and 9 from the west, and districts 6 and 10 from the central region. Subsequently, seven girls' schools and seven boys' schools were randomly selected from each district. Individuals exhibiting non-suicidal self-injury behaviors, comprising 3 to 4 students from grades 10 to 12 in each school, were identified through counselors and school principals. Questionnaires were then distributed among them. The research instruments included the Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation (Beck, Kovacs & Weissman, 1979), the Self-Harm Inventory (Sansone, Wiederman, Sansone & Touchet, 1998), the Basic Needs Satisfaction in General Scale (Gagné, 2003), the Parents as Social Context Questionnaire (Skinner, Johnson & Snyder, 2005), and the Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire (Van Orden et al., 2012). Data analysis was conducted using structural equation modeling with statistical software SPSS 23 and AMOS 23.

Findings

The results from structural equation modeling revealed that parenting styles, basic needs, and perceived burdensomeness exhibit significant negative direct effects on suicidal ideation ($\beta = -0.20$, $p < 0.05$), ($\beta = -0.57$, $p < 0.001$), and ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.001$) respectively. Furthermore, suicidal ideation demonstrates a positive effect on non-suicidal self-injury ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$), while basic needs exert a direct negative influence on non-suicidal self-injury ($\beta = -0.26$, $p < 0.001$). Parenting styles, basic psychological needs, and perceived burdensomeness collectively explain 44% of the

variance in suicidal ideation. Moreover, these factors, along with suicidal ideation, account for 35% of the variance in non-suicidal self-injury.

Conclusion

The research findings underscore the importance of appropriate parenting styles, fulfillment of basic psychological needs, and reduction of perceived burdensomeness and suicidal ideation among adolescents in mitigating non-suicidal self-injury. In line with the Three-Step Theory of Suicide Ideation (Klonsky & May, 2015), it is evident that adolescents, in the initial stage, engage in power struggles with their parents, seeking autonomy, yet facing resistance due to inappropriate parenting styles. This leads to feelings of powerlessness, ineffectiveness, and hopelessness, fostering suicidal ideation. Subsequently, decreased reliance on parents exacerbates feelings of burden, intensifying suicidal thoughts, which may culminate in self-harm as an escape mechanism. Educational workshops focusing on parenting styles and meeting basic psychological needs are recommended for both parents and adolescents. Adequate satisfaction of these needs, coupled with positive parenting practices, can buffer individuals against negative environmental influences, consequently reducing self-injurious thoughts and behaviors.

Keywords: Basic Psychological Needs, Non-Suicidal Self-Injury, Parenting Styles, Perceived Burdensomeness, Suicidal Ideation.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research encompassed ensuring individuals' privacy regarding information confidentiality and respecting their right to privacy and confidentiality in maintaining this information. The right to withdraw from the research if unwilling to continue participation was upheld, and every effort was made to avoid any psychological or physical harm to the participants.

Acknowledgments

The authors of this article wish to express their gratitude to all participating students whose cooperation facilitated the conduct of the study. This article is extracted from the doctoral dissertation in general psychology at the Islamic Azad University, Karaj Branch, Tehran. The current article has not received any financial support.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest associated with this article.

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Cite this article: Valinezhad, A., Rezabakhsh, H., Nemattavousi, M., & Kraskian Mujembari, A. (2024). The Mediating Role of Suicidal Ideation in the Relationship Between Parenting Styles, Basic Psychological Needs and Perceived Burdensomeness with Non-Suicidal Self-Injury among Adolescents. *Journal of Applied Psychological Research*, 15(1), 91-114. doi: 10.22059/japr.2024.342474.644251.



Publisher: University of Tehran Press
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22059/japr.2024.342474.644251>

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