

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY CARE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS IN YIMIN MIDDLE SCHOOL^{*}

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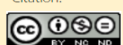
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Abstract

The research title is The Relationship between Family Cares and Psychological Problems of Students in Yimin Middle School. The research objectives are: 1) to study the family care of students in Yimin Middle School, 2) to study the psychological problems of students in Yimin Middle School, 3) to study the relationship between the family care and psychological problems of students in Yimin Middle School. To obtain the research results more accurately, the sample group used in this study includes 285 students in Yimin Middle School. The research instrument is questionnaires. The statistics are used for data analyzing by finding frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product moment correlation. The conclusions, discussion, and suggestions are as follows:

1. The family care of students in Yimin Middle School in 5 aspects was at a high level Considering the results of these 5 research aspects were as follows:

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the highest rank was “Emotional Regulation” indicates a high level. whereas “Social Connections” was the lowest rank.

2. The psychological problems of students in Yimin Middle School in 4 aspects was at a moderate level Considering the results of these 4 research aspects were as follows: the highest rank was “Somatic Symptoms” indicates a moderate level. Whereas “Emotional Disturbances” was the lowest rank.

3. It was found that the overall relationship between family care and psychological problems has a negative correlation at a very low level with no statistical significance level ($r=-0.050$)

Keywords: Family Care, Psychological Problems, Yimin Middle School

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical stage in psychological development and socialization. During this period, individuals experience rapid changes in emotional experiences, cognitive patterns, and behavioral regulation, making psychological problems more likely to emerge. Previous studies have shown that adolescents’ psychological problems are multidimensional in nature, encompassing emotional disturbances, cognitive distortions, behavioral dysregulation, and somatic symptoms. These manifestations are shaped by the interaction between developmental characteristics and environmental factors (Achenbach, 2021; Beck, 2019; McEwen, 2017). Therefore, examining the key factors influencing adolescents’ psychological problems within specific school contexts is of both theoretical and practical significance.

Based on the institutional framework and instructional organization of the school, together with the developmental characteristics of its student population, junior high school students are generally exposed to escalating academic demands, frequent performance evaluations, and increasingly complex peer interactions. As a typical secondary school, Yimin Middle School serves

adolescents who are in a critical developmental stage marked by significant psychological and emotional transitions. Students are required not only to adapt to intensified academic pressure but also to navigate challenges related to identity development, emotional regulation, and interpersonal adjustment. In such a context, psychological problems may not necessarily be present as overt emotional disturbances; rather, they may manifest indirectly through learning-related cognitive difficulties or stress-related somatic complaints. This developmental and contextual complexity underscores the importance of conducting systematic investigations into students' psychological conditions. (Meng, C. et to all., 2023; Zhonghua. et to all., 2023)

Among the various environmental factors affecting adolescents' mental health, family care is widely regarded as one of the most fundamental and enduring sources of support. Emotion socialization theory emphasizes the central role of the family in adolescents' emotional development, suggesting that parents influence children's emotional stability and psychological adjustment by modeling and guiding emotional expression and regulation in daily interactions (Intarasompun, W. et to all. 2022; Zimin, Z., et to all., 2023). For students at Yimin Middle School, the family not only constitutes an essential living environment beyond school but also serves as a primary source of emotional support, understanding, and psychological security.

Furthermore, stress and coping theory posits that individuals' psychological outcomes in stressful situations depend largely on their cognitive appraisal of stress and the coping strategies they adopt, with family support playing a crucial role in this process. During middle school years, students continuously adjust to academic competition, teacher-student interactions, and peer relationships, making family care particularly important in helping them alleviate stress and develop adaptive coping strategies. (Daming, H. et to all. 2023; Peihao, X. et to all., 2023). In addition, attachment theory suggests that stable

and secure emotional bonds within the family provide adolescents with a sense of psychological safety, enabling them to cope more effectively with external challenges. (American Psychiatric Association, 2022; McEwen, 2017; Xiang Hui. et to all., 2023; Yanting, C. et to all., 2023)

However, existing research also indicates that family care is not the sole determinant of adolescents' psychological problems. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR) and stress-related models, psychological problems at non-clinical levels often manifest through somatic symptoms or cognitive difficulties rather than explicit emotional disturbances (American Psychiatric Association, 2022; McEwen, 2017). This suggests that it is necessary to examine the relationship between family care and psychological problems within specific educational contexts, considering adolescents' developmental characteristics and the ways psychological difficulties are expressed.

This study examines family care and psychological problems among students at Yimin Middle School, focusing on their levels and interrelationship. By grounding research in a real middle school context, it aims to provide empirical evidence for understanding adolescents' psychological development and to inform collaborative efforts between schools and families in promoting students' mental health.

Objectives

1. To study the family care of students in Yimin Middle School,
2. To study the psychological problems of students in Yimin Middle School,
3. To study the relationship between family care and psychological problems of students in Yimin Middle School,

Literature Review

1. Family care

Across contemporary developmental and family research, family care is best synthesized as a relationship-based support system rather than a purely material or supervisory arrangement. It reflects parents' emotional warmth and responsiveness, respectful and open communication, and developmentally appropriate autonomy support, which together enhance adolescents' psychological security and self-regulation. From a risk and resilience perspective, stable and supportive family processes can buffer everyday stressors and strengthen adaptive coping, thereby reducing vulnerability to maladjustment during adolescence (Eisenberg & Morris, 2017; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984/2019; Orth & Robins, 2019; Steinberg, 2020). Accordingly, in this study, family care is treated as a multidimensional protective resource that supports adolescents' emotional stability, resilience, and adaptive functioning.

2. Psychological problems

Psychological problems in adolescence should be synthesized as interconnected and developmentally shaped difficulties rather than isolated symptoms. Literature consistently conceptualizes these problems as co-occurring profiles spanning emotional distress, cognitive difficulties, behavioral dysregulation, and somatic complaints, with expression patterns influenced by stress exposure and regulatory capacity (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001; Beck, 2019; McEwen, 2017). Developmental psychopathology research further emphasizes that disruptions in emotion and stress-regulation processes under chronic or cumulative stress can elevate risk across multiple symptom domains (McLaughlin, 2019). Thus, psychological problems are operationalized here as a multidimensional construct reflecting broader adjustment challenges within specific developmental and school contexts.

3. Research Framework

Guided by emotion socialization perspectives, stress and coping theory, and developmental models of self-regulation and adjustment (Eisenberg & Morris, 2017; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984/2019; Orth & Robins, 2019), this study integrates family and developmental mechanisms to explain variation in adolescents' psychological functioning. Family care is operationalized across five dimensions: Emotional Regulation, Stress Management, Social Connection, Self-Esteem and Confidence, and Coping Skills. Psychological problems are modeled across four domains: Emotional Disturbances, Cognitive Distortions, Behavioral Dysregulation, and Somatic Symptoms, reflecting the multidimensional nature of adolescent difficulties (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001; McLaughlin, 2019).

The research framework can be described as the figure following.



Figure 1 Research Framework

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research method to systematically explore the relationship between family care and psychological problems. The

research process includes population and sample determination, research instrument design, data collection, and data analysis.

1. The Population and The Sample Group

The Population

The Population is 1100 students in Yimin Middle School, located in Sichuan province.

The Sample Group

The sample are 285 students in Yimin Middle School, located in Sichuan province are selected to be the sample group, determined by simple random sampling, and following the method set by Krejcie and Morgan's method (1970) for determining sample size.

2. Research Instruments

The research instrument is a questionnaire with 3 parts:

Part 1: General Information. This section has 4 questions to gather background information on the respondent's gender, your age, your level, your academic performance average.

Part 2: (family cares). It is 5 rating Scales. This main section has questionnaires statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from " means strongly disagree" to " means strongly agree ". It is organized into 5 dimensions: 1) Content of the questions for Emotional Regulation (5 statements); 2) the questions for Stress Management (5 statements); 3) the questions for Social Connections (5 statements); 4) the questions for Self-Esteem and Confidence (5 statements); 5) the questions for Coping Skills (5 statements).

Part 3: (psychological problems). It is 5 rating Scales. This main section has questionnaires statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from " means strongly disagree" to " means strongly agree ". It is organized into 4 dimensions: 1) Content of the questions for Emotional Disturbances (5 statements); 2) the questions for Cognitive Distortions (5 statements); 3) the

questions for Behavioral Dysregulation (5 statements); 4) the questions for Somatic Symptoms (5 statements)

All statements display consistency with the measurement targets evidenced by an average score of 0.67 to 1.00 on the acceptable consistency Dex (OC). The reliability of a pilot test of questionnaires assessed using Cronbach's α , a statistic measuring internal consistency, with a value of 0.89 indicates excellent internal consistency.

3. Data Collection

To ensure the systematic collection of data, the researcher implemented the following procedures:

Distribution: The online questionnaires were distributed to students at Yimin Middle School via digital channels. Each respondent was informed of the research objectives, confidentiality, and their voluntary participation.

Platform Utilization: Data was collected through the "Questionnaire Star" (Wenjuan Xing) online platform, which facilitated efficient data gathering and management.

Data Screening: Upon completion of the collection period, the raw data were screened. Invalid responses, such as incomplete forms or patterned answers, were excluded to ensure the integrity of the results.

Preparation for Analysis: The final valid datasets were coded and organized for statistical processing and analysis.

4. Data analysis

Part 1 To study family care of students in Yimin Middle School, data analysis uses mean and stand deviation.

Part 2 To study the psychological problems of students in Yimin Middle School, data analysis uses mean and stand deviation.

Part 3 The relationship between the family cares and psychological problems of students in Yimin Middle School was analyzed by using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r).

Results

Part 1: Family Cares

Table 1 The mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) of the family care of students in Yimin Middle School in 5 aspects.

(n=285)

family care	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	Ranking
1. Emotional Regulation	3.71	0.80	High	1
2. Stress Management	3.70	0.81	High	2
3. Social Connections	3.67	0.85	High	5
4. Self-Esteem and Confidence	3.68	0.80	High	3
5. Coping Skills	3.67	0.84	High	4
Total	3.69	0.82	High	

From Table 1 considering, the overall average of the family care of students in Yimin Middle School in 5 aspects was at a high level ($\bar{x}$ =3.69, S.D.= 0.82). Considering the results of these 5 research aspects were as follows: the highest rank was " Emotional Regulation " ($\bar{x}$ =3.71, S.D.= 0.80), indicates a high level. Followed by " Stress Management " ($\bar{x}$ =3.70, S.D.= 0.81), whereas "Social Connections" a was the lowest rank ($\bar{x}$ =3.67, S.D.= 0.85).

Part 2: Psychological Problems

Table 2 The mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) of the psychological problems of students in Yimin Middle School in 4 aspects.

(n=285)

psychological problems	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	Ranking
1. Emotional Disturbances	2.52	1.02	Moderate	4
2. Cognitive Distortions	2.55	1.02	Moderate	2
3. Behavioral Dysregulation	2.54	0.99	Moderate	3
4. Somatic Symptoms	2.56	1.04	Moderate	1
Total	2.56	1.02	Moderate	

From Table 2 the overall average the psychological problems of students in Yimin Middle School in 4 aspects, was at a Moderate level ($\bar{x}$ =2.56, S.D.= 1.02). Considering the results of these 4 research aspects were as follows: the highest rank was "Somatic Symptoms" ($\bar{x}$ =2.56, S.D.=1.04), indicates a Moderate level. Followed by "Cognitive Distortions" ($\bar{x}$ =2.55, S.D.=1.02), whereas "Emotional Disturbances" was the lowest rank ($\bar{x}$ =2.52, S.D.= 1.02).

Part 3: The relationship between family care and psychological problems

Table 3 The relationship between Family Cares and Psychological Problems.

Psychological problems (Y_{tt})	Family care (X_{tt})					
	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_{tt}
Y1	-0.033	-0.045	-0.033	0.041	-0.090	-0.070
Y2	-0.006	-0.100	-0.003	0.093	0.043	0.014
Y3	0.002	0.068	0.057	0.044	-0.080	0.04
Y4	-0.041	-0.009	-0.073	-0.059	-0.026	-0.093
Ytt	-0.036	-0.039	-0.025	0.053	-0.070	-0.050

From table 3 it is shown that the overall relationship between family care and psychological problems has a negative correlation at a very low level with

no statistical significance level ($r=-0.050$) Considering the minor variables in the correlation detail, the strongest negative correlation was found between Somatic Symptoms and Social Connections ($r = -0.073$). In contrast, the weakest correlations were observed between Behavioral Dysregulation and Emotional Regulation ($r = 0.002$), as well as between Cognitive Distortions and Social Connections ($r = -0.003$).

Discussion

1. The findings indicate that students at Yimin Middle School reported a generally high level of family care across five dimensions, with emotional regulation ranking highest and social connections ranking lowest. This pattern suggests that family care in the present context primarily emphasizes internal emotional support rather than the facilitation of adolescents' external social interactions. This result is consistent with emotion socialization theory, which highlights the family's central role in shaping adolescents' emotional understanding and regulation through daily interactions (Eisenberg & Morris, 2017). In addition, stress and coping theory suggests that emotional support from family members enhances adolescents' capacity to manage stress effectively (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). By contrast, attachment theory emphasizes emotional security within the family but does not necessarily entail active parental involvement in adolescents' broader social networks, which may explain the relatively lower level of social connections (Bowlby, 1969/1982).

2. About psychological problems, the results showed a moderate overall level across four dimensions. Somatic symptoms were most prominent, followed by cognitive distortions, whereas emotional disturbances were least evident. This pattern suggests that psychological difficulties among the students tended to manifest through physical complaints and maladaptive cognitive patterns rather than overt emotional distress. According to the DSM-5-TR, adolescents'

psychological problems at non-clinical levels often present indirectly through somatic symptoms, particularly under sustained stress (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Beck's cognitive theory further explains the prominence of cognitive distortions, as negative automatic thoughts may emerge even when emotional symptoms are not salient (Beck, 2019). In addition, McEwen's stress-related model indicates that prolonged exposure to academic and daily stress can lead to physiological dysregulation, resulting in somatic symptoms prior to emotional disturbances (McEwen, 2017).

3. Despite the generally high level of family care, the relationship between family care and psychological problems was found to be a very weak negative correlation and did not reach statistical significance ($r = -0.050$). This finding suggests that family care alone may not exert a direct influence on adolescents' psychological problems. From a theoretical perspective, ecological systems theory emphasizes that adolescent development is shaped by multiple interacting contexts beyond the family, including peers and school environment (Bronfenbrenner). Moreover, stress and coping theory proposes that psychological outcomes depend largely on individuals' cognitive appraisal and coping strategies rather than external support alone (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Taken together, these findings suggest that family care may function more as an indirect or buffering factor, and its influence on psychological problems may be contingent upon other personal and contextual variables.

Recommendation

The implementation of the research results is as follows.

1. Given the high level of family care with a strong emphasis on emotional regulation, it is recommended that families and schools continue to prioritize emotional support as a core protective resource for adolescents.

2. Considering that psychological problems were at a moderate level and were mainly manifested through somatic symptoms and cognitive distortions, schools should strengthen preventive mental health support.

3. Given the very weak and non-significant association between family care and psychological problems, interventions should adopt a multi-contextual perspective. In addition to family support, greater emphasis should be placed on peer relationships, school environment, and individual coping capacities. Future research is encouraged to examine potential mediating and moderating mechanisms underlying these relationships.

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