



Original Article

The correlation between mothers' knowledge of non-verbal communication on mother-child relationship

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Abstract

Introduction: This study investigated the relationship between mothers' knowledge of non-verbal communication and the relationship between mother and child.

Materials and Methods: The population of this correlational study consisted of mothers having 3-6-year child in the academic year of 2015-2016. Pre-school institutions in the five districts of Shiraz were studying. The sample of the study consisted of 154 women, were selected by multistage cluster sampling. The research instrument included test of non-verbal cue knowledge (TONCK) and the scale of the relationship between parent-child (PCRS). Data analyzed by descriptive and analytical statistics using SPSS software.

Results: The results showed that the mothers' knowledge of non-verbal communication and overall positive mother-child relationship were not correlated. In addition, there was no significant correlation between mothers' knowledge of non-verbal communication with subscales of the mother-child relationship, and mothers' age and education.

Conclusion: It seems that there is not significant correlation between the mothers' knowledge of non-verbal communication and overall positive mother-child relationship.

Keywords: Communication, Knowledge, Mother-child relationship, Non-verbal

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Introduction

Family is a place where a person starts his/her life and is one of the factors influencing the quality and functioning of the family system and the relationships and interactions governing the family members (1). Meanwhile, the parents' relations especially the mother-child relationship, plays a decisive role in shaping the child's personality and mental health in adulthood (2). The quality of the early relations of the mother and the child is related to the child's future relationships (3). The intimacy relationship between mother and child causes children to internalize optimal beliefs and behaviors by modeling (4). Some researchers believe that children's behavioral problems in the early years of life are related to the negative interaction between mother and child (5). Also, mother's non-verbal knowledge plays an important role in creating intimacy and trust in mutual understanding and social adjustment with the child (6). Mothers who cuddle their children will turn them into self-confidence adults (7). Often, the importance and influence of non-verbal messages, in transmitting meaning and feeling, is so great that affect verbal messages (8). The results of the research show that in an interaction, fifty-five percent of all emotions are expressed using non-verbal communication. Therefore, the lack of understanding of the child's body language can cause more than 90% of his/her thoughts and feelings not to be transmitted (9). In this regard, Maghrebi Sinaki et al. showed that training the communication skills had a significant effect on the promotion of parent-child interaction and reduced the components of conflict and dependence and increased the proximity component (10). Zahedi-Kia showed that non-verbal communication training significantly increased social competence,

and willingness to participate versus students' indifference and unfriendliness (11). Etemadi et al. found that problem solving-based group therapy reduced mother-daughter conflicts (12) also verbal communication had a relative influence on non-verbal communication in mother-child relationship (13). Based on a study, the combined method significantly improved the mother-child relationship in the dimensions of conflict and dependence, but no significant difference was observed in the positive relationship between mother and child (4). Lauren, Maxim and Nowicki found that there was a significant relationship between social competence and non-verbal behavior in elementary school children (14). Abareshi et al. showed that training the child's psychosocial development by improving the mother-child interaction did not affect the positive relationship between the mother and the child (15). According to numerous researches done on the relationship between non-verbal communication knowledge and various factors such as social competence, shyness, social adequacy, and social development, as well as the importance of non-verbal knowledge on effective communication and the lack of domestic research in the field of the relationship of non-verbal knowledge with the mother-child relationship, this study specifically examined the correlation between the mothers' non-verbal knowledge and the overall mother-child positive relationship.

Materials and Methods

The method used in this study was descriptive-correlational. The statistical population of the study included all mothers with children aged 3-6 years old, whose children were attending kindergartens and preschools under the supervision of the Welfare Organization in the academic year 2015-2016 in Shiraz. Considering that the

population of the target community was 260 people, a number of 154 people were selected as the sample size according to Morgan's table. The sampling method used in this study was a multi-stage cluster sampling method in which the work was initiated by referring to the Welfare Organization of Shiraz and obtaining permission to conduct research. After obtaining permission from the relevant organization, five districts were randomly selected among the ten districts of Shiraz, and next the number of kindergartens and preschools under the supervision of the Welfare Organization was identified. Among 13 kindergartens and preschoolers, five kindergartens and preschoolers was randomly selected; then, by receiving an introduction letter from the organization, the researcher referred to the selected kindergartens and preschoolers and convinced the managers to cooperate in the implementation of the research by providing explanations on the topic of the research. Then, by holding a meeting for mothers, explanations about the importance and applicability of this research were presented and the questionnaires were distributed among the mothers in the meeting and they were asked to answer the questionnaire with accuracy and honesty and, finally, to deliver the questionnaires to the managers of the kindergartens. In this research, two questionnaires were used for measuring and collecting data.

Research instrument

A) *Knowledge of Nonverbal Cue Test*: This pencil and paper test measures the non-verbal knowledge of individuals from the two dimensions of meanings and their application. This test was developed by Rossip and Hall (16) at Boston University. This test has 81 items, in which people are asked to answer by choosing true or false

options. The score ranges 0-81. The validity of the test was calculated through Cronbach's alpha as 0.89. The test was standardized by Bani Assadi (6) in 2009, which the final form was reduced to 55 that the individuals' scores range zero to 55. The reliability of the test was calculated to be equal to 0.69 through Cronbach's alpha. Also, the validity of the test was confirmed through specialist validity.

B) *Parent-Child Relationship Scale*: This scale was first developed by Pianta in 1994, and includes 33 items that measure the parents' perception about their relationship with the child. This scale includes the components of conflict, proximity, dependency, and overall positive relationship, which were of the Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.84, 0.69, 0.46 and 0.80, respectively (10). The reliability of these scales was also reported to be equal to 0.84, 0.70, 0.61 and 0.86 by Abareshi in Iran, and because the sample in his research was the mothers of 0-3 year-old children, and it was not possible that some items were included in the questionnaire, the number of items was reduced from 33 to 24 items (15). For this reason, the 33-item scale calculated by Fariba Mofrad was used in this research. In Mofrad (2011), the construct validity using a confirmatory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the validity and reliability of the parent-child relationship scale.

In confirmatory factor analysis, researcher aimed to confirm the special factor structure. About the number of factors, a hypothesis is explicitly stated and the fitness of the intended factor structure in the hypothesis is tested by the covariance structure of the measured variables (17).

Table 1. Good fitness indexes of the confirmatory factor analysis model of parent-child relationship scale

Chi-square model	df	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	NNFI
Single factor 605.3	486	0.042	0.79	0.79	0.85

Results

According to the previous discussions, the main aim of this study was to determine the correlation between mothers’ knowledge of non-verbal behavior and the overall positive relationship between mother and child. To this end, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, categorized and

measured. Then inferential analysis was used to test the hypotheses and answer the research questions. In the table below, the descriptive indexes of the score of mothers’ non-verbal knowledge and the mother-child overall relationship with their dimensions are reported.

Table 2. Index of main variables of research and its sub-scales

Index of variables	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Non-verbal knowledge	34.37	5.29	17	48
Overall mother-child relationship	117.84	18.31	64	157
Attachment (intimacy)	45.14	3.99	27	50
Conflict	43.32	14.19	17	83
Dependency	21.99	4.05	11	30

Pearson correlation test was used to examine the correlation between mothers’ knowledge of nonverbal behavior and mother-child

relationship and its sub-scales (attachment, dependency and conflict).

Table 3. Pearson correlations to measure the relationship between mothers’ knowledge of nonverbal behavior and overall mother-child relationship, mother-child attachment, mother-child conflict and mother-child dependency

Variable	Correlation coefficient (r)	P
Mother-child relationship	0.04	0.610
Mother-child attachment	0.09	0.249
Mother-child conflict	0.07	0.350
Mother-child dependency	0.02	0.775

Based on the results, there are no relationships between mothers’ knowledge of non-verbal behavior and the overall

mother-child relationship, mother-child attachment, mother-child conflict and mother-child dependency.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that there was no significant correlation between (mothers’) knowledge of non-verbal behavior and mother-child relationship. The results of the study are consistent with the results of Abarashi et al. (15) which indicates the ineffectiveness of the program for promoting children’s psychosocial development on the mother-child attachment, Grebelsky-Lichtman (13) that suggests the relative domination and influence of verbal communication on non-

verbal communication in mother-child relationship, Masumi Zare et al., (4) that indicate the ineffectiveness of combined parenting and behavioral therapy approach on improving the overall positive mother-child relationship. Although the present findings are in contrary with the results by Maghrebi Sinaki et al. (10) that indicate the effectiveness of communication skills on promoting parent-child interaction and decreasing dependency, as well as with the results by Etemadi et al. (12) suggesting the effectiveness of solution-based group

therapy on decreasing mother-daughter conflicts in mothers. Also, Bani Asadi and Bagheri (6) indicated that there is a relationship between social competence and knowledge of nonverbal communication. In this regard, Zahdi Kia (11) suggested the effectiveness of training nonverbal communication on primary school students' social competence.

In explaining this finding, it can be said that one of the factors influencing an individual's mental health depends on his/her the healthy interpersonal relationships, and the first relationship and one of the strongest and most stable interpersonal relationships is the mother-child relationship. Also, the undeniable role played by the quality of this relationship in the mental, social and emotional health of children and efforts to improve the quality of this relationship seem to be of great help to the well-being of the families and their children (18). One of the aspects of relations between parents and children is non-verbal communication. The use of spoken language in comparison with body language is negligible. Given the importance of body language in the transmission of verbal concepts and messages, as well as the transference of non-verbal messages by parents and children indicate that, first of all, parents should be able to communicate with their child. Effective communication is the key and linking ring of parents and children; if not, the necessary field for human rearing and uplifting will not be provided (9). In a two-way communication, 7% of the total effect of a message is verbal (as a word), 38% is auditory (including tone, voice, and voice fluctuation and so on) and 55% is non-verbal. Many studies have been conducted to discover that what aspects of non-verbal messaging are inherent, what aspects are the results of puberty, and what is caused by the socialization of individuals (19). Eibl and

Eibesfeldt, in their research on congenital blind and deaf children, studied some facial expressions such as crying and smiling; the results of the study showed that the smiling and crying patterns of blind and deaf children are completely independent of learning. Therefore, it can be concluded that these movements are intrinsic (20). Some of Darwin's early beliefs about the intrinsic gestures and movements were confirmed by Akman, Fryzen, and Sorenson, when they studied the people from five different cultures. Their findings indicated that all societies and cultures use the similar facial movements to express their emotions; they believed that this result is a sign of the intrinsic nature of these movements (20). Therefore, nonverbal behavior can be inherent, fixed, and diverse in different cultures, groups and individuals. Regarding the issues indicating the intrinsic nature of non-verbal communication, some non-verbal behaviors and relationships between mother and child occur intrinsically; mothers inherently do behaviors like hugging, cuddling, and kissing. Therefore, having accurate and scientific information on non-verbal communication does not guarantee the individuals' use of these relationships in interpersonal interactions.

Conclusion

According to the findings of this study, there was no significant correlation between mothers' knowledge of nonverbal behavior and mother-child positive relationship and the subscales of mother-child relationship.

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