

The Role of Affective Family Atmosphere, School Atmosphere and Perceived Social Support in Predicting Aggressive Behavior and Addiction Readiness among Students

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Abstract

Introduction: The present study aimed to investigate the role of affective family atmosphere, school atmosphere, and perceived social support on predicting aggressive behavior and addiction readiness in students.

Method: The research method was descriptive-correlational with a structural equation modeling. The statistical population consisted of all second grade high school students in Tehran studying during the academic year 2017-2018. A total number of 485 samples were selected randomly by multi-stage cluster sampling method. The data analysis was conducted by EMOS software ver.24 and SPSS ver.25.

Results: Full effect of affective family atmosphere on aggressive behavior was significant and this readiness had a direct and significant effect on addiction readiness. Investigations of school atmosphere on addiction readiness and aggressive behavior showed a complete and significant direct effect between these variables. Also, the direct effect of perceived social support on aggressive behavior showed to be complete and insignificant. There was no direct and complete direct effect of perceived social support on addiction readiness.

Conclusion: Based on the findings of this study, affective family atmosphere and school atmosphere can predict aggressive behavior and addiction readiness among students.

Keywords: Family Atmosphere, School Atmosphere, Perceived Social Supports, Aggressive, Addiction

Introduction

Adolescence is one of the most important age periods and adolescents are among the most vulnerable social groups. One of the problems that schools and teachers face today is the prevalence of the issues associated with increased aggression in secondary schools [1]. Aggression is a conscious act aimed at inflicting physical or psychological harm which may be either physical or verbal [2]. Researchers have focused on aggression due to the consequences of such behaviors for adolescents [1]. Drug addiction in adolescents and youth is also one of the biggest concerns of today's societies. Addiction readiness is referred to a mental or physical mood, or both, by which a person is prepared to become addicted and addicted to drugs [2].

One of the most important factors affecting adolescents' behavior and personality is the family's emotional environment. An unhealthy emotional readiness in the family can be a major contributor to addiction and drug use as well as other high-risk behaviors among adolescents [3]. On the other hand, education plays an important role in the development of human-beings and societies and is used as a useful tool for changing people's behavior. The behavior is profoundly influenced by the home and school atmosphere in the early years of life when many of these behavioral habits are associated with the home and school environment [4]. Social support is another important factor in the development and

enhancement of aggressive high-risk behaviors and drug use readiness. Adolescents are less likely to feel anxious and depressed if they receive the necessary emotional support from their peers. It has also been found that receiving social support reduces levels of aggression among adolescents [1].

In this regard, two separate studies conducted by Kaya and Kimon in Turkey have highlighted the role of school atmosphere in generating aggressive and bullying behaviors [5]. Also, in a study conducted in Spain by Lopez on the factors influencing adolescent aggressive behaviors, items such as the family environment, school, and the role of gender in adolescent behaviors were mentioned, and a longitudinal study in the United States found a negative association between school performance and the frequency of aggressive behaviors among adolescents [6]. In another American study, results showed that the emotionally and behaviorally deficient adolescents in schools were more likely to become delinquent and also drug use over time, indicating a positive correlation between behavioral and emotional problems at school [7]. In addition, Lopez reports an association between aggressive behaviors and low scores of academic employment and scores, relationship with classmates, teacher's support perception, and school attitudes; while at family level, he reports a significant relationship between aggressive behavior and high scores of aggressive and adverse relationships and family conflict [6].

Massah et al. aimed to investigate the relationship between perceived social support and family functioning in the tendency to illegal substance abuse. The results of their study showed a significant and negative correlation between perceived social support and a tendency to abuse illegal substances. A family performance also had a significant correlation with the tendency to drug abuse [8]. Also, in a research conducted in Jordan among university students, the results showed that students with high levels of aggression reported moderate social support perceptions [9]. Adolescence, as a transitional period, is associated with psychological and physical changes, greater autonomy, and risk. In some studies, drug use is associated with an increase in violent behavior and harmful effects of substance use [10]. Previous research only examined the relationship between all factors such as family, school atmosphere, and social support with addiction and aggression. However, no comprehensive study has been conducted accordingly to investigate the relationship between different factors in a model. The difference between the present study and previous research is in summarizing and achieving a relational model between different variables affecting the issue of addiction and aggression among adolescents. Hence, this study aimed to investigate the relationship model of affective family atmosphere, school atmosphere and perceived social support on aggressive behavior and addiction readiness among students.

Method

The method of this research was descriptive and

correlational with a structural equation modeling. The statistical population included all male and female high school students studying in Tehran during the academic year 2017-18 with a quantity of 224,401 ones as per the announcement of Tehran Education Office. Compared to univariate analyses, multivariate analyzes require a larger sample (e.g. at least 100 people in binomial correlation tests, at least 10 to 20 times more than the number of variables in multivariate regression analyzes, and at least 500 people when using factor analysis) [11]. The inclusion criteria included studying in the second year of high school, having a normal IQ and accommodating the student with the parents, and the exclusion criteria included suffering from physical or mental illness, including epilepsy and hyperactivity.

The following tools were used for data collection:

Eysenck and Wilson's Aggression Questionnaire: This test was developed by Eysenck and Wilson in 1975 for measuring aggression with 30 questions. The validity of this test was determined by Eysenck et al.'s study [12]. This test found a relatively good reliability in several studies such as Maleki's study [13]. Using Cronbach's Alpha and Kuder-Richardson formulas, a reliability of 0.69 and 0.74 was obtained by Maleki [13] and Dortaj et al. [14], respectively. Also, the mean alpha coefficient for the whole test was 0.74 in a 50-person group of 12-16-year-old boys from Shiraz orphanages [15]. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0/756.

Weed and Butcher's Addiction Readiness Scale: This scale was developed by Weed and Butcher in 1992 [16]. The Persian version of this scale was developed by Zarger et al. according to Iranian society's mental-social conditions [17]. The questionnaire consists of two factors and 36 items plus five lie-test items [17]. A reliability of 0.90 was calculated for this scale by Cronbach's alpha. Also, alpha for the first (active) and second (passive) factors was calculated to be 0.91 and 0.75, respectively [17]. According to criteria validity and construct validity, the correlation coefficient between the Persian Addiction Readiness Scale and symptoms checklist was calculated to be 0.45 (significant in a level lower than 0.001) [17]. Davoudi et al., also used an addiction readiness scale among the third year high school students in Mashhad and calculated the reliability of this scale using Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale, active and passive addiction as 0.70, 0.71 and 0.62, respectively [3]. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0/891.

Hilburn's Affective Family Atmosphere Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed by Hilburn in 1964 to measure the degree of compassion in parent-child interactions. It has 16 questions and eight aspects [18]. As per Cronbach's Alpha, the reliability of this questionnaire was reported by Raya et al. as 0.83 [7]. In other studies [19, 20], for the internal consistency of the family's emotional atmosphere questionnaire, measures such as Cronbach's Alpha, Split-Half and Gutman were used with the results of 0.85, 0.77, and 0.77 respectively. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0/902.

Rovai's Questionnaire of Class and School Environment: This questionnaire was developed by Rovai

et al. in 2004 to measure students' emotions versus the school environment and, in general, the degree of the students' admission to school and their acceptance of the school environment according to two subscales: class environment (10 items) and school environment [20]. In order to assess the validity of this questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the class form and school form was reported to be 0.84 and 0.83, respectively. In addition, the internal consistency coefficients for the two social and learning dimensions of the class form and school form were 0.90 and 0.87, and 0.85 and 0.82, respectively. A reliability of 0.91 was calculated for this questionnaire by means of Pearson's correlation coefficient with an interval of two weeks [20]. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0/886.

Zimmet's Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support: This scale is a subjective evaluation of the social support adequacy, developed by Zimmet et al. in 1988. This scale assesses the perceptions of social support in three sources including "family", "friends" and "others" [21]. It includes 12 questions (16). Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the scale as a whole was calculated to be 0.93 and for the scales of family, friends and others' social support was calculated to be 0.91, 0.89 and 0.91, respectively [21]. Also, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the multidimensional scale of perceived social support for the scale was 0.92 and for subscales social support of family, friends and others were calculated to be 0.84, 0.65 and 0.75, respectively [21]. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of perceived social support as well as the aspects others, family and friends in an Iranian sample were reported to be 0.89, 0.84, 0.85 and 0.91, respectively [22]. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was 0/846.

After obtaining the necessary permits from the education office of Tehran, 510 male and female students were selected by multistage cluster sampling from five parts of Tehran including north, south, east, west and center. From each of these five parts, one district was selected from

each of which two high school (one boys and one girls high school) were picked up randomly. The questionnaires were given to the students. At the end, after deleting incomplete questionnaires, 485 questionnaires remained for data analysis and examination.

The findings were separated into the descriptive statistics and demographic information of the participants, and were analyzed by EMOS Ver.24 and SPSS Ver.25.

Regarding all the questionnaires of this study, before performing the confirmatory factor analysis, the assumptions of the confirmatory factor analysis, including normality and multi-variable outlier data were examined. In the proposed research model, standard path coefficients and model fitness indicators were calculated. Also, the indicators χ^2 , degree of freedom, Comparative Fitness Index (CFI) and Root Mean Error Approximation (RMSEA) were used to fit the model.

Results

The respondents' demographic variables such as gender, age, and educational background are detailed as follows: Among the 485 respondents, 240 (49.5%) were girls and 245 (50.5%) were boys.

The descriptive specifications of the variables are presented in Table 1.

To analyze the data in the research model (Figure 1), the hypothesized model findings related to perceived social support are shown. The questionnaire consists of 12 questions and three subscales of the aspects of family, friends and others. In this section, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model was examined based on the three subscales and their related questions.

Structural model of family's emotional atmosphere, school atmosphere, and perceived social support with aggressive behavior and addiction readiness among students showed appropriate fit results, as shown in Table 2.

Table 1. The Descriptive Specifications of the Variables (n=485)

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Affection	2	10	8.07	1.717	-0.784	0.429
Endearment	1	10	6.50	2.308	-0.210	-0.757
Approving	1	10	6.70	1.878	-0.264	-0.117
Common experiences	2	10	6.21	2.142	-0.140	-0.572
Gift giving	1	10	6.82	2.173	-0.390	-0.536
Encouragement	1	10	7.44	2.134	-0.588	-0.269
Trust	2	10	7.65	2.096	-0.738	-0.139
Feeling secure	2	10	8.22	1.901	-0.995	0.441
Social class	0	20	9.79	4.617	-0.145	-0.548
Learning class	0	20	9.87	4.170	-0.128	-0.510
Social school	0	20	10.98	3.875	-0.327	-0.001
Learning school	0	20	9.97	4.260	-0.157	0.461
Family aspect	4	20	15.11	3.692	-0.883	0.521
Friends aspect	4	20	13.69	3.686	-0.256	-0.471
Others aspect	4	20	14.41	3.807	-0.573	-0.071
Aggression	7	55	30.87	5.514	0.013	-0.255
Addiction readiness	15	70	37.63	4.040	0.517	-0.536

The CFI with the value of 0.916 is acceptable because it is greater than 0.90. Also, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) was found to be 0.916 which is greater than the acceptable value of 0.90, indicating a fit. Also, the RMSEA was found to be 0.066, which, according to [23], is excellent for the model if the value is less than 0.1. If it is between 0.1 and 0.5, the model fit will be good and in case of between 0.5

and 0, the model fit will be moderate.

As it can be seen, the direct effect between each of the variables of affective family atmosphere, school atmosphere, and perceived social support with the variables of aggression and addiction readiness is presented in Table 3. Figure 1 also depicts the hypothesized model with standardized coefficients.

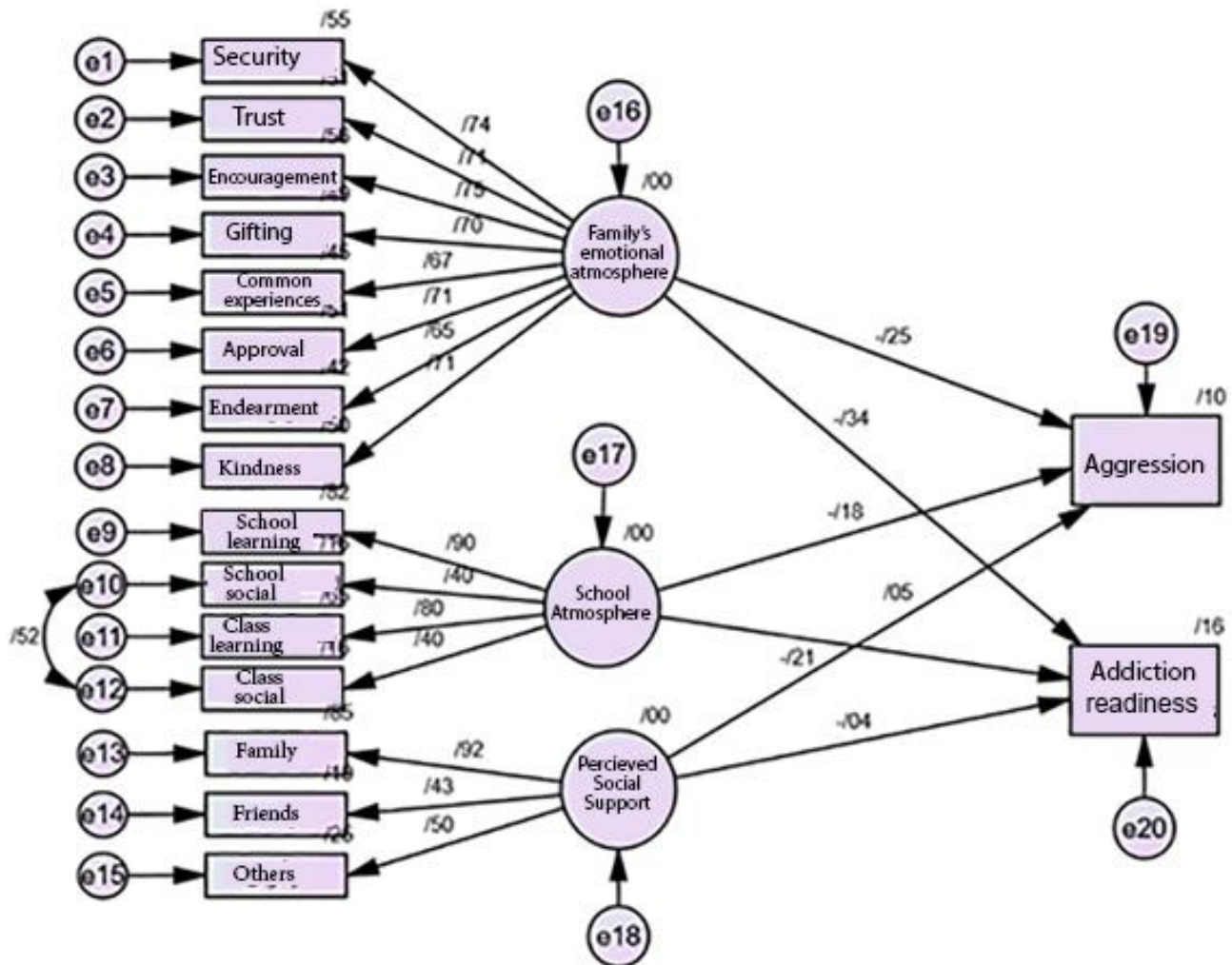


Figure 1. Proposed Structural Equation Modeling for the Effect of Affective family atmosphere, School Atmosphere, and Perceived Social Support with Aggression and Addiction Readiness

Table 2. Fitness Indices of Structural Equations Model

Chi- square	DF	P	cmin/df	GFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA
353,393	114	0.0001	3.100	.922	.916	.916	.066

Table 3. Direct Effect between Independent and Dependent Variables in the Hypothesized Model

Relationships	Standardized coefficients	Standard Error	Critical Ratio	P
Family's affective atmosphere -> Aggression	-0.246	0.335	-4.917	0.001
Family's affective atmosphere -> Addiction readiness	-0.335	0.873	-6.737	0.001
School atmosphere -> Aggression	-0.184	0.244	-3.481	0.001
School atmosphere -> Addiction readiness	-0.208	0.603	-3.977	0.001
Perceived Social Support -> Aggression	0.052	0.259	1.059	0.290
Perceived Social Support -> Addiction readiness	-0.041	0.632	-0.857	0.392

Discussion

In the present study, the structural model of affective family atmosphere, school atmosphere, and perceived social support with aggressive behavior and addiction

readiness among students had a good fit. Our statistical analysis showed that affective family atmosphere has a completely significant impact on aggressive behavior. The intimate and warm emotional atmosphere of the family

creates a psychologically healthy environment. On the contrary, the cold and violent family environment has a significant correlation with aggressive and delinquent behaviors of children and family members. Previous research confirms this result. The obtained results from the analysis of Javdan [4] indicated a significant relationship between affective family atmosphere and boys' aggressive behaviors in high school with a correlation of 0.74. The results of the Davoudi et al., [3] are in line with the present study.

These studies report that aggressive individuals belong to families with more behavioral problems, such as aggression, theft, controversies, and parental violence. Also, violent parenting behaviors had a positive correlation with the children's aggressive behaviors. The findings of the present study, along with the above findings, highlighted the contribution of individual and family factors to bullying and violence, indicating that intimate and encouraging parents treat their children with empathy [22]. As other studies have shown, the role of family in adolescent violence and aggression or vice versa in the development of balanced mental and behavioral health in children has been clarified. Statistical analysis of this study revealed that the effect of affective family atmosphere with addiction readiness is significant. Upon the investigation of the correlation between affective family atmosphere and addiction readiness, a completely direct and significant relationship is reported here. The results of the present study and various studies on the relationship and correlation of affective family atmosphere and adolescents/students' tendency to addiction show that the role of family is extremely important in this case, previous studies confirm this result, as well [24]. Overall, numerous studies have shown that the youth with a secure attachment have less experience with drug abuse. The most common causes of psychological states such as stress and substance abuse are related to family life and social activity [24]. In fact, most studies investigating the underlying causes of crime and substance abuse and home escape, including White's research [25], have found significant correlations between instability, escape, poverty, problematic adolescent behavior and tendency to addiction. Van Den Bree et al., [26] also found that peer influence, poor family relationships, low levels of religious attitudes, schooling problems, and mental health issues were among the factors that could predict adolescent smoking. This finding is in line with Javdan [4] where parental support led to greater attachments between them and their children and increased family's mental health. Adolescents who perceived their parents to be supportive were less likely to commit delinquent behavior, maladaptation at school, substance abuse and home escape. On the other hand, poor parental supervision and control over their children makes children dependent on deviant peers outside the home environment and paves the way for juvenile delinquent behaviors such as addictive and home-based drug use. It has also been found that suicidal ideation and abusive reactions to stress such as alcohol and drug use have a close

relationship with parental conflicts and cynicism about the future. In fact, most researchers have found a significant correlation between family instability, leaving home, poverty, and problematic behavior, and a tendency to addiction among adolescents [5]. Also, in this study, a significant negative relationship was observed between the school atmosphere and aggressive behaviors of students. The school atmosphere and educational environment can play an important role in creating and maintaining students' balanced and sociable behaviors. In contrast, educational readiness and the environment can contribute to aggressive behaviors and juvenile delinquency. Here, the role of the peer group, especially in susceptible adolescent ages, in inducing aggressive and traumatic behaviors, and vice versa in preventing such behaviors, is clear. The results of Tatari and Omidjarjanki's [27] study are in line with those of the present study. The results of such studies indicated that the favorable school atmosphere is negatively correlated with aggressive behavior. There is also a small but important relationship between school atmosphere and behavioral problems over time, and a significant negative relationship is seen between positive school atmosphere measures and bullying prevalence among peer students. Also, there is a significant negative correlation between learning readiness and aggression. These findings suggest that students' maladaptation and aggression are partly affected by the inappropriate readiness of the learning environment and classroom. The findings also support Levin's field theory, which was introduced in 1942 [7]. The results of this study in regards to the relationship between school atmosphere and addiction readiness showed a completely significant direct effect between these variables. The results of the present study, are in line with the results of other researches and studies, which showed a significant negative relationship between school atmosphere and drug abuse readiness [28]. In other words, positive school and classroom readiness is associated with drug abuse readiness and vice versa. The classroom and school atmosphere/environment can include a warm and intimate relationship between teachers and school authorities with students and their peers. The results of the present study are in line with Rashidi et al.'s study [28] according to which, bullying behaviors at school are significantly associated with future drug use. These two behavioral disorders are correlated with other behavioral disorders in the family and school, and adolescents who were emotionally and behaviorally deficient at school were more prone to delinquency and drug use over time.

Bullying at school is correlated to drug abuse in the future, and adolescents who are emotionally and behaviorally deficient at school will be more likely to commit crimes and use drugs in the future. According to study results, there is a correlation between behavioral and emotional problems in school and youth behavioral problems over time [3].

According to the standardized regression coefficient, perceived social support variables could not predict aggressive behavior, and the effect of perceived social

support with aggressive behavior is not significant. Also, the results of the hypothesized model for the effect of perceived social support with aggressive behavior have a complete effect and a direct non-significant effect. Previous research does not support this conclusion. Previous studies have pointed out to the role of perceived social support in reducing aggressive behaviors, and in fact a significant negative correlation was found between the two variables [9].

The results of this study also showed a negative correlation between the role of perceived social support and aggressive behaviors. This finding is not in line with Jamal Ahmad's study [29]. Also, there was a negative correlation between anger and outright aggression and the complex role of social support accordingly. In particular, perceived social support from parents, teachers, and close friends was correlated with less aggressive behaviors toward teachers, while peers' support moderated aggressive behaviors toward peers, and the correlation between social support and mental health became clear. This is while, the results showed that high levels of aggression in students were correlated with lower levels of social support.

It was found that the perceived social support for the family had a significant negative correlation with all domains of aggression. In addition, providing social support in general and family support in particular may relieve the effect of related aggression and maladaptation in adolescents even with aggressive tendencies. Contrary to the findings of previous research, the findings of this study have insignificant implications for the role of perceived social support and its relationship with aggressive behaviors. Given the results of present study, it seems that the role of affective family atmosphere and school atmosphere is more important in the occurrence of such behaviors.

The results of this study did not confirm the relationship between perceived social support and addiction readiness. Regarding the standardized regression coefficient, the variable perceived social support could not predict addiction readiness and there was no direct and complete effect. Hence, the impact of perceived social support on addiction readiness was reported to be insignificant. The results of this study are inconsistent with the results of Sadri et al.'s research [30].

The results of present study showed a significant relationship and negative correlation between perceived social support and students' tendency to drug abuse. Also, positive and productive family functioning can reduce the tendency for drug abuse by students. On the other hand, poor social networking and lack of constructive communication between the individual and the society as well as stressful family environment can be factors affecting the tendency for drug abuse among adolescents and youth.

Furthermore, as it can be seen from previous studies, there was a significant negative correlation between perceived social support and addiction readiness. In other words, in the presence of the perceived social support, readiness for addiction declines and, on the contrary,

decreased perceived social support is significantly in line with increased addiction readiness. However, the results of the present study showed no relationship between these two variables.

In this study, it seems that other factors besides perceived social support, such as the emotional atmosphere of the family and the school atmosphere, were associated with addiction readiness.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the fit indices, it can be concluded that the structural equation modeling of the effect between affective family atmosphere, school atmosphere and perceived social support with aggressive behavior and addiction readiness was acceptable. Also, it can be stated that an affective family atmosphere and the school atmosphere can predict aggressive behavior and addiction in students.

In this study, it seems that factors other than perceived social support such as affective family atmosphere and school atmosphere were correlated with addiction readiness. Here, the use of a questionnaire consisted of self-report limitations from the subjects. This limitation particularly included the variable addiction readiness among students. The present study was conducted on male and female students in five districts of Tehran and only three secondary schools in grade two. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other areas of Tehran and other educational centers and cities. Similar research are proposed to be conducted in other regions and cities of Iran on different target groups and communities of different ages and genders in order to compare their results with each other and generalize the results. Combined research methods can also be used to collect data such as interview and observation along with questionnaires.

The present study was performed on male and female students in five districts of Tehran and only three grades of high school. Therefore, the research results cannot be generalized to other areas of Tehran, other educational grades and other cities. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct similar studies in other regions and cities of Iran. Also, according to the results of this study, it was found that the emotional atmosphere of the family is related to aggressive behaviors and addiction readiness among adolescents. For this reason, it is recommended to hold training workshops for families in order to create a warm family atmosphere.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Ethical Approval

This study was reviewed and approved by the ethics committee of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch. Also, all study participants were asked for their informed consent to participate.

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