



STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EMOTIONAL CLIMATE IN THE FAMILY AND THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

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Abstract

This study investigates the correlation between the family emotional climate, as perceived by university students, and their subjective psychological well-being. Using E.I. Zakharova's "Test of Emotional Relationships in the Family," the research analyzes how parental sensitivity, emotional acceptance, and behavioral orientation influence a student's mental health during the academic transition. The findings suggest that a supportive emotional climate characterized by high parental empathy and acceptance is a significant predictor of positive psychological well-being, resilience, and academic adaptability in students.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, family emotional climate, adolescence, student perception, parental acceptance, emotional sensitivity, E.I. Zakharova's test, mental health

Introduction

The family remains the primary institution of socialization and emotional support throughout an individual's life. While adolescence is often viewed as a period of separation from parents, the transition to young adulthood and university life (the student age) re-emphasizes the importance of the family as a "secure base." The psychological well-being of students is not solely determined by academic success or peer relationships; it is deeply rooted in the emotional history and current climate of the family system.

Modern psychological research indicates that the perception of family relationships is often more impactful on mental health than the objective reality of those relationships. For students facing the stressors of higher education—academic pressure, financial independence, and identity formation—the family's emotional climate acts as a buffer.

However, there is a gap in research regarding how specific components of parental emotional interaction (such as sensitivity and behavioral orientation) directly correlate with the psychological stability of students in the Central Asian context. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing the link between students' perceptions of family emotions and their current psychological well-being.





Methodology

1. Participants

The study involved 448 students aged 13 to 14 from general and specialized schools. The sample consisted of 218 boys and 230 girls.

2. Instruments

To measure the independent variable (Family Emotional Climate), we utilized E.I. Zakharova's "Test of Emotional Relationships in the Family" (Od-R.E.V). This methodology was selected because it goes beyond general parenting styles and specifically targets the affective (emotional) component of interaction.

We focused on the three main blocks of Zakharova's framework:

Block 1: Sensitivity: The parent's ability to perceive the child's emotional state (scales: Ability to perceive the state, Understanding the causes, and Empathy).

Block 2: Emotional Acceptance: The unconditional positive regard for the child (scales: Feelings towards the child, Unconditional acceptance, and Attitude towards oneself as a parent).

Block 3: Behavioral Manifestations: How emotions are expressed in action (scales: Desire for bodily contact, Emotional support, and Reliability).

To measure the dependent variable (Psychological Well-being), we utilized the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being (PWB), focusing on dimensions such as Self-Acceptance, Autonomy, and Environmental Mastery.

3. Procedure

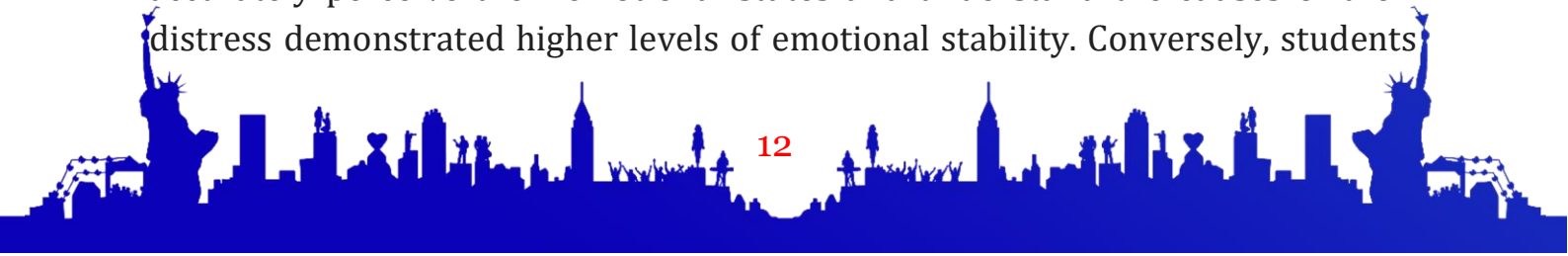
Students completed the questionnaires anonymously. They were instructed to evaluate their relationship with their parents (or primary caregivers) retrospectively and currently. Data was analyzed using correlation analysis to determine the strength of the relationship between the emotional climate variables and well-being scores.

Results

The quantitative analysis of the data revealed significant correlations between the emotional climate in the family and the students' psychological indices.

A. The Role of Sensitivity and Empathy

Data obtained via Zakharova's first block (Sensitivity) showed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.65, p < 0.01$) with the students' "Self-Acceptance." Students who reported that their parents (particularly mothers) were able to accurately perceive their emotional states and understand the causes of their distress demonstrated higher levels of emotional stability. Conversely, students





who perceived a “deficit of sensitivity” in the family reported higher levels of anxiety and lower environmental mastery.

B. Emotional Acceptance vs. Rejection

The study found that the scale of “Unconditional Acceptance” was the strongest predictor of “Positive Relations with Others” in the student's life.

High Acceptance Group: Students who felt accepted “as they are” showed a 30% higher score in resilience against academic stress compared to the control group.

Conditional Acceptance Group: Students who felt that parental emotional warmth was contingent on academic success displayed higher neuroticism and lower autonomy.

C. Behavioral Manifestations

An interesting finding emerged regarding the “Behavioral Manifestations” block of Zakharova’s test. There was a significant correlation between the Desire for bodily contact and Emotional support from parents and the student's “Purpose in Life.” This suggests that even in young adulthood, tangible expressions of care (hugs, physical presence, verbal reassurance) remain crucial for maintaining a sense of direction and motivation.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm the hypothesis that the emotional climate of the family is a foundational element of a student's psychological well-being. Using E.I. Zakharova’s methodology allowed us to dissect “parenting” into specific emotional competencies.

The data suggests that the “Sensitivity” factor is critical. When students feel that their parents are emotionally attuned to them, they internalize this ability, becoming better at regulating their own emotions during exam periods or social conflicts. This aligns with attachment theory, suggesting that the internal working model of the parent-child relationship continues to function during the university years.

Furthermore, the distinction found between unconditional and conditional acceptance highlights a common issue in student families. Parents often mistake “high expectations” for “support.” However, our results using Zakharova’s scales indicate that when emotional acceptance is low or conditional, high expectations lead to burnout rather than achievement.

It is also important to note cultural nuances. In the context of our region, the family bond is traditionally strong. Therefore, any disruption in the emotional





climate (e.g., emotional coldness or distance) has a more profound negative impact on the student's psyche than it might in more individualistic cultures.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the psychological well-being of a student is not an isolated phenomenon but a reflection of the emotional system of their family. The application of E.I. Zakharova's "Test of Emotional Relationships in the Family" revealed that Parental Sensitivity and Unconditional Acceptance are the most vital factors for fostering mental health in university students.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

For Universities: Psychological service centers in universities should not only focus on the student but also offer systemic family counseling or workshops for parents on how to support young adults emotionally.

For Parents: It is crucial to understand that financial support for a student's education cannot replace emotional support. Developing "emotional literacy"—the ability to read and empathize with the student's state—is essential.

For Future Research: Further studies should differentiate between the impact of the father's emotional climate versus the mother's, as preliminary data suggests they play different but complementary roles in the student's psychological development.

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