



# The Comparison of Loneliness and Social Self-Efficacy among Male Adolescents in Families where the presence of Father is Temporary (for Employment) and Normal Adolescents

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## Abstract

The present study aimed to compare the loneliness and social self-efficacy among male adolescents in families where the presence of father was temporary (for employment) and normal adolescents in Shiraz. This was a causal-comparative study. The population consisted of high school students in area one, Shiraz. Using multistage cluster sampling method, 8 schools were selected from 31 boy's high schools; and 5 classes were selected from each school. In each class, the questionnaire was given to students who were eligible as normal group. Totally, 201 cases were included in normal group. Using convenience sampling, the students that their parents were in work for two weeks, a month, or more were selected as experimental group. The questionnaire was given to 201 cases. The Usher' loneliness (1984) and Cuneley's social self-efficacy among adolescents (1989) questionnaires were used for collecting the data. The independent t test was used to analyze the data. The results showed that there was a significant difference between loneliness and social self- efficacy of teenagers in two groups. In other words, the loneliness and social self-efficacy of experiment group was more and less, respectively. Therefore, it was concluded that the permanent presence of father influenced the level of loneliness sense and social self-efficacy among adolescents.

**Keywords:** Loneliness, Social Self-Efficacy, Adolescent, Temporary Presence of Father in The Home

## Introduction

After childhood, individuals face with adolescence period and its specific conditions. In this period, adolescents analyze their own feelings and mental phenomena. This is such that they

sometimes neglect the community and social beliefs and conventions, focus on themselves, and a state of introspection is created in them. The tendency to be alone fully appears in some adolescents and causes they fantasize and sometimes be aggressive (Akbari, 2002, quoted by Mohammadi, 2011). The self- efficacy is another variable that plays important role in mental health of adolescents (Bandura, 1997). The self efficacy is a key motivation component that determines how the learners will use the mental capacities, knowledge, and skills they have acquired through experience. The loneliness and social self- efficacy are factors which are necessary in the formation of a balanced personality and mental health in children and adolescents. Since children and adolescents are the largest human capital in our society, obviously paying attention to the difficulties and needs of this group will greatly increase the mental health of community. Family is the most important social institution in human society. By developing and nurturing the character of children in a safe and healthy environment, the mentality of children grows. The absence of any of the parents in a family environment will have harmful effects on the natural development of children. The research has shown that father's love have more predictive power than mother' love in terms of children's personality and psychological adjustment (Gholian, 2008). The absence of father is a special family circumstance. As an important environmental variable, it may have direct and indirect effects on public development and various aspects of child development in the areas of physical and mental health (Ahmadi, 2009). In families where fathers are away from children, because of employment and livelihood, for relatively long duration (at least two weeks or more), the phenomenon of "temporary presence of father in the house" appears. Since the dependence of children to fathers is created from the first year of life and intensifies over the next several years, the father's presence next the child over these years leads to the development of focus and concentration, emotional and behavioral discipline, social cognition, and increased adaptability in children. Given the importance of father's presence in the home and lack of research on the fathers' being away from home because of their job, this study aims to compare the loneliness and social self-efficacy among male adolescents in families where the presence of father was temporary (for employment) and normal adolescents in Shiraz.

1. The objectives of the study:

1. Comparison of loneliness among male adolescents in families with temporary presence of father (for employment) and normal adolescents.
2. Comparison of self- efficacy among male adolescents in families with temporary presence of father (for employment) and normal adolescents.
3. Comparison of social decisiveness (the first element of social self-efficacy) among male adolescents in families with temporary presence of father (for employment) and normal adolescents.
4. Comparison of performance in social situations (the second element of social self-efficacy) among male adolescents in families with temporary presence of father (for employment) and normal adolescents.
5. Comparison of participation in social groups (the third element of social self-efficacy) among male adolescents in families with temporary presence of father (for employment) and normal adolescents.
6. Comparison of friendship and intimacy aspects (fourth element of social self-efficacy) among male adolescents in families with temporary presence of father (for employment) and normal adolescents.

7. Comparison of help or get help (fifth element of social self-efficacy) among male adolescents in families with temporary presence of father (for employment) and normal adolescents.

#### Theoretical Foundations

Solitude is a feeling of inner emptiness and void. You feel isolated and separate from the world and from those you would like to have a relationship with them. Loneliness is different from being alone and it does not necessarily mean being alone. On the one hand, one may be alone for a long time, but he/ she does not feel being alone. On the other hand, one may feel loneliness in familiar environment with familiar people. Of course, it is normal to feel somewhat alone in certain positions. However, if it goes beyond a certain level and disrupts individuals' performance, this is not the normal mode and it should be dealt with (Salimi, 2008). Weiss (1973) distinguishes between the loneliness arises from social isolation and loneliness resulting from emotional isolation. Accordingly, he proposes two types of loneliness: emotional loneliness and social loneliness. Weiss believes that emotional loneliness arises from the lack of depth and significant relationship in life through the death of a loved one or divorce. This type of loneliness may improve by creation of satisfying relationships with others and being away from any emotional vacuum. He believes children's loneliness completely reminds the fear of children from being abandoned and neglected. The second type of loneliness is called social loneliness. It includes the defects in social networks or lack of opportunity to be accepted in relationships. The individual's characteristics and emotions in this type are centered on boredom and impatience, lack of focus, and a sense of being ignored or rejection by the peer. Once they have access to a network of social interaction, these symptoms usually disappear. The loneliness in adolescence period is a multidimensional phenomenon and involves four different aspects that each can be measured:

Loneliness related to their parents, such as "parents do not pay attention to me."

Loneliness related to peers, such as "I have very few friends."

Negative attitudes toward loneliness, such as "I am alone, I am sad."

Positive attitudes towards loneliness, such as "I like to be alone."

From early adolescence onwards, the loneliness related to parent increases, loneliness related to peers decreases, and attitude toward being alone changes from negative to positive (Mashayekh and Borjali, 2010).

#### Definitions of Self- Efficacy

The self- efficacy is individuals' beliefs and judgments of their ability to perform specific tasks in specific situations. Bandura (1997) calls a form of waiting as self- efficacy. He states that self- efficacy refers to the beliefs of people to exercise control over their performance and events affecting the lives. According to Bandura (1989, quoted by Karim Zadeh, 2001), self efficacy means we can deal with different situations. The individuals who are very self-sufficient expect to succeed and often succeed. Those who are not self-sufficient are skeptical about their ability to do tasks; therefore they are less successful and their self-esteem is so low.

#### Sources of Self- efficacy

Self-efficacy expectations are formed based on four sources of information (Hui and Myski, 2005 quoted by Kamaly, 2008). The four sources are:

1. Performance accomplishment
2. Vicarious experiences
3. verbal persuasion
4. Physiological states

Performance accomplishment: Bandura believes that the self- efficacy expectations roots in the experiences that individuals are expert in them. Successful experiences create high level expectations, while failure experiences tend to create low expectations.

Vicarious experiences: These experiences refer to the model selection process that is discussed in Bandura's theory. Achievement of Performance based on real experiences and skills, but they are not the most effective source of efficacy expectations. The performance accomplishments are based on real skills experiences, but they are not the most effective source of efficacy expectations. The vicarious experiences can contribute effectively in acquiring efficacy expectations. Observing others successful functioning may gradually induce the efficacy perceptions in viewers.

Verbal persuasion: This means that if people are said they can do what they want, their self efficacy will increase. The sentences should be realistic, therefore people will be convinced. This method is often used to convince people who have the necessary capabilities to meet their goals.

Physiological arousal: The relaxation or fear in stressful situations is another source affects our self efficacy. We often use this type of information as a resource for judging about our abilities. Bandura believes that when people are not surrounded with galling arousal expect success more than when they are in stressful situations. Personal efficiency gradually grows. When children are trying to influence their physical and social environment, they begin raising personal effectiveness. They begin to learn the abilities such as physical skills, social skills, and language abilities. These capabilities are almost used continuously and act largely through their influence on parents and environment. Ideally, parents respond to their children's activities and efforts to establish a relationship. They provide a stimulating environment and allow their children to grow and explore. The adolescence transmission experiments include coping with the demands and pressures, from sexual knowledge to selecting the university and profession. In any situation that requires consistency, the teenagers need new assessments of their new competencies and abilities. Bandura noted that the success in the transition between childhood and adulthood depends on to the level of personal effectiveness which is created during the childhood years.

In his research, Anari (2008) studied the effectiveness of showing treatment in reducing loneliness and social dissatisfaction in the children. The results showed that the scores of loneliness and social dissatisfaction were significantly decreased after the end of intervention. Mortazavi (2004) found that there is positive and statistically significant relationship between personal and collective self-efficacy and life satisfaction. In their study, Abolqasemi et al (2009) found that there is relationship between social skills, self-efficacy, and attitudes towards substance use in adolescents. Shahgholian (2008) showed that the behavioral disorders in children with parents working in Asalooye were more than the students with parents who were working in their residence location. The difference between the two groups was significant in terms of aggression- hyperactivity, anxiety - depression, attention deficit, and distraction small-scales. In a study entitled "The study of relationship between the absences of fathers immigrated to the Persian Gulf states and their children's education status in Lamerd city", Movahed and colleagues (2008) found that there is inverse and significant

relationship between the absence duration of father due to migration and the student's academic status. Other variables that play a decisive role in the education of students in Lamerd include the age of children in the first travel of father and father's stay duration in Iran. In this regard, Lamb (2001); Kranzlr (2003) (quoted by Shahgholian, 1999) found that fatherless children have more responsibility sense, superior motivation, and more self-confidence. Studying 642 children aged 6 to 12 years old whose father was absent, Renee (1998) showed that aggression and anxiety in fatherless group was more common than normal group.

In a research conducted on 401 freshmen, Nikpan et al (2007) showed that social support has a negative relationship with loneliness and a positive relationship with academic decisions. Also, this study showed that women receive more social support from friends and family than men. Therefore, girls experience significantly less loneliness related to family than boys.

### Methodology

The causal- comparative (after the event) research method was used in this study. The population consisted of high school students in area one, Shiraz, in 2013- 2014. Using multistage cluster sampling method, 8 schools were selected from 31 boy's high schools; and 5 classes were selected from each school. In each class, the questionnaire was given to students who were eligible as normal group. Totally, 402 cases were selected. The Usher's loneliness (1984) questionnaire has twenty-four items which eight of them (23-19-15-13-11-5-4-2) are related to the child's interests and hobbies and scores are not entitled to them. As a result, the range of score is between 16 and 80. The Knly's adolescents' social self-efficacy (1989) questionnaire has twenty-five items. Using seven point Likert scale (1= impossible to 7= too possible), the subject should determine the extent to which each statement represents his personality. The adolescents' social self-efficacy scale has five subscales: social determination (5 items), performance in social situations (5 items), participation in social groups (5 items), aspects of friendship and intimacy (7 items), help and get help (3 items). The total score is between 25 and 175; higher scores indicate higher levels of social self-efficacy. The questionnaires' reliability coefficient has been reported to be 0.7.

### Analysis of the Data

Table 1:

*Results of Independent T-Test For Loneliness Sense Scores In Both Temporary Presence of Father Group And Normal Group*

Indices Groups	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T test score	Significance level
The temporary presence of father	179	58.93	11.46	-5.21	P<0.001
Normal	165	65.36	11.38		

Considering the significance level, there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of loneliness sense.

Table 2:

*Results of independent t-test for social self- efficacy scores in both temporary presence of father group and normal group*

Indices Groups	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T test score	Significance level
The temporary presence of father	182	113.42	23.12	-3.53	P<0.001
Normal	154	122.28	22.7		

Considering the significance level, there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of social self- efficacy.

Table 3:

*Results of independent t-test for social decisiveness scores in both temporary presence of father group and normal group*

Indices Groups	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T test score	Significance level
The temporary presence of father	197	25.95	5.53	-4.32	P<0.001
Normal	187	28.35	5.33		

Considering the significance level, there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of social decisiveness.

Table 4:

*Results of independent t-test for performance in social situations scores in both temporary presence of father group and normal group*

Indices Groups	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T test score	Significance level
The temporary presence of father	192	21.14	5.65	-2.42	0.016
Normal	184	22.57	5.75		

Considering the significance level, there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of performance in social situations.

Table 5:

*Results of independent t-test for participation in social groups' scores in both temporary presence of father group and normal group*

Indices Groups	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T test score	Significance level
The temporary presence of father	195	22.12	7.30	-3.75	P<0.001
Normal	196	24.66	6		

Considering the significance level, there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of participation in social groups.

Table 6:

*Results of independent t-test for friendship and intimacy aspects scores in both temporary presence of father group and normal group*

Indices Groups	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T test score	Significance level
The temporary presence of father	190	28.91	8.19	-1.08	0.278
Normal	178	29.86	8.58		

Considering the significance level, there is no significant difference between the two groups in terms of friendship and intimacy aspects.

Table 7:

*Results of independent t-test for help and get help scores in both temporary presence of father group and normal group*

Indices Groups	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	T test score	Significance level
The temporary presence of father	195	14.81	3.92	-2.58	0.010
Normal	191	15.80	3.64		

Considering the significance level, there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of help and getting help.

### Conclusion

1. The loneliness sense of teenagers in families with temporary presence of father in the home is more than a normal teenager.
2. The social self- efficacy of teenagers in families with temporary presence of father in the home is less than a normal teenager.
3. The social decisiveness of teenagers in families with temporary presence of father in the home is less than a normal teenager.



4. The teenagers' level of performance in social situations in families with temporary presence of father in the home is less than a normal teenager.
5. The teenagers' willingness to participate in social groups in families with temporary presence of father in the home is less than a normal teenager.
6. In terms of friendship and intimacy aspects, the teenagers in families with temporary presence of father in the home are as same as normal teenagers.
7. The willingness to help and get help in teenagers with families with temporary presence of father in the home is less than a normal teenager.
8. Practical suggestions

According to the findings of this study and considering the fact that loneliness sense and social self-efficacy have important impact on different stages of growth and physical and mental health of adolescents, it is recommended that adolescent's education and training authorities conduct programs such as teaching communication skills to adolescents and their parents, creating more opportunities for adolescents to participate in social groups by family and school, and organizing happy recreational programs by parents in appropriate opportunities to prevent from the spread and development of their loneliness sense and increase their social self-efficacy level.

It is recommended that the findings of this study to be used by curriculum designers and schools consultants in prevention programs of education areas.

It is recommended that the findings of this study to be used by the owners of companies and institutions that creating Aghmari jobs is common in them.

The school officials and consultants should warn the families which are involved in the phenomenon of "Father's temporary presence in the house" to consider this issue as one that could threaten the mental health of children and adolescents.

Officials and school counselors should identify these students. They should provide group counseling and guidance programs for their parents in order to attract parents' attention and increase their awareness in correct dealing with the phenomenon of "Father's temporary presence in the house" ».

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