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## Research Paper

# The Effect of Family Emotional-Psychological Atmosphere on Suicide Attempt of Adolescents Referred to Hospitals in Hormozgan Province



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Emotional-psychological atmosphere, family structure, suicide attempt.

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This article focusses on emotional atmosphere and family structure among suicidal attempt among 20 to 13year-old clients referred to hospitals in Hormozgan Province.

**Methods:** The sample consisted of 146 male and female adolescents who attempted to suicide. They were selected by random sampling method. In this research, the Hill Burn family questionnaire, Fellowship Suicide Factor Questionnaire (ASQ) and family structure questionnaire (FAD) were used to collect data. To analyze the data, Pearson correlation coefficient and entered regression were used. SPSS-20 statistical software was used for data analysis.

**Results:** The results of the analysis showed that there is a negative relationship between the family's emotional atmosphere and its subscales with suicide attempt and also there is a negative relationship between family structure and its dimensions with suicide attempt.

**Conclusion:** The results showed that there is a negative relationship between family psycho-emotional atmosphere and family structure with suicide attempt. The results of regression coefficients analysis showed that family emotional atmosphere and family structure were significantly associated with suicide attempt and could predict clients' suicide attempt ( $R^2 = 56$ ,  $N = 146$ ,  $P \leq 0.001$ ).

## 1. Introduction

One of the most important voluntary and involuntary acts of man throughout history has been an attempt to preserve the survival. There is an enigma to the evolutionary psychologists about this issue and why a person chooses a voluntary death? Abstract thinking of death has been a part of the current concerns of human life and man has always wanted to eliminate death due to the inherent tendency to live (Yusefi and Tabee, 2011). In different communities, suicide is a taboo and in most cultures and religions, suicide is considered as a sin (Pompili, 2010).

Suicide is a complex, multi-dimensional, qualitative and fluid phenomenon with variety of psychological, social, economic and cultural dimensions. Series of complex and continues factors cause suicide attempts. This phenomenon is described as a final point of a process that it starts with suicidal ideation, continues with planning, preparing for suicide and ultimately completes with threatening and suicide attempting (Barrios, et al., 2000; Quoted Aliverdiniya and Yusefi, 2012). In both traditional and advanced societies, there is suicide attempting.

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This issue has attracted the attention of many researchers in evolutionary psychology and sociology fields. Although suicide is observed among all age groups, it can lead to the loss of more potential years of teenagers, which is of great importance (Mikaeili & Samadifard, 2019). In general, suicide and suicidal thoughts are more common in teenagers than in other age rang, and a major global health problem is considered in the ages of 15 to 24. The risk of suicidal behavior starts at the beginning of adolescence. Its peak occurs at the age of 16 and it will remain in the same position until the age of 20. The suicidal thoughts and plans of girls in the middle adolescence (age 16) continue to grow while boys continue to grow up to the end of adolescence, but there is no difference between the sexes in the attempt to suicide. Adolescent years are an important and prominent stage of social-psychological development. This period requires emotional and affection balance, especially the balance between emotions and intellect. The most important and socio-psychological needs of adolescents include the appreciation of self-consciousness by choosing real goals in life, emotional independence on family, maintaining affection and emotional balance against the stressors of life and the environment, healthy relationships with others, necessary social skills training, understanding healthy and effective life and how to enjoy it. Therefore, guiding the youth in the development and expansion of social skills is necessary for effective life, creating or enhancing self-confidence in dealing with problems and solving them. The developing and evolution of social skills are resulted in successfully adapting to the social environment and experience of productive life in society. Considering the sensitivity and stress of teenage years, it is extremely important to deal with the variables that can predict suicide in these age range. The variables that can be associated with the suicide of teenagers and young people are psychological, social, emotional and emotional atmosphere of the family. Generally, studies have shown that the role of families in suicides is different; For example, bonding with family and family integrity has been linked to the low rate of suicide (Carter, McGee, Taylor, & Williams, 2006; Sun, Hui, & Watkins, 2006) and it have been associated with high rates in families with a chaotic structure (Akleema, & Hari, 2005). According to Sun, et al. (2006), family integrity, conflict and peer support significantly predicted the self-esteem and depression, which has been powerful factors in predicting suicidal thoughts. Authoritarianism, humiliation and rejection of children are factors that encourage the feeling of failure. Obviously, aggression and irrational acts in outside the

tolerance of children cause an incidence of impulse and aggressive and revengeful behaviors, reduce the ability and capacity to dominate on destructive and negative emotions, thoughts, self-expression, and recognition of their and other's feelings. Emotions control has an important role in interpersonal relationships and control of thoughts, excitements, and behavior. Many interpersonal problems related to responsibility, intimacy, affection are influenced by individual emotions control (Kiesner, & Kerr, 2004). Maimon, Browing, Brooks-Gum (2010) stated that family affection and emotional atmosphere affect suicide through receiving of family support and emphasize on role of indirect control of parent-child attachment in reduction of suicide attempts. Sociological and psychological studies have shown that some factors such as family structure, lack of family support, weak relationships with peers, depression, emotional and impulsive disorders are associated with suicide attempts. The selected method of family members in family with unsuitable structure when deal crisis is fight instead of understanding which may lead to isolation, rejection, depression, lack of emotional control miscarriage, worthlessness, loneliness, or suicide. The study of Beautrais (2001) revealed that disputes with a family member is usually one of the predictors of suicide behavior at 70 % of the cases. Also, Rudd (2004) showed that the history of suicide attempts in the family members is one of the risk factors for suicide attempts. Goodwin, Beautrais, & Fergusson (2004) also found that the suicidal thoughts of parents or the history of suicide attempt are the strong predictors of suicide. According to the researches done in the field of suicide, the family plays a strong role in the act of suicide, so two important parts of the family, the same psychological - emotional atmosphere and family structure, are variables that research suggests that they contribute to the suicide of young people. Therefore, it is possible to state that one of the factors influencing the behavior and personality of teenagers is the emotional environment of families, which in the face of attention to the biological and psychological needs of children will have fewer behavioral problems and more flexible personality, and their children will experience less psychological and developmental problems. Therefore, the aim of this study is determination of the role of psycho-emotional atmosphere and family structure in the suicide attempts of teenagers in Hormozgan Hospital.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The method of this research was descriptive-correlation.

The statistical population of this study consisted of all teenagers (male and female) of 13-20 years old referred public and private hospitals of Hormozgan Province that had committed suicide in 2015, which was selected 146 by random sampling of them after obtaining the necessary permission from the concerned authorities.

**Research tools:**

**Affective family climate:** The Hill-Berne Affective family climate (1964) was used to collect data. In the research of [Kooti, Rajabi, & Sodani \(2007\)](#), a criterion questionnaire (AFC) was used to determine the concurrent validity of the scale. The validity coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.67. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha, half split, and Guttman methods were used to investigate the internal similarity of the family's emotional atmosphere scale, which were 0.85, 0.77, and 0.77, respectively, indicating the acceptable reliability of this scale. In the present study, the reliability of Cronbach's alpha method for the whole questionnaire was calculated 0.81. The scale has 16 five-choice items (very low = 1, low = 2, moderate = 3, high = 4, very high = 5) and eight subscales (tenderness, caresses, authentication, shared experiences, gifts, persuasion, and feeling of security). Each subject gets a score between 16 and 80. Achieving a high score is a sign of a good emotional atmosphere, and a low score is a sign of an unfavorable emotional atmosphere.

**The Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ):** The questionnaire has 13 items and two options (yes = 1 and no = 0), designed by Keith (1984). Of course, this scoring method is inversely related to questions 1, 5, and 11. Therefore, the score range will be from 0 to 13. The higher the score, the more likely the person

selects suicide and vice versa. In [Noori research \(2010\)](#), the face validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by two university professors and also the reliability of the questionnaire or its reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha measurement method. Cronbach's alpha for the suicide questionnaire in adolescents was 0.65, which indicates the acceptable reliability of this questionnaire ([Noori, 2010](#)). Also, in the present study, the reliability of the Cronbach's alpha method was calculated for the total questionnaire of 0.89.

**Family assessment device (FDA):** The questionnaire has 60 items (fully agree = 1 and completely opposite = 4) with a score range of 60 to 240 for the whole tool and is based on McMaster's theory ([Epstein, Ryan, Bishop, Miller, & Keitner, 2003](#)). The tool consists of seven areas (6 family dimensions and one overall family performance dimension): communication, emotional integration, role playing, overall structure, problem solving, emotional support, and behavior control that measure family efficiency. As a result, higher scores indicate poorer family performance and lower scores indicate better family performance. The validity and reliability of this tool have been studied and confirmed in studies of [Fogarty \(2009\)](#). It has been evaluated by [Zadeh Mohammadi and Malek Khosravi \(2011\)](#) and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of all scales was calculated 0.94.

**3. Results**

Descriptive statistical methods such as frequency, percentage and cumulative percentage were used to analyze the collected data. In the inferential statistics section, Pearson correlation coefficient and entered regression analysis have been used. 58.9% of the participants in the present study were male and 41.1% female.

**Table 1. Simple correlation coefficients between the emotional atmosphere of the family, family structure and its subscales with suicide attempt**

Variable	suicide attempt	
	correlation coefficient	significance level
<b>Tenderness</b>	-.60	0.001
<b>Caresses</b>	-.39	0.001
<b>authentication</b>	-.67	0.001
<b>shared experiences</b>	-.09	0.24
<b>gifts</b>	-.04	0.68
<b>persuasion</b>	-.01	0.90
<b>trust</b>	-.47	0.001
<b>feeling of security</b>	-.57	0.001
<b>emotional atmosphere(totally)</b>	-.72	0.001
<b>Communication</b>	-.61	0.001
<b>emotional integration</b>	-.33	0.001
<b>role playing</b>	-.43	0.001
<b>overall structure</b>	-.47	0.001
<b>problem solving</b>	-.43	0.001
<b>emotional support</b>	.11	0.18
<b>behavior control</b>	-.27	0.001
<b>Family structure(totally)</b>	-.49	0.001

Table 1 shows a correlation between the emotional atmosphere of the family, family structure and its subscales with suicide attempts.

Entered regression model to predict the variable suicide attempt based on family emotional atmosphere subscales showed  $R = .79$ ,  $R^2 = .63$  and Adjusted  $R =$

.61. Based on these observations, it was found that the multiple correlations between the subscales of the emotional atmosphere of the family with suicide attempt of the clients are equal to 0.79 and its adjusted coefficient of determination was 0.61.

**Table 2. Summary Table of one-way analysis of variance results for predicting variable suicide attempts based on family emotional atmosphere subscales**

Enter model	Model index	Total square footage	Degrees of freedom	Average square	The value of F	Significant level
family emotional climate subscales	Regression effect	803.79	8	100.74	29.88	0.001
	left over	460.67	137	3.36		
	Total	1264.74	145			

The analysis of variance table 2 showed that regression model was statistically significant ( $F=29.88$ ,  $P \leq 0.001$ ).

**Table 3. Table of coefficients of entered regression equation, variable subscale of emotional atmosphere of the family, variable of family structure dimensions and variables of family emotional atmosphere and family structure**

Model	Non-standard coefficients		Standard value $\beta$	The value of t	Significant level
	The value of B	Standard error value			
intercept	15.56	0.79		19.69	0.001
Tenderness	0.27	0.07	-.22	-6.86	0.001
Caresses	-0.32	0.10	-.23	-2.89	0.001
authentication	-0.34	0.09	-.31	-7.48	0.001
shared experiences	0.03	0.08	-.02	0.32	0.74
gifts	-0.10	0.11	-.07	-.92	0.35
persuasion	-0.04	0.10	-.03	-.44	0.65
trust	-0.29	0.11	-.19	-4.17	0.001
feeling of security	-0.23	0.11	-.17	-2.69	0.001
intercept	160.96	15.10		10.65	0.001
Communication	-0.30	0.04	-0.24	-6.58	0.001
emotional integration	0.01	0.04	0.05	0.030	0.97
role playing	0.12	0.05	-0.18	-2.56	0.001
overall structure	-0.13	0.04	-0.29	2.91	0.001
problem solving	0.06	0.06	0.13	1.05	0.29
emotional support	-0.07	0.03	-0.18	-2.68	0.001
behavior control	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.36	0.71
intercept	17.58	0.74		23.67	0.001
Family emotional climate	-0.27	0.03	-0.44	7.54	0.001
family structure	-0.19	0.08	-0.31	4.90	0.001

Table 3 of the regression equation table showed the share of each of the predictor variables (family emotional atmosphere and family structure) in the variable changed criteria (suicide attempt). Also, Table 3 showed the coefficients of regression equation, the share of the predictor variables (dimensions of family structure) in the variable changed the criterion (suicide attempt).

In regression model to predict suicide attempt based on family emotional atmosphere and family structure  $R = 0.75$ ,  $R^2 = 0.58$  and adjusted  $R = 0.56$  was calculated. Based on the observations in Table 3, it was found that the multiple correlation between the emotional atmosphere of the family and the structure of the family with the suicide attempt of the clients was equal to 0.75 and its adjusted determination coefficient

was equal to 0.56. In other words, 56% of the variable changes in suicide were explained by the emotional atmosphere of the family and the structure of the family.

The other results, entered regression model to predict suicide attempts based on family structure dimensions  $R = 0.69$ ,  $R^2 = 0.49$  and adjusted  $R = 0.47$  was calculated. Based on these observations, it was found that the multiple correlations between the dimensions of family structure and suicide attempts of clients was equal to 0.69 and its adjusted coefficient of determination is 0.47.

Regression model to predict suicide attempt based on family emotional climate and family structure ( $R = 0.75$ ,  $R^2 = 0.58$  and adjusted  $R = 0.56$ ). Based on the observations in Table 3, it was found that the multiple

correlation between the emotional climate of the family and the structure of the family with the suicide attempt of the clients was equal to 0.75 and its adjusted determination coefficient was equal to 0.56. In other

words, 56% of the variable changes in suicide criteria are explained by the emotional atmosphere of the family and the structure of the family.

**Table 4. Summary of One-Way analysis of variance results for predicting suicide based on family emotional atmosphere, family structure and suicide prediction based on family structure dimensions**

Enter model	Model index	Total square footage	Degrees of freedom	Average square	The value of F	Significant level
<b>Family emotional climate and family structure</b>	Regression effect	722.80	2	361.40	95.40	0.001
	left over	541.67	143	3.78		
	Total	1264.47	145			
<b>Dimensions of family structure</b>	Regression effect	614.81	7	87.83	18.65	0.001
	left over	649.65	138	4.70		
	Total	1264.47	145			

Table 4 of the analysis of variance showed that the present regression model was statistically significant. This table showed the variables of family emotional atmosphere and family structure are significant ( $F = 95.40, p \leq 0.01$ ). Also, this table showed that the variable of family size dimensions was significant ( $F = 18.65, p \leq 0.01$ ).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of analysis of simple correlation coefficients between the emotional atmosphere of the family and its subscales with suicide attempts showed that the emotional atmosphere of the family and its subscales were significant and showed a negative relationship with suicide attempts.

These findings are led in the results of research by Maimon et al. (2010), Agerbo, Nordentoft, & Mortensen (2012), Abdolmaleki, Farid, Habibi Kleiber, Hashemi, & Qudosinejad (2015) and SerajKhorami and Safarzadeh (2012). Chen, Chan, Wong, Chan, Chan, Law, et al., (2006) conducted a study on Hong Kong adolescents and found that stressful events can increase suicidal ideation and can be counteracted by the support of friends and the family's appropriate emotional atmosphere. Maimon et al. (2010) also argued that family affection and emotional atmosphere affect suicide along with family support and emphasize on the role of indirect control of parent-child attachment in reduction of suicide attempts. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between family emotional atmosphere and suicidal tendencies; also, the emotional atmosphere of the family can be a good predictor of suicidal tendencies. The social support of friends, family and other people lead in decreasing in stress and suicidal thoughts, and people who have suicidal thoughts have lower social support. To explain, it can be stated that the family is the place of formation of the individual's identity and the origin of

human identity, and all people of all ages turn to the family for information, help and attractive and enjoyable interactions (Abdolmaleki, et al., 2016). The existence of intimate and satisfying communication predicts physical and mental health throughout the developmental range of individuals (Picardi, Toni, & Carropo, 2009). In general, in families which the psychological environment is unhealthy, members are constantly in conflict with each other, their children and adolescents are the main victims of such situations. However, if people in society, especially parents, are aware of the impact of the family's emotional atmosphere and their performance on the health and prosperity of their children, they will try to provide a calm, balanced and supportive environment. Therefore, the existence of intimate relationships between family members prevents criminal acts and destructive behaviors such as suicide. Therefore, the existence of a negative relationship between the emotional atmosphere of the family and its subscales is confirmed by suicide attempts.

The results of a simple correlation between family structure and its subscales with suicide attempts showed that family structure and subscales including emotional fusion, role play, general structure, problem solving and behavioral control are statistically significant and negative. This means that possibility of suicide attempts is less in family with appropriate structure. These findings are consistent with the results of researches by Mousavi et al., (2008), and Kierkus and Bear (2003). There is a negative correlation between appropriate relationship in family with rate of suicide (Sun, et al., 2006) and also, a positive correlation between disturbed family structure with rate of suicidal behaviors (Akleema, Hari, 2005). According to Sun et al. (2006), family cohesion, conflict, and peer support have been significant predictors of self-esteem and depression, and depression has been a powerful factor in predicting of

suicidal ideation. The divorce of parents, violence in family, the degree of verbal communication in family, abuse of family, abuse and especially sexual abuse are related to history of suicide attempts in the adolescent (Mousavi, Sajadi, Rafiei, & Fayazi, 2008).

To explain these findings, it can be said that young people who commit suicide often have a troubled family history and disorders such as family dysfunction, physical and sexual abuse, and inadequate parental care. In addition, factors that affect the overall structure of the family, such as the death of a parent, separation and divorce, the existence of psychological problems in one parent, the family environment of rejection, quarrel and intense parent-child conflict, are also considered. In fact, the family is a kind of system that has its own sub-system and is located in larger systems. The stable patterns of family behavior allow us to consider the family to have a structure, which not only regulates the interactions of family members, but also shapes their behavior; when behavioral patterns are formed in a family, family members show only a part of the total behavior. Therefore, family interactions are predictable and family has a powerful structure.

The results of regression coefficients revealed that between subscales of family emotional atmosphere and subscales of love, caress, approval, trust and sense of security were statistically significant and were able to predict the suicide of clients. This finding is also consistent with the results of Gencoz (2006), Mc Holom, Macmillan, & Jamieson (2014), Parker and Benson (2004); Movahedi, Movahedi, Hashemi, Mashinchi Abbasi, & Bazgir (2012) and Nazari, Amini manesh, & Shahini (2011). Beautrais (2001) showed that arguing with a family member is usually one of the predictors of suicide behavior in 70% of cases. In general, adolescents who suffer from disorders such as depression, are more likely to commit suicide than adolescents who are not. Gencouz (2006) also found that poor family relationships (lack of emotional atmosphere between family members) and lack of cohesion in the family were associated with a higher probability of suicide. The parental supports lead in greater attachment between parent and their children and increase the mental health in family (Parker and Benson ,2004). Numerous studies have been conducted in the country that have highlighted the prominent role of the family, especially the emotional atmosphere of the family, quality of adolescents' relationship with their parents as the best predictor of delinquency. The variables of religiosity, social support, family atmosphere and depression were able to predict 54 of the changes in students' suicide attempts (Sheeber, Hops, Alper, Davis, & Andrews, 1997). The family atmosphere was the most important part of the relationship and the predictive power of suicide attempts (Movahedi, et al., 2012). To explain this, it can be said that since the relationship in family

are very different from the relationships in external environments. Many of the adolescent's psychological and emotional needs are met in this environment and support his or her entry into society. For this reason, its role is more important than all other environmental factors. The cause of much social harm in metropolis is the disintegration of the family and instability in the relations between the members. It seems that the emotional environment of the family, the proper upbringing and supervision of parents, is effective in preventing the occurrence of abnormal behaviors in children. Evidence shows how long the family spends for raising the child, the family members are less distracted (Afraseyabi & Jahangiri, 2015).

The results of regression coefficients in the regression equation showed that among the subscales of family structure, communication subscales, role play, general structure and emotional support were statistically significant correlation and were able to predict suicide attempts of clients. Importantly, the subscales of the family structure, like the subscales of the emotional atmosphere of the family, negatively predicted suicide. This research finding is in line with the results of Rud Research (2004), Mousavi et al., (2008), King, Berona, Horwitz & Gipson (2015), Michel, and Rosenthal (2002), and Naami and Peymannia (2014). As example, Goodwin et al. (2004) found those parents' suicidal thoughts or a history of suicide were among the strong predictors of suicide in children. Also, research has shown that drug use, family harassment, parental separation due to divorce, withdrawal from others, and lack of verbal communication between members have been associated with suicide (Mousavi et al. 2008). In addition, the research results showed that the rate of familial correlation in those who attempted suicide was lower than those who did not commit suicide. In a study conducted by Kiyani, Fatehzadeh & Ghasemi (2013) concluded some factors such as family structure, real or emotional divorce, psychological and physical harassment by parents, authoritarian parenting style, rejection, addiction, a history of psychiatric illness, a history of suicide in the family, lack of family support, poor relationships with peers, depression, excitement, and impulsivity are associated with suicide, suicide attempts, and suicidal ideation. To explain this finding, it can be stated that the family is considered as a set of plans and bases that have a relatively stable relationship with each other as structure of the family. Family as a social subsystem includes a set of plans and the relationships between them. Each role is assigned a based on its social values. Different plans and relationships sometimes find completely different bases in the hierarchy of family power, and sometimes they are on the same level and horizontally. Each type of power distribution in the family between different roles leads to the development of special characters. Therefore, given

the performance of the family structure and the dimensions of the family, it is expected that the dimensions of the family structure will predict suicide based on past research, which is confirmed in the present hypothesis.

The results of regression coefficients in the regression equation showed that both the input variables of regression (family emotional atmosphere and family structure) became statistically significant and were able to predict the suicide of clients. It is important to note that among the input variables, the emotional atmosphere variable of the family plays a greater role in predicting suicide attempts by clients. This research finding is in line with the results of research by McCullough et al. (2014), Nazari et al. (2012), Goodwin et al. (2004), Mousavi et al. (2008) and Groleger et al. (2013) In order to explain this general finding, it can be stated that according to the results of the previous four hypotheses in which there is a strong relationship between emotional atmosphere and family structure with suicide attempt, and also since the dimensions of family structure and emotional atmosphere subscales of family were statistically significant; Therefore, there is an expectation that the emotional atmosphere and structure of the family will be able to predict suicide. In addition, this point has been pointed out in various studies. So the present hypothesis that the emotional atmosphere of the family and the structure of the family can affect the suicide attempts of 13–20-year-old clients referring to hospitals in Hormozgan province are confirmed.

The use of correlation method, low sample size, age range of 13 to 20 years and lack of study in other age groups were the most important limitations of this study. It is suggested that in order to prevent and control of this social harm should be identified important and effective factors such as marital status, emotional control, emotional stability and personality traits of the person taking action. Inability to control unwanted variables was another limitation of the present study; because exactly the contribution of each of the variables in the suicide attempt must be determined. Neglecting importance of mental health during this period leads to family, social and educational conflicts, and the source of many problems including addiction, depression, theft, kinds of crimes and eventually suicide. Therefore, further research by researchers in this field, the formation of training workshops in this field by relevant organizations (education and higher education), Familiarization of families with the emotional characteristics of adolescents and desirable parenting styles, informing parents that the personality of children and adolescents is formed in the early years of childhood are recommended.

## 5. Ethical Considerations

### Compliance with ethical guidelines

In designing and compiling this research, ethical principles have been considered. The purpose of the research was explained to the participants and the information was received confidentially and used only for research purposes.

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### Authors' contributions

All authors of this article participated in all stages of writing and conducting research.

### Conflicts of interest

The authors of the article had no conflict of interest.

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