

# Studying the relation between control source with hypochondria and life satisfaction of parents having mental retarded children

Faramarz Sabeghi, Hossein Jenaabadi

**Abstract**— The study was done to investigate the relation between controlling with hypochondria and life satisfaction of parents having children with mental retardation. It is a correlative study. 200 sample parents (100 mothers and 100 fathers) were chosen using simple random sampling. This study includes three questionnaires: Ratter control scale (83% kranbakh alpha), Hypochondria (79% kranbakh alpha) and Taft's life satisfaction scale (83% kranbakh alpha). Independent T test, correlation coefficient and regression analysis were used to analyze data in this research. According to regression test, there is a significant negative correlation between control source and life satisfaction. But there is no significant relation between control source and hypochondria. Results also showed that there is no significant difference between parents with internal control source and those with external control source of hypochondria. Parents with internal control source are more satisfied in life than those with external control source. Results also showed that life satisfaction has a direct relation with hypochondria and fathers are more satisfied in life than mothers.

**Index Terms**— control source, hypochondria, life satisfaction, mental retardation.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

MENTAL retardation or failure of mental powers is not a hot topic. In each period, there are people in societies who do not have natural mind. Different statistics show that children with IQ lower than 70 i.e. mental retarded ones include 1-2% of population in countries (Milani, 2001). One important thing in mental retarded people is their mental problems whether they or their family and relatives are mental retarded. Observation of psychologists and physicians shows that mental retarded child brings about problems in the family particularly if other family children have natural IQ or even higher than natural. Parents' reactions to their mental retarded children are not the same. Mental retardation degree, psychologist and psychiatrist advices, social and economical status and parents' personality are different. Of the commonest reactions of parents having mental retarded children are guilty feeling, failure, nervousness and concern (Milani, 2001). Studying the relation between control source and hypochondria and life satisfaction is one of issues that should be studied to help parents having mental retarded children and it plays a vital role in decreasing parents' problems. Control source is one of topics related to document theory in which it is assumed to seek understanding the affairs and events causes (Seif, 2001). Control place is important in control source. Control place was first developed by Ann Julian Ratter (1996). It has been formulated for individual beliefs in source. It is assumed in the theory that people are divided into two groups regarding belief in control place. One group attributes their success and failure to themselves and the other attributes them

to external factors. The former is called people with internal control source and the latter is external control source (Seif, 2001). In a study done by Kosari (2001), the effect of control source on individual and social adaptation of high school students was investigated and concluded that in general control source relates to adaptation. It shows that internal control source can be a factor for controlling events and increasing individual adaptation in order to be more satisfied in personal and social life. Frasat (2004) studied and compared control source and marital satisfaction among employed women and housewives. Results show that there is a significant difference between control source of employed women and housewives and housewives have more external control source than employed women. Results also showed that housewives are more satisfied in their life. A research done by Ratter show that people with internal control source is mentally and physically healthier than those with external control source. They received better grades in school and they believe to have more rights for choosing and they are socially more famous and skillful and have higher self esteem (Seif, 2001). Another problem that parents of mental retarded children face with is hypochondria. Hypochondriac people are very concerned about their health. This disease increases by age rising and occurs in women, the olds and middle aged people more than others (Shamloo, 2003). A hypochondrium has psychosomatic symptoms although the missed physical actions are not destroyed. Most of studies show that hypochondria will be formed based on matching with parents, sisters and brothers who are sick. All authors agreed with the role that parents play in this regard. According to Conner studies, in 53% of cases, parents of the child have hypochondria (Dadsetan, 1967 cited from attorney 1379). Identifying life satisfaction and the factors that increase or decrease it are also important. Compel defined life satisfaction as the difference between what person want and what it is. According to multiple contradiction theory of Alex Michalos, life satisfaction has been identified by perception of

- Faculty Member Department Education University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Zahedan, Iran.
- Assistant Professor of Psychology, University of Sistan and Baludhestan, Zahedan, Iran.

person from what objects are and what objects can be. Considering life satisfaction has important role in social and individual efficiency and healthy person is the most basic element of development and health society, the factors that can increase life satisfaction of people should be noted. Regarding problems of parents having mental retarded children, it is necessary to study the factors that can facilitate difficulties and help parents to change their thoughts in these conditions (Mofidi, 1997). So in order to explain the cause and problem statement of the research, considering place of source control in people life especially people who face problem such as mental retarded children, it is possible that in all stages of life, parents seek the cause of their mental retarded children. This affected negatively on their health and self esteem and makes them ill that does not have any physical base. It results in decrease of satisfaction from family and personal life. So the present study is aimed to seek whether or not there is any relation between control source with hypochondria and their life satisfaction regarding problems parents face that have mental retarded children.

The following assumptions have been studied:

- 1-There is a relation between control source with hypochondria and life satisfaction of parents with mental retarded children
- 2-There is a significant relation between life satisfactions and hypochondria in parents with mental retarded children
- 3-parents with internal control source are more satisfied than those with external control source
- 4-Life satisfaction of fathers with mental retarded children is higher than mothers with mental retarded children
- 5-Parents with internal control source are less hypochondriac than parents with external control source

## 2 METHOD

It is a correlative study. In this study, control source is used as independent variable and hypochondria and life satisfaction are used as dependent variables. Statistical population of the study is all parents of mental retarded children in Zabol in academic year 2010-2011. 200 parents (100 fathers, 100 mothers) were chosen by simple random sampling in this study. Three questionnaires are used in the study such as 1- Ratter's control scale questionnaire (internal and external) with 83% kranbakh alpha 2- hypochondriac questionnaire with 79% kranbakh alpha 3- Taft's life satisfaction test with 83% kranbakh alpha. Independent T test was used for data analysis, and correlation coefficient for studying the relation of variables and regression analysis.

Variable	Control source	mean	Standard deviation	T	Freedom degree df	Significance level sig
Life satisfaction	Internal	58	13.5	38	198	0.0001
Life satisfaction	external	39	8.156			

## 3 RESULTS

It is a correlative study. In this study, control source is used as independent variable and hypochondria and life satisfaction are used as dependent variables. Statistical population of the study is all parents of mental retarded children in Zabol in academic year 2010-2011. 200 parents (100 fathers, 100 mothers) were chosen by simple random sampling in this study. Three questionnaires are used in the study such as 1- Ratter's control scale questionnaire (internal and external) with 83% kranbakh alpha 2- hypochondriac questionnaire with 79% kranbakh alpha 3- Taft's life satisfaction test with 83% kranbakh alpha. Independent T test was used for data analysis, and correlation coefficient for studying the relation of variables and regression analysis.

Assumption 1: There is a relation between control source with hypochondria and life satisfaction of parents with mental retarded children

TABLE 1

REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR CONTROL SOURCE WITH HYPOCHONDRIA AND LIFE SATISFACTION

Predicting variable	Predictive variable	$\beta$ coefficient	Determination coefficient	F ratio	Significance level
control source	hypochondria	0.22	0.134	8.46	0.0001
	life satisfaction	-0.36			

As seen in table 1, there is a significant negative correlation between control source and life satisfaction with respect to regression coefficient ( $\beta$  coefficient) and f significance level but there is no significant relation between control source and hypochondria.

Assumption 2: There is a significant relation between life satisfactions with hypochondria in parents with mental retarded children

TABLE 2

PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN LIFE SATISFACTION AND HYPOCHONDRIA

Variable	Correlation coefficient r	Significance level sig
Life satisfaction	-0.145	0.0001
Hypochondria		

As seen in table 2, there is a negative significant relation between life satisfaction and hypochondria. Correlation value is  $r = -0.145$  and this correlation is in range of 0.0001 significance level. So this assumption is confirmed.

Assumption 3: parents with internal control source are more satisfied than those with external control source.

TABLE 3

COMPARING AVERAGES OF LIFE SATISFACTION AND CONTROL SOURCE

Results of independent T test for comparing average difference showed that there is a significant difference in averages of life satisfaction in both groups. Average score of life satisfaction in people with internal control source and external control source are 58 and 39 respectively. So this difference is significant regarding  $T = 3.8$  and significance level = 0.0001. This assumption is confirmed.

Assumption 4: Life satisfaction of fathers with mental retarded children is higher than mothers with mental retarded children

**TABLE 4**  
COMPARING AVERAGES FOR LIFE SATISFACTION

Variable	gender	mean	Standard deviation	T	df	sig
Life satisfaction	Male	42	7.35	7.24	198	0.0001
Life satisfaction	Female	25	8.67			

Results of independent T test for comparing average difference showed that there is a significant difference in averages of life satisfaction in both groups. Average scores of life satisfaction are 25 and 42 for female and male respectively. So this difference is significant regarding  $T = 7.24$  and significance level = 0.0001. This assumption is confirmed.

Assumption 5: Parents with internal control source are less hypochondriac than parents with external control source.

**TABLE 5**  
COMPARING AVERAGES OF HYPOCHONDRIA

Variable	Control source	mean	Standard deviation	T	df	sig
hypochondria	Internal	16	2.3	1.872	198	0.057
hypochondria	external	17	2.8			

Results of table 5 showed that there is no significant difference between both groups regarding hypochondria ( $sig = 57\%$ ,  $df = 198$ ,  $T = 1.872$ ) so this assumption is rejected.

#### 4 Discussion

Assumption 1: There is a relation between control source with hypochondria and life satisfaction of parents with mental retarded children. As seen in the results of the test, there is a negative significant correlation between control source and life satisfaction but there is no significant relation between hypochondria and control source. In studying the relation between control source and life satisfaction, it should be noted that the observed behavior is not only due to certain reinforcement rather it will be identified by individuals' opinions about what the possible results of the behavior should be. People have expectations and their behavior is affected by these expectations (Ratter, 1994). People with internal control source have positive attitude towards life because they control different events in life (Seif, 2000). Research results are coincident with results obtained by Kulshresthasen (2006) namely relation between objective well being and emotional intelligence and

control source of mothers with mental retarded children and with Abubadr's research called predictors of life satisfaction in adolescents.

Assumption 2: There is a significant relation between life satisfactions with hypochondria in parents with mental retarded children.

Test results showed that there is a significant negative relation between life satisfaction and hypochondria. In many studies, health is one the strong factors for life satisfaction. Researchers while studying the effect of physical values concluded that generally 1% increase in reported average of health status is equal to 1% increase in objective well being of people (Danovan and Halpem, 2002) so since hypochondria is a kind of psychological disease, decrease in life satisfaction will be increased.

Assumption 3: parents with internal control source are more satisfied than those with external control source.

Results showed that there is a significant difference between two groups. Research results are coincident with results obtained by Kulshresthasen (2006) namely relation between objective well being and emotional intelligence and control source of mothers with mental retarded children. In the Study done by Ratter showed that people with internal control source are mentally and physically healthier than those with external control source. They are socially more skillful and popular and have higher self esteem compared with people with external control source.

Assumption 4: Life satisfaction of fathers with mental retarded children is higher than mothers with mental retarded children.

Results showed that life satisfaction of fathers is more than that in mothers. Research results are coincident with results obtained by Cork et al (1997). In a study done by Cork et al called gender differences between Chinese male and female's life satisfaction resided in Malaysia, results showed that males are more satisfied than females. Bemskov et al have done a study about the relation between gender and life satisfaction in 66 countries and concluded that male satisfaction is higher than female's one. Generally it seems that male life satisfaction is higher than that in females. The reason may be how to face and adapt with life difficulties that may make difference between both genders. Females face emotional problems when they encounter with difficulties resulting in decrease of their satisfaction.

Assumption 5: Parents with internal control source are less hypochondriac than parents with external control source

Results showed that there is no significant difference between both groups regarding hypochondria. Research test are coincident with that of Montazar Alfaraj (2005). Most of researches showed that a hypochondrium is formed based on being homologue with parents, sisters and brothers. According to Conner's studies, in 53% of cases, parents are hypochondriac. Other factors such as attraction of parents for accepting and confirming the others, denying the disease due to mental stress reduction resulted from guilty feeling can lead to

hypochondria (Dadsetan, 1997). So it can be concluded that hypochondria is a defense mechanism for those who have problem for adapting with the others. It can be the reason why they do not have relation with others.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Dadsetan,P (1997),psychosomatic, evolution from childhood to adolescence, Samt press
- [2] Seif,A (2001), educative psychology, Agah Press
- [3] Shamlou,S,(2003), psychological pathology, Roshd Press
- [4] Frasat,Z (2004), studying and comparing control source and marital satisfaction among employed females and housewives in Tehran, the first congress of family pathology in Iran, Tehran, Beheshti University.
- [5] Mofidi,F (1997) training family as a practical guide for parents and teachers of mental retarded children, Saramad-e Kavosh Press
- [6] Montazar Alfaraj, F (2005), the relation between control source and mental health of high school female students, MA thesis for psychology, Tehran, Beheshti University
- [7] Milanifar, B (2001), psychology of mental retarded children, Qos Press.
- [8] Angos ,kempel&etal(1974),social support as a moderator of life stress.presidentall address.psychosomatic jornal vol :38pp:300-314
- [9] Axel R.Fugl-Meyer, Roland Melin and Kerstin S. Fugl-Meyer(2007).LIFE SATISFACTION IN 18-TO 64-YEAR-OLD SWEDES: IN RELATION TO GENDER, AGE, PARTNER AND IMMIGRANT STATUS. From the Department of Neuroscience, Rehabilitation Medicine, Uppsala University, Sweden34:239-246
- [10] Arggel,M(1999).Causes and correlates of happiness . The foundation o hedonic psychology.
- [11] Bjirnskov, c,Dreher A& fischer,A,V(2007).on gender inequality and life satisfaction ,sse/efi working paper serie in economics and finance no457 ,final version,.
- [12] Donovan,N.& Halpern.D(2002).life satfe satisfaction:the state of knowledge and hmplications for government.Attrived at Nicholas.Danovan@cabinetof hedonic psychology.
- [13] Hanter,d.r.(2002).development of an aviation safltylocus of control scale.original search,aviation.spce&environment medicine.vol15.no 11pp;247-257.
- [14] kirk.S.A.&gallageher,j,j&amastasiwo, N.j.(1997) .education exopt children .boston,Houghton Mifflin.
- [15] Soleman H.Abu-Bader,Anissa Rogers ,&Amanda S. Barusch, (2002) .Predictors of Life Satisfactionin Frail Elderly.Journal of Gerontological Social work, vol.38(3),haworthpressinc.com/store/product.asp?sku=J083.
- [16] sousa,L.&1yubomirsky,S(2001).life atisfaction.inj.worell(ED.),encycloped-A of women andgender:sex similartirs and difference.vol.2,pp.667-676... Sandiego CA.
- [17] Usha Kulshrestha and Chandrani Sen(2007),Subjective Well Being in Relation to Emotional Intelligence andLocus of Control among Executives. Journal of the Indian Academy of Applies Psychology , February 2006, Vol. 32, No.2, 93-98.