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The role of parental socialization in facilitating self-determination of learning motivation and psychological well-being in school-age children

Rationale of the research study

Self-determination theory (SDT) is an approach to human motivation and personality developed by Ryan & Deci (1985, 1991). Proponents of SDT propose that to be self-determined is to endorse one's actions at the highest level of reflection. When people are self-determined, they experience a sense of freedom to do what is interesting, personally important, and vitalizing. Social-contextual contexts, particularly, the process of socialization, may facilitate individual's self-determination and healthy psychological development by satisfying three basic psychological needs- autonomy, competence, and social-relatedness. The process of socialization is not only necessary for effective internalization of societal attitudes, values, and regulatory process but also for psychological growth, healthy development, integrity, and in turn, psychological well-being.

Applying self-determination theory (SDT) to a research issue in parental socialization, the research framework focuses on the role of parental socialization in facilitating children's self-determination of learning motivation and psychological well-being in a learning context. In this research, parental socialization is concerned parents' supportive styles (autonomous-emotional vs. control-pressure) used when getting involved in children's home learning situations (e.g. homework supervisor). Regarding previous SDT research, parents are significantly assumed to be effective socializing agents, who may facilitate (autonomous-emotional supportive parents) or undermine (control-pressure supportive parents) children's self-determination of learning motivation (intrinsic, identified, and external motivation) and psychological well-being in a learning context (positive affect experienced in home learning situations, learning satisfaction, self-actualization). Nevertheless, parents may differ in their supportive styles due to some antecedents, for instance, parents' positive beliefs of the role construction and sense of efficacy, parents' perceived invitations from children and teachers to get involved in home learning situations, and parents' resources of knowledge and time (e.g. Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997, 2005). In addition, some previous research revealed that parents from different social classes may differ in their supportive styles (e.g. Steinberg, 2001). Therefore, these antecedents may hypothetically reduce parents' readiness to become autonomous supportive on one hand and increase the likelihood of control-pressure supportive parents on the other hand. However, the concepts of antecedents of parents' supportive styles have been negligently combined to the SDT perspective on socialization.

Regarding the rationale of the research study, the main purposes of this research aim 1) to develop the theoretical model of antecedents and effects of parents' supportive styles used in home learning situations and 2) to validate whether the theoretical model fits the empirical data.

School age-children in 5th-6th Grade and their parents will be randomly sampled using multi-stage sampling design. There are two versions of research instruments: one for children and one for their parents. Each version consists of demographic questionnaire and scales (5 point-Likert type). Data collection will start at the beginning of year 2010. Descriptive statistics, crosstab analysis, correlation analysis, MANOVA with SPSS for Windows 17.0, will be employed in order to analyze descriptive data and compare means of research variables. The theoretical model will be validated with the empirical data using structural equation modeling (*SEM*) with LISREL 8.53.