




Hardiness as a Mediator between Daily Life Hassles and Psychological Well-being among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Adolescents face various challenges in their lives and family hardiness not only work as a coping construct but also contribute to the wellbeing of adolescents in facing daily life hassles. Hence, there is a need for further evaluation of family hardiness in reducing the impact of stress and amplifying psychological well-being in adolescents. Present research suggested evaluation of the mediating role of family hardiness between daily life hassles and psychological well-being. A convenient sample of 250 adolescents (aged 11 to 21 years), from two cities of Pakistan, was administered with indigenous Daily Life Hassles, Family Hardiness Index (FHI), and Psychological Well-being Scales. Research questions of the present study were evaluated through the procedures of PROCESS and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Findings of the present study revealed that family hardiness has a mediating role between daily life hassles experienced and appraised as stressful by adolescents and their well-being, and adolescents with enhanced well-being also reported daily hassles less frequently and appraised less stressful. Similarly, significant number of adolescents with enhanced well-being also reported enhanced levels of family hardiness. Findings of the present study emphasize the critical roles of hardiness as buffer against perceived stress in adolescents and also its role an amplifier for well-being in adolescents.

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1. Introduction

The age of adolescence is considered to be an important phase in mental development and growth in a human being. It involves transition from childhood phase to adulthood phase, and can likewise be seen as very stressful for the adolescents going through it. Many researchers have studied the impact of stress on adolescents and children (Clarke, 2006; Goodman et al., 2005; Grant et al., 2006). Although there is a broad concept and operational definition of stress in the literature related to adolescents which comprised of burnout (Schraml et al., 2011), feeling hassled (Miller & Townsend, 2005) and anxiety (Fichtel & Larsson, 2002; Smith et al., 1999). Whether it is daily life hassles or a major life event, the experience of stress is correlated with anxiety and depression in terms of negative effect on mental health (Barber et al., 2014; Beiter et al., 2015; Eisenberg et al., 2007; Mahmoud et al., 2012; Vinkers et al., 2014). Daily life hassles may not be overwhelming but still they are significant in terms of its effects on psychological health and well-being of individual. The impact of academic daily life hassles has been determined to be the major cause of stress amongst a sample of students of a medical college (Sohail, 2013).

In addition, optimal psychological functioning and experience is considered vital to the widespread perception of well-being in recent times. World Health Organization (WHO) constitution refers to health as the "state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 2016). Health outcomes and well-being are affected by environmental hassles like safety, noise, quality of interior and others (Salonen

et al., 2013). Various types of hassles contribute to stress, reduced performances and satisfaction (Anjali, 2010; Beyea, 2007; Mazer, 2006). In general those who experience high levels of stress, have low levels of self-efficacy, high external locus of control, and poor well-being (Roddenberry & Renk, 2010). Moreover, researches related to stress have found family hardiness to be a significant resistance force against stress. For a longer period of time, the construct of hardiness has only been restricted to individual unit but later on it guided they way forward to the construct of family hardiness (McCubbin, 1987). This research also identified family hardiness as the inner strengths and resilience of a family that work not only as protective factor against the impact of negative life experiences and adversities, but also work as helpful and protective construct, moreover it work as an active construct in regulating and managing stressful situations. Theoretically some scholars have incorporated hardiness into research using the concept of family cohesion, family schema and adaptability (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982; McCubbin et al., 1998; Olson, 2000). Psychological literature also revealed that correlation between the rise of stressors and family distress is significantly mediated by the family (Weiss et al., 2013).

The psychological effects in adolescents and children are reviewed in literature of multiple studies. Literature of the psychological studies provides confirmation that chronic stress caused by the daily life is a predictor of and well-being and mental health (Newnham et al., 2015), but it is important to highlight that these psychological researches were mostly focused on major life events or traumatic incidents (Bosmans et al., 2013). There are numerous evidences of the negative effects of stress on positive mental health outcomes of individuals, there is still little literature available about the moderating effects of family hardiness. The recent literature highlighted the significance of daily life hassles as these negative experiences may also be as detrimental as disaster trauma (Asselmann, Wittchen, Lieb and Beesdo-Baum 2017). Many research have been conducted on the subject but these researches could only examine the backward relationship between stress caused by daily life hassles and psychological well-being, and these researches could not clearly identify the relationship between the cause of higher psychological distress and lower well-being. This research address the need for a study that could clearly identify the backward relationship daily life hassles and psychological well-being, as well as the factors that may and to study the variables affecting their relationship. Keeping this in view, the current study therefore examine if living in an environment characterized by more frequent and more negative daily life hassles is related to adolescents' psychological well-being, and to investigate the role of family hardiness contributing to the well-being of adolescents.

1.1. Hypotheses

Following hypotheses were formulated for present study:

1. Daily life hassles (experience and appraisal) are negatively related with psychological well being.
2. Family hardiness mediates relationship between life hassles and psychological well being.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Study sample comprised of boys and girls from two cities of Pakistan; Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The sample comprised of 250 adolescents (117 boys and 133 girls). Age of the sample ranged from 11 to 21 years ($M = 17.46$, $S.D = 2.20$).

2.2. Measures

An indigenous daily life hassles scale, comprised of 71 items, was used to examine how frequently daily life hassles were experienced and how much they were appraised as stressful by adolescents. Participants of the study were requested to mention frequency of each hassle from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Higher frequency ranges were rated with the score of 4 or 5 for any one event that occur more frequency. They were also asked to rate intensity of each hassle from 1 (none) to 5 (severe) to report how much stress they felt because of the hassle mentioned in scale over the past two weeks. A score of 4 or 5 for any one event indicates that it is at least some problem to the adolescent. The overall Cronbach's alpha reliabilities for frequency and appraisal of Daily Life Hassles Scale were recorded as .93 and .94 respectively. A 20-item instrument, Family Hardiness Index (FHI), developed by M. McCubbin, H. McCubbin, and Thompson (1991) was used to assess family hardiness. Participants of the study were requested to rate them using a scale ranging from 0 (false) to 3 (true). The Chronbach alpha reliability of FHI for the present study was recorded as .74. Psychological well-being was measured by Urdu

version of 54-items Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale translated by Ansari (2010). Participants of the study were requested to respond on a scale ranging from strongly disagree= 1 to strongly agree= 6. For high and low well-being no specific cut points were defined.

2.3. Procedure

A permission letter, comprising details about nature and purpose of the study, was provided to the participants of the study by the researcher. Purposive Convenient sampling technique was used for collecting the data. Informed consent was taken prior to the administration of the instrument. Parental consent form for adolescents under 16 years of age was signed by their parents and assent form by the adolescents themselves prior to the administration of instruments. The participants of the study were well informed about nature and purpose of the study and their volunteer participation by the researcher. All the questionnaires were responded to by the participants in the presence of the researcher.

3. Results

Pearson product-moment correlation has been used to evaluate the relationships among frequency and appraisal of daily life hassles, family hardiness and psychological well-being. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The findings revealed that there is significant correlation between all of the variables. There is a negative and significant correlation between frequency and appraisal of daily life hassles and psychological well-being. In addition, there is a positive and significant correlation between family hardiness and psychological well-being (table1).

Table 1: Correlation coefficients of study variables (N= 250)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
1 DLH(Freq)	171.66	35.20	-	.85**	-.46**
2 DLH(App)	167.2	41.74		-	-.47**
4 PWB	207.07	27.98			-

Note. ** $p < .01$, DLH (Freq) = Frequency of Daily Life Hassles, DLH (App) = Appraisal of Daily Life Hassles, FHI= Family Hardiness Index, PWB= Psychological Well-being.

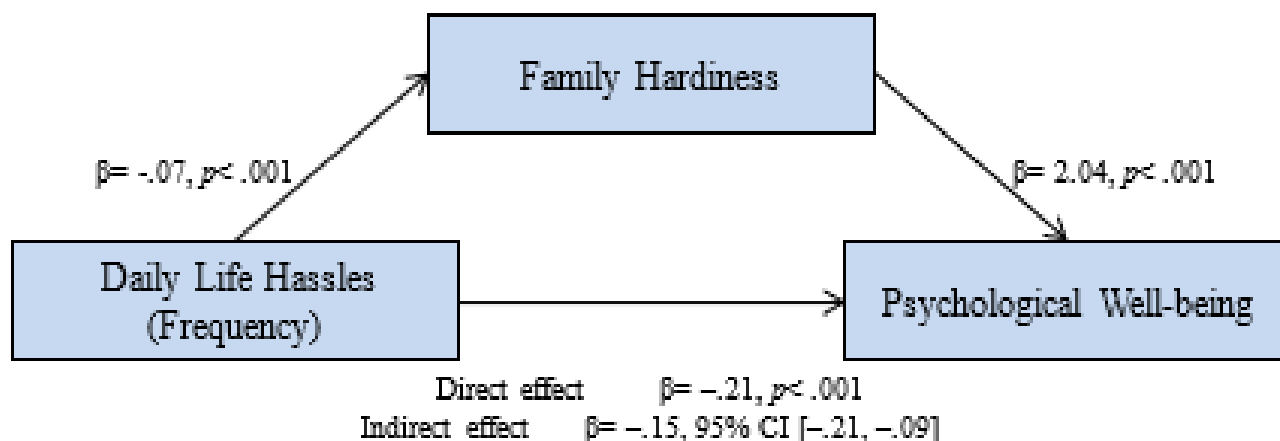
The purpose of the mediation analysis is to investigation of the significant relationship between predictor and outcome constructs. Path c in the graphical representation of Table 2 shows the relationship between the constructs of daily life hassles, psychological well-being and family hardiness and revealed that in the absence of family hardiness that is serving as a mediator between daily life hassles and psychological well-being, there is a predictive association between daily life hassles and psychological well-being as an independent and dependent variable respectively.

Table 2: Mediation Role of Family Hardiness between Frequency of Daily Life Hassles and Psychological well-being (N= 250).

Model	b	SE	p	CI (lower)	CI(upper)
Model without Mediator					
Constant	269.14	8.07	.000	253.24	285.05
DLH(Freq)-PWB(c)	-.36	.05	.000	-.45	-.27
R ² (Y,X)	.21				
Model with Mediator					
Model 1: FHI as dependent variable					
Constant	53.92	2.21	.000	49.56	58.28
DLH(Freq)-FHI (a)	-.07	.01	.000	-.10	-.05
R ²	.13				
Model 2: PWB as dependent variable					
Constant	158.88	12.62	.000	134.01	183.75
FHI-PWB(b)	2.04	.19	.000	1.67	2.42
DLH(Freq)-PWB(c')	-.21	.04	.000	-.29	-.13
Indirect effect	-.15	.03		-.21	-.10
R ² (Y, M, X)	.45				

Note. DLH(Freq)= Frequency of Daily Life Hassles, FHI= Family Hardiness Index, PWB= Psychological Well-being. (sobel $z = -5.01$. $p < .001$).

Figure 1: Explanation of Table 2



Path 'a' in the graphical representation of Table 2 shows that experiencing daily life hassles is significantly associated with family hardiness. It shows the association between the frequencies of daily lie hassles as an independent variable and family hardiness as a mediator. Path 'b' in the graphical representation of Table 2 represents family hardiness as a predictor of psychological well-being revealing the significance of regression equation in general. Path c in the graphical representation of Table 2 revealed that in the absence of family hardiness, which is serving as a mediator between daily life hassles and psychological well-being, there is a predictive association between daily life hassles and psychological well-being as an independent and dependent variable respectively. If frequency of daily life hassles is not affecting the psychological well-being in the absence of family hardiness as evident from path 'c' of the graphical representation of Table 2, which highlights the significance of family hardiness as a mediator between daily life hassles and psychological well-being. Partial mediation is identified by the decrease in the association (Baron and Kenny 1986; Kenny 2016 Frazier et al. 2004). Table 2 shows partial mediating role of family hardiness between the relationship of frequencies of daily life hassles and psychological well-being. The association between frequency of daily life hassles and psychological well-being is partially mediated by the family hardiness partially mediates evident from the results of study in Table 2.

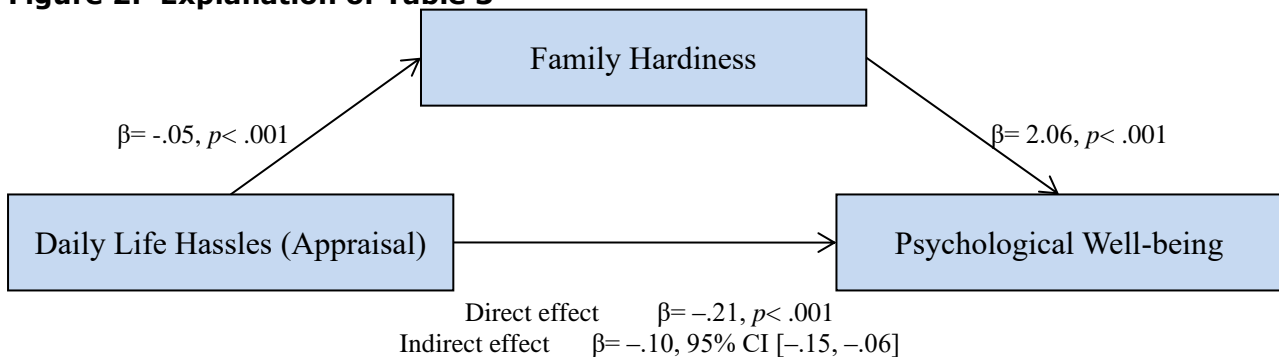
Table 3: Mediation Role of Family Hardiness between Appraisal of Daily Life Hassles and Psychological well-being (N= 250)

Model	b	SE	p	CI (lower)	CI(upper)
Model without Mediator					
Constant	260.32	6.68	.000	247.16	273.48
DLH(App)-PWB(c)	-.32	.04	.000	-.39	-.24
R ² (Y,X)	.22				
Model with Mediator					
Model1: FHI as dependent variable					
Constant	49.74	1.79	.000	46.21	53.27
DLH(App)-FHI (a)	-.05	.01	.000	-.07	-.03
R ²	.08				
Model 2: PWB as dependent variable					
Constant	157.75	10.32	.000	137.43	178.07
FHI-PWB(b)	2.06	.17	.000	1.72	2.40
DLH(App)-PWB(c)	-.21	.03	.000	-.28	-.15

Model	b	SE	p	CI (lower)	CI(upper)
Indirect effect	-.10	.02		-.15	-.06
R ² (Y, M, X)	.48				

Note. DLH (Freq) = Frequency of Daily Life Hassles, FHI= Family Hardiness Index, PWB= Psychological Well-being. (sobel z = -4.36. $p < .001$).

Figure 2: Explanation of Table 3



Path 'c' in the graphical representation of Table 3 revealed that in the absence of family hardiness, which is serving as a mediator between daily life hassles and psychological well-being, there is a predictive relationship between appraisal of daily life hassles and psychological well-being as an independent and dependent variable respectively. Path 'a' in the graphical representation of Table 3 shows the relationship among appraisal of daily life hassles as an independent variable and family hardiness as a mediator. Path 'a' in the graphical representation of Table 3 indicates significant correlation between family hardiness and the appraisal of daily life hassles as stressful events. Path 'b' in the graphical representation of Table 3 identified family hardiness as a predictor of psychological well-being showed the significance of regression equation in general. The path 'c' in the graphical representation of Table 3 revealed that in the absence of family hardiness, which is serving as a mediator between daily life hassles and psychological well-being, there is a predictive association between daily life hassles and psychological well-being as an independent and dependent variable respectively. Table 3 and its graphical representation reveals that family hardiness partially mediates the relationship between appraisal of daily life hassles as stressful and psychological well-being.

4. Discussion

The study was conducted with the aim to identify the relationship between daily life hassles and psychological well-being, in addition to mediating effects of family hardiness. The findings of the research study confirmed the hypothesis i.e., experiencing and appraising daily life hassles as stressful demonstrated a significant negative correlation with psychological well-being. This is coherent with the psychological literature reviewing daily life hassles to identify the relationship of positive mental health and daily life hassles (McCullough, Huebner, & Laughlin, 2000; Tajalli, Sobhi, & Ganbaripanah, 2010). In other words, adolescents who experience more hassles and small number of pleasures would be more stressed (Bell, Rajendran, & Theiler, 2012; Nazione et al., 2014; Nezelek & Allen, 2006). Due to positive correlation of experiencing and appraising daily life hassles, higher the frequency of daily life hassles the higher the appraisal of them as stressful. Excessive stress due to appraisal of negative events is identified as having negative impact on the well-being. Stress further leads to decrease in their psychological well being. This is strongly supported by the results in the current study via negative correlation of both experiencing and appraising daily life hassles with psychological well-being of adolescents. In present study, hardiness is seen as a family characteristic (McCubbin, 1987). Individuals who are brought-up in a positive, enriched and hardy family environment are more likely to have sound mental health. It coincides with other researches examining the effects of similar concepts such as family's stability and family's resiliency on the psychological well-being (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007; Todd, 2015). The hypothesis regarding mediating effects of family hardiness between daily life hassles (frequency and appraisal) and psychological well-being is confirmed by the results of mediation analyses through PROCESS by Andrew F. Hayes Hayes (2017) for SPSS IBM version 21, which shows that family hardiness mediates the relationship between daily life hassles

whether measured by its frequency or intensity and psychological well being of adolescents. The mediation results of personality hardiness are supported by researches examining personality hardiness as mediator between stress and health relationship (Abdollahi et al., 2014; Delahaij, Gaillard, & Van Dam, 2010; Otero-López et al., 2015; Park et al., 2017; Sandvik et al., 2015; Wallace, Bisconti, & Bergeman, 2001) among different population. In conclusion, adolescence is a transition from childhood to adulthood minor stressful event compromise their well-being and hence impedes positive psychological growth. Stress due to minor, everyday problems can be reduced by lowering the everyday irritating events and increased family hardiness.

4.1. Implication

Present study carries multiple practical and theoretical implications. Present study has not only contributed to the existing literature on daily life hassles, family hardiness, and psychological well-being. Moreover, it emphasis on the importance of psychological stress caused by daily life hassles, family hardiness, and psychological well-being in the adolescents' population. Policies and programs can be devised to reduce everyday stressful events workshops can be arranged to enhance family hardiness.

4.2. Limitation

Generalization of the study is limited by the smaller size of the sample. Moreover, the study is based on the cross-sectional design with self-reporting measures which restricts deep interpretations, and can lead to social desirability biasness as well as limitation in choices for the participants. Future studies on the topic need to take these underlined limitations into consideration and design longitudinal and experimental research, even after adding other experimental constructs on a diverse and larger populations, to enhance the scope and applicability of the research. Moreover there is a need to identify cause and effect relations, with emphasis on direction of associations.

5. Conclusion

Present study investigated role of family hardiness as a mediator between the relationship of psychological well-being and daily life hassles as a dependent and independent variable respectively. Results of the study identified the construct of family hardiness as a significant mediator between the relationship of appraisal of stress due to daily life hassles, and psychological well-being among adolescents.

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