



Achievement Pressure and Intensive Parenting in Gifted Education Contexts: Implications for Maternal Wellbeing and Parent–Child Relationships

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Abstract

Within high-pressure academic environments, the pursuit of elite educational placement often encourages intensive maternal attitudes. This quantitative cross-sectional study utilizes structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine how these attitudes influence maternal wellbeing and parent–child relational dynamics. Data were collected from 301 mother–daughter dyads in Tehran during active preparation for gifted school entrance examinations. The research investigates the impact of intensive parenting paradigms—characterized by heightened parental involvement and strong child-centered expectations—on maternal psychological wellbeing and the quality of the parent–child relationship. Empirical results demonstrate that intensive maternal attitudes are significantly negatively associated with maternal mental health ($\beta = -0.236$, $p < .001$) and significantly negatively associated with parent–child relationship quality ($\beta = -0.192$, $p < .004$). Indirect effects further highlighted the mediating role of maternal wellbeing and parent–child relationship quality within high-pressure educational contexts. The findings suggest that achievement-oriented educational cultures may reinforce parenting expectations that position mothers as primarily responsible for continuously optimizing children’s academic and developmental success, creating psychological and relational strain within the family environment. By examining gifted education culture through parent–child relational dynamics, this study highlights the importance of fostering balanced interactions and supporting maternal wellbeing to mitigate relational strains that may emerge within competitive academic environments.

Keywords: Intensive parenting; Maternal mental health; Parent–child relationship; Parenting pressure; Gifted education