CHILDREN'S LONELINESS, SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND SCHOOL SUCCESS: THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

Marja Vauras and Niina Junttila
University of Turku, Finland

Abstract: Elementary school students' social and emotional well-being and competences, social and attachment relations (feelings of loneliness), and social competences (such as co-operation and sympathy) are examined on the basis of evidence from research literature and our studies with fourth grade, 10-year-old students in two cohorts ($N = 985$). These competences are discussed in the family context by examining the relationships between family functioning (focus on parents' loneliness and parenting self-efficacy beliefs) and the child's social, emotional and academic competence. Research evidence is discussed by emphasising complex, two-way influences between children's social and emotional well-being and competences, and family functioning. Finally, it is stressed that academic success does not have a one-to-one correspondence with social and emotional well-being of the child and his/her family.

Address: Marja Vauras, Department of Teacher Education, University of Turku, FIN-20014 Turku, Finland. E-mail: marja.vauras@utu.fi

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there is growing concern over the well-being of children and adolescents. The multiform, rapidly changing academic, vocational and leisure activity settings of modern society load heavily individuals' adaptive resources and present lifelong adaptive challenges, such as multifaceted social competencies that we all have to adopt. It can be argued that social and cognitive competencies are closely related to emotional well-being and adjustment, manifested, for example, as feelings of self-worth, relatedness, attachment, and gratification. In the development of multiple social, emotional and cognitive competencies, the child's primary relationships and developmental environment in the family play a crucial role. Families' ill-being and problems are considered as a serious health risk to children of all ages. Unfortunately, there is indication that the indisposition of more and more families is increasing and is even cumulative in nature in the sense that 'the bad lot' transfers from one generation to another.

In this article, we focus on young students in school and family contexts. We have limited our discussion of these issues to one specific viewpoint, with which we will deal in two consecutive parts: First, we discuss some individual indicators of children's social and emotional well-being and competences, focusing on social and attachment relations (feelings of loneliness) and on social competences (such as co-operation and sympathy). We also briefly discuss their relation to children's school success. Loneliness is part of our life, and we do not focus here on pathological loneliness but on a phenomenon present as a possible everyday problem. Second, we try to put this picture of a child into the framework of the family, and concentrate on the relationship between the functioning of the family and the children's social, emotional and academic competence.

CHILDREN'S LONELINESS, SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

Loneliness as a developmental risk

Being apart from others can either be freezing or refreshing (Larson, Csikszentmihalyi, & Graef, 1982). There are times when most of us need

solitude, time to be alone. However, when we talk about loneliness, we refer to an unwanted state, often arousing anxiety or sorrow with regard to insufficient human relationships (e.g., Peplau & Perlman, 1982; Young, 1982). Even young children can be articulate in the distinctions concerning loneliness. For example, in interviewing young kindergarteners and first graders, Cassidy and Asher (1992) found that 93 % of the children referred to loneliness as having both 'aloneness' and 'sadness' components (cf. also Hayden, Tarulli, & Hymel, 1988). It has also been argued that childhood loneliness has long been an underestimated, even neglected, issue (e.g., Solomon, 2000).

However, loneliness can be considered an inherent part of the human experience, and, hence, we may have relatively little concern about short-term, situational loneliness. For example, children occasionally experience loneliness due to lacking playmates or after moving to a new environment. In many circumstances, loneliness is an inevitable by-product of life, and not pathological in nature (Asher & Gazelle, 1999; Hopmeyer & Asher, 1997). Therefore, it is important to recognize the difference between brief periods of situational loneliness, and *chronic loneliness*, which may have serious emotional consequences (Peplau & Perlman, 1982).

In addition to temporary, situational loneliness and long-term chronic loneliness, there is another important distinction to be made. Already 30 years ago, Weiss (1973) suggested two types of loneliness, either 'social isolation' or 'emotional isolation'. Asher, Parkhurst, Hymel, and Williams (1990) expanded his distinction, and defined *social loneliness* as stemming from the absence of a network of social relationships or from feeling that one is not part of a group, whereas *emotional loneliness* stems from the lack of close, intimate attachment to another person. Thus, in the former case, we refer to peer group relationships and in the latter case, to close dyadic friendships. Despite this old recognition of these two aspects of loneliness and the importance of close attachment relationships in adulthood, most studies on loneliness – until fairly recently – have utilized scales which focus more on peer relationships but do not clearly capture emotional, dyadic friendships (Hoza, Bukowski, & Beery, 2000). Thus, although there is some evidence (e.g., Bukowski, Hoza, & Boivin, 1993; Parker & Asher, 1993) that social and emotional loneliness make unique but nevertheless related contributions to the prediction of loneliness and its consequences, their effects are not yet well known. As examples of this scarce knowledge, there is indication that close friendship may buffer unpopular, rejected children from loneliness (Bukowski et al., 1993; see also Parker & Asher, 1993), and

that adaptive functioning in regard to one peer context can lessen the negative effects of poor functioning in the other (Hoza et al., 2000). However, we find children with high chronic level of both social and emotional loneliness (Junttila & Vauras, 2005; cf. Hoza et al., 2000).

In general, there is research evidence of negative relationships between loneliness, social and emotional well-being, and functioning; for example, loneliness is associated with school drop-out, depression, lowered self-worth, sympathy and various forms of coping abilities (such as social, emotional, and cognitive) (see, e.g., McWhirter, Besett-Alesh, Horibata, & Gat, 2002). It has also been shown that if adolescents feel isolated, they are less likely to seek and receive guidance and support, which places them at an even greater risk for further problems (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsay, 1989).

Before turning in more detail to the relationship between loneliness and social functioning, it is perhaps necessary to point out that loneliness is not a marginal problem, for example, in present-day school. Research on school-aged children and adolescents indicates that approximately 8-12 % report extreme feelings of loneliness in school (see, e.g., Asher & Gazelle, 1999). These reports may even be underestimates, given the fact that it is not socially desirable to admit loneliness in our culture (Rotenberg & Kmill, 1992). Indeed, important cultural differences may exist in loneliness, although comparative data are largely missing. In our study (Junttila & Vauras, 2005), we used a scale developed by Hoza et al. (2000), which allowed us to compare samples of Finnish and American grade 5 (the mean age for Americans was less than one year higher) students and their experienced loneliness (see Table 1). The comparison implicated higher mean social and in particular emotional loneliness in Finnish students. This cultural difference was most pronounced in boys. In Figure 1, we can clearly see the high and, even increasing, degree of emotional loneliness in Finnish boys from Grade 4 to Grade 5. Significant differences in emotional loneliness between girls and boys were affirmed at every time point ($p < .01$ in t-tests).

Table 1. Means (and standard deviations) of Finnish and American students' social and emotional loneliness

Loneliness / Gender	Finnish children[1]	American children[2]	Effect size (Cohen's d)
Social / Girls	1.71 (.56)	1.66 (.58)	.09
Social / Boys	1.77 (.57)	1.60 (.68)	.30
Emotional / Girls	1.62 (.63)	1.37 (.55)	.42
Emotional / Boys	1.93 (.61)	1.52 (.72)	.61

Note: [1]Junttila & Vauras (2005); [2]Hoza, Bukowski, & Beery (2000).
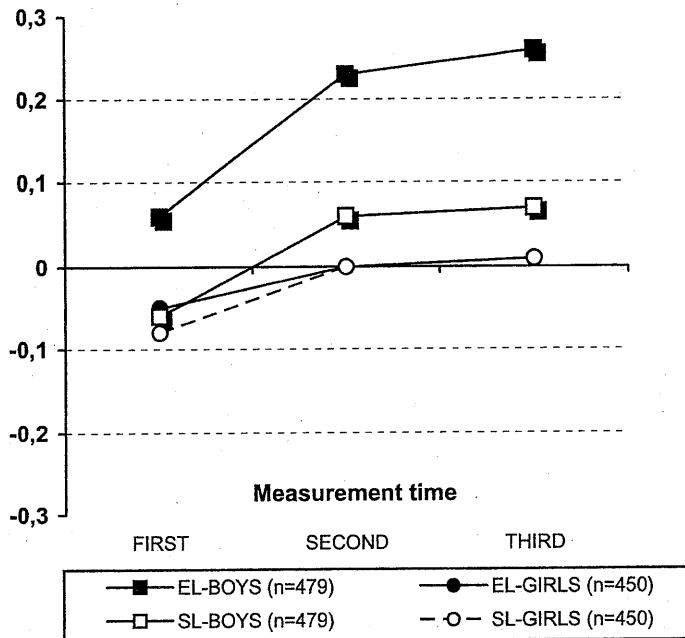
Figure 1. Changes in social and emotional loneliness in Finnish boys and girls from Grade 4 (autumn) to Grade 5 (autumn).

Note 1: SL = Social loneliness, EL = Emotional loneliness.
Note 2: The EL-GIRLS line of Testing 2 and 3 is not shown because its values are the same with SL-GIRLS'.

Loneliness in relation to social competence

There are many possible correlates to loneliness but, given our primary interest in young, school-aged children and in prevention of learning-related risks, we concentrate on one aspect of social functioning that have also been found amenable to intervention: social competences like co-operation and sympathy (e.g., Moote, Smyth, & Wodarski, 1999; Schneider & Byrne, 1989).

Social competence can be regarded as a set of person-related abilities and personal qualities perceived by one or several individuals in social interactions. The former refers to social competence as «the ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction while simultaneously maintaining positive

relationships with others over time and across situations» (Rubin & Rose-Krasnor, 1992, p. 285). The latter implies that the social contexts relevant to a child are important in describing social competence. A child must be able to exhibit the forms of verbal and nonverbal behaviour that are appropriate in a given social context. To behave in a socially competent way, a person has to recognize the conventions of the relevant context and to adapt his/her behaviour to this particular situation (see Crick & Dodge, 1994).

Here, we focus on two main contrasting aspects of social competence: the manifestation of *pro-social and antisocial behaviour*. Both of these dimensions include components of skills, attitudes, and affective states (Junttila, Voeten, Kaukiainen, & Vauras, 2006). Manifestations of pro-social behaviour, such as *co-operating* and participating in group-activities lead to acceptance by peers (see Coie, Dodge, & Kupersmith, 1990), and promote learning processes (see Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998). *Sympathy* includes both affective and cognitive, i.e., perspective taking, components, and it has been described as a fundamental skill that helps people anticipate, understand, and experience another person's emotional reaction or point of view (Davis & Franzoi, 1986). The other dimension of social competence is the absence of antisocial behaviour, for example the ability to inhibit *impulsive* or *disrupting behaviour*. It may be self-evident that these competences are shown by evidence to be associated with loneliness (e.g., Asher & Wheeler, 1985). For example, there are indications that, at least in the case of at-risk students, the inability to view the world from the others' perspectives can lead to rejection by peers (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 1995), and the ability to be sympathetic is negatively related to loneliness, suggesting that sympathy may mediate loneliness (Margalit & Ronen, 1993).

Similar conclusions can be drawn from our own, recent studies (e.g., Junttila & Vauras, 2005; Junttila, Vauras, & Laakkonen, in press). Our students were fourth grade, 10-year-old elementary school students in two successive cohorts ($N = 985$). In Table 2, simple correlations between the students' social and emotional loneliness and peer-assessed social skills are illustrated. Although correlations are not high, they form a significant and consistent pattern.

Table 2. Pearson correlations between loneliness and social competence

Loneliness	Co-operation	Sympathy	Impulsivity	Disruptive behaviour
Social	-.25**	-.24**	.20**	.17**
Emotional	-.21**	-.21**	.17**	.17**

Loneliness, social competence and academic performance

It has been suggested that language and communication impairment is associated with peer social status and, consequently, with loneliness. Studies with very young, two- to five-year-old children indicate that peer interactions already at that age may be strongly influenced by communicative patterns. For example, Black and Logan (1995) showed how peer rejected children were less contingently responsive, took longer conversational turns, made more irrelevant comments and interruptions, and engaged in more simultaneous talking during interactions. Specific language and speech impairment may also severely hamper peer relationships. Children with language deficits are found, for example, to have more difficulties than their peers in joining interactions and in engaging in social behaviours, like play. On the other hand, these children seem to be more readily socially rejected and, thus, isolated, from social exchange by their peers (e.g., Gertner, Rice, & Hadley, 1994). These dynamic interaction patterns may lead a child into a vicious circle situation. We learn social skills by interacting with others, and if access to social exchange is prevented such learning becomes hard. Since difficulties in peer relations are a major cause of loneliness (e.g., Asher & Gazelle, 1999), we can expect that language and speech deficits are not only associated with social competence but, importantly, also with social and emotional loneliness.

There are few studies that address the relationship between loneliness, social competence, and academic performance. However, if we accept that early language problems may significantly be associated with loneliness and the development of social skills, we should find this relationship in older, school-aged children. Most evidence comes from the studies comparing students with learning disabilities and their peers with expected school performance. A meta-analysis study by Kavale and Forness (1996) showed that, on average, 75 % of students with learning disabilities manifested deficit social competence, expressed in peer rejection and social isolation. Not surprisingly, these children may also be at-risk for developing loneliness, and, although evidence is still scarce, some studies have, indeed, indicated that children with learning disabilities feel lonelier than their other peers (e.g., Margalit, Tur-Kaspa, & Most, 1999; Valás, 1999). However, as yet, very little is known about the developmental relationships between loneliness, social competence and school success.
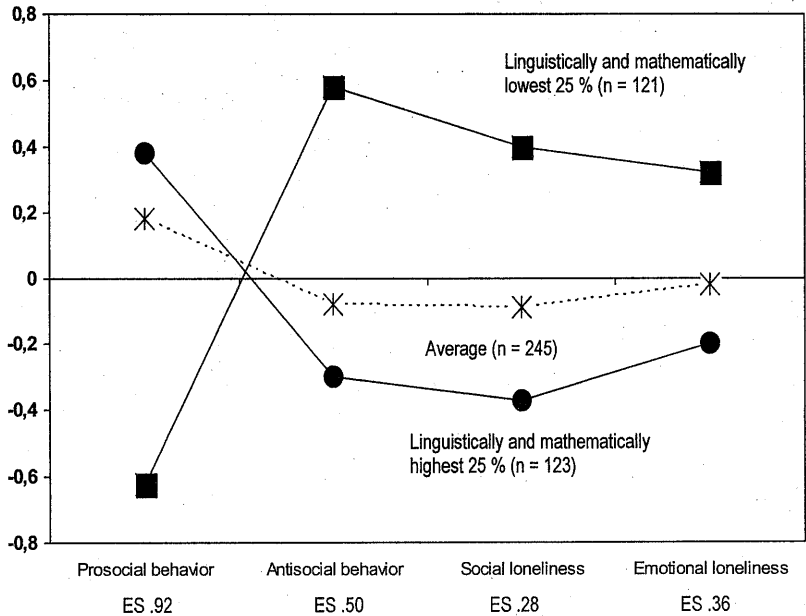
M. Vauras and N. Junttila

Figure 2. Relationships between academic performance, social competence, and loneliness of Grade 4 Finnish students.

Note: Effect sizes (ES: Cohen's *d*) are calculated between the groups of highest and lowest achievers.

We return to our studies with young, fourth-grade students, which inevitably showed strong relationships between social competence, loneliness, and cognitive school performance in reading and mathematics. This can be seen in Figure 2, in which high- (*n* = 123), average- (*n* = 245) and low-achieving students (*n* = 121) are compared in regard to loneliness and social skills. We can see how the profile of the proficient students is a mirror image of the students with linguistic and mathematical difficulties.

THE ROLE OF PARENTING SELF-EFFICACY AND THE PARENTS' SOCIAL RELATIONS IN THE CHILD'S LONELINESS

Social competence, socio-emotional coping and school success

We have tried to draw a picture of how intimately associated loneliness and social functioning are in a child's social and emotional functioning, and how some children are highly vulnerable to cumulating social and emotional risks.

We now try to link this picture to the child's family. The importance of family context and functioning has been shown to be strongly related to children's social, emotional and academic competence (see, e.g., Putallaz & Heflin, 1990; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). Over the last decades, family functioning and parental care, support, and control, for example, have been extensively studied. The attachment framework (e.g., Bowlby, 1982) has undoubtedly been among the most influential ones. We do not discuss the vast family literature here but instead concentrate on more limited issues of parenting functioning, namely parenting self-efficacy, and parents' social networks and attachment relations in terms of parents' loneliness.

Loneliness in the family

Loneliness has not often been studied as a socially shared experience, although we exist within ongoing, personally important groups (cf. Henwood & Solano, 1994). However, system level loneliness, such as that exhibited consistently by the same family members, may have serious consequences to a child's social learning and, consequently, to peer relationships and friendship relations. It has been suggested that if a child is raised in a socially isolated family, the child's risk of becoming chronically lonely may significantly increase (Solomon, 2000). A socially detached family will not actively enhance a child's social growth by promoting and guiding acceptable behaviours or by modelling ample patterns of social interaction (cf. Lawhon, 1997). Since children readily acquire their parents' interactive behaviours (East, 1991), intergenerational cycle of loneliness may be shaped (e.g., Bullock, 1993).

There is little evidence of system level loneliness as such in research literature. Earlier research indicates that associations between the loneliness of husbands and wives are modest (correlations ranging from .19 to .30) (e.g., Henwood & Solano, 1994; Sadava & Matejcic, 1987), whereas somewhat stronger associations have been found between the parents' and their children's loneliness, in particular, between the mother and the child (e.g., Henwood & Solano, 1994). Our own, recent studies show somewhat different patterns in family level loneliness. We found a rather strong, significant correlation between the loneliness of spouses ($r = .51, p = .000$), whereas statistically non-significant direct influences between the parents' and the child's loneliness were observed. However, we offer one intriguing observation. In the case of *chronically* (both) socially and emotionally lonely children, the fathers' loneliness was high (Junttila & Vauras, 2005).
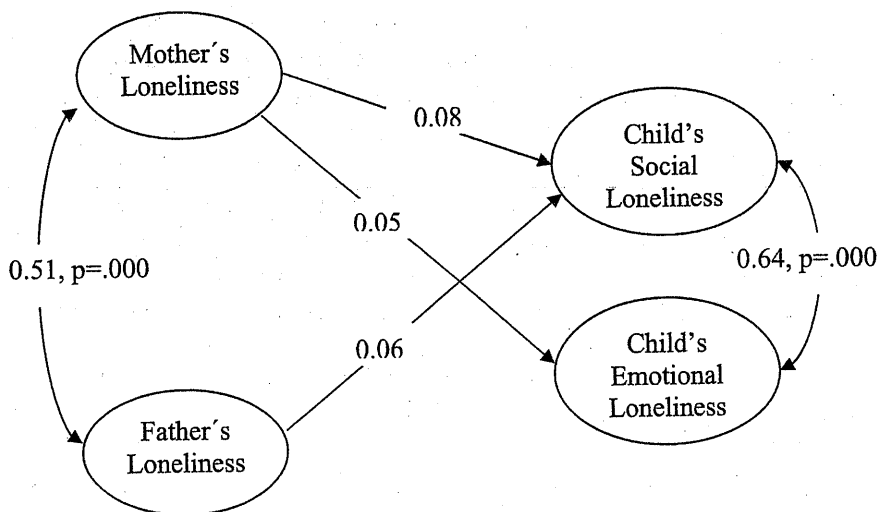
Figure 3. The structural model of mother's and father's loneliness related to their child's social and emotional loneliness.

Note 1: Values being presented are standardized solutions.
Note 2: The goodness of fit indices are: $\chi^2(\text{df} = 1) = 0.042, p = .838$.

All in all, existing literature implies that associations between different persons' loneliness may be importantly mediated by other factors. We come back to this question below.

Parenting self-efficacy, loneliness, and the child's social competence

According to Coleman and Karraker (1998, 2000), *parenting self-efficacy* can be identified as parents' self-referent estimations of competence in the parental role, or as parents' perceptions of their ability to positively influence the behaviour and development of their children. Parenting self-efficacy beliefs may include, for example, the parents' sense of competence in facilitating the child's achievement in school, supporting the child's need for recreation (including socializing with peers), promoting structure and discipline, providing emotional nurturance, and maintaining the child's physical health (Coleman & Karraker, 2000).

The parental self-efficacy beliefs may have an important mediating role in linking distinct parental factors, child characteristics, and situational factors. Parenting self-efficacy has been found to predict responsiveness to children's

needs, engagement in direct parenting interactions, active parental coping orientations, and less focusing on the child's behaviour problems. In contrast, low parenting self-efficacy has been found to correlate, for example, with parental depression, parental defensive and controlling behaviours, high levels of parental stress, passive coping and feelings of helplessness in a parenting role, and the use of punitive disciplinary techniques (see, e.g., Coleman & Karraker, 2000).

Our studies (Junttila & Vauras, 2005; Junttila, Vauras, & Laakkonen, 2007) indicate that parenting self-efficacy may have a significant *mediating role* in the system level loneliness in the families. The overall picture of our findings with young, fourth-grade children and their parents in the light of complex associations between parents' loneliness, parenting self-efficacy, and children's loneliness and social competence suggests the following: Firstly, we found a strong relationship between parents' loneliness and their parenting self-efficacy, both in mothers and fathers (Junttila & Vauras, 2005; Junttila, Vauras, & Laakkonen, 2006). Secondly, parenting self-efficacy was significantly related to the child's social competence. In line with previous studies (e.g., Laible & Carlo, 2004), influences between the mother's parental support and the child's functioning were stronger than between the father and the child.

Here, we concentrate on mothers to make the picture simpler (for the role of fathers, see Junttila, Vauras, & Laakkonen, 2007). By using the Interactive LISREL 8.7 Structural Equation Modelling (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2004), we constructed a model on influences between the mother and the child, starting from the mother's feeling of loneliness (see Figure 4). Interestingly, the mother's loneliness was strongly negatively associated to her parenting self-efficacy. The latent variable *parenting self-efficacy* was loaded by four aspects of parenting, that is, Participation, Nurturance, Discipline, and Recreation. The strongest of these loadings was the mothers' self-efficacy in *participating* in children's activities without feelings of frustration and helplessness (e.g., in a reversed example, "I easily feel frustrated when helping the child in his homework"). If we take a step further, we notice that parenting self-efficacy has at least moderate influence on the child's social competence, which here was defined in terms of co-operating skills, sympathy, impulsivity, and disruptive behaviour. Finally, these aspects of the child's social competence were related to his/her social and emotional loneliness (cf. Margalit & Ronen, 1993). Although not included in this model, we have to keep in mind that familial loneliness and parental functioning mediated influences on the child are also related to the child's academic performance in school.
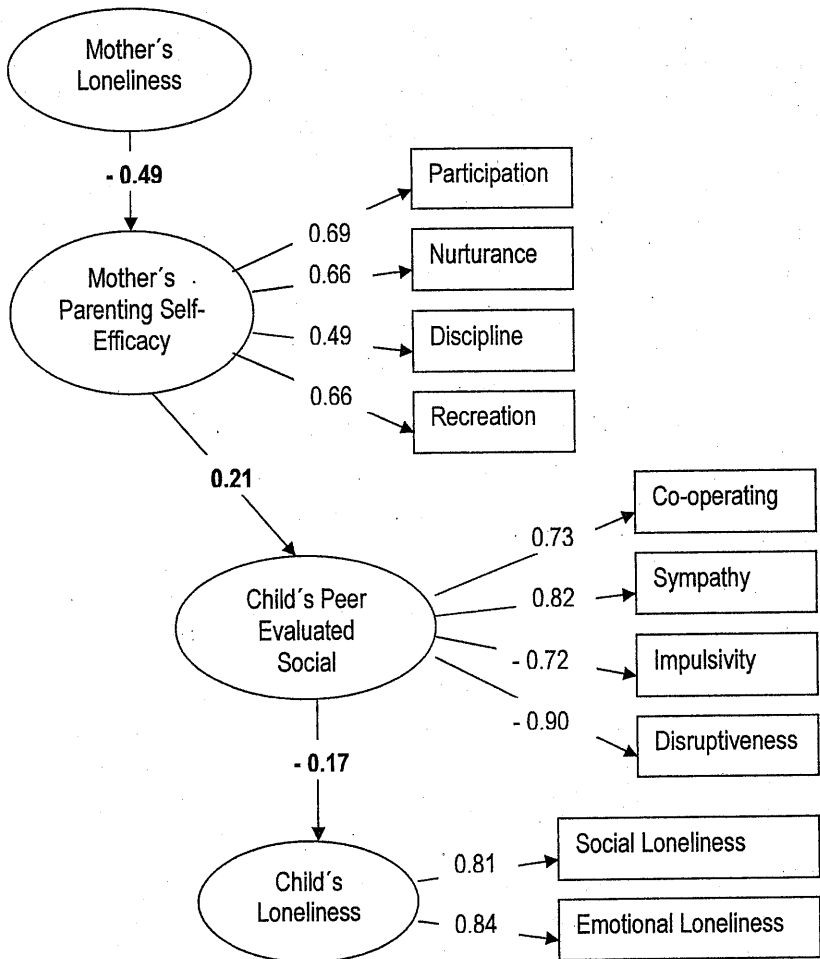
Figure 4. The structural model of mother's loneliness and parenting self-efficacy related to child's social competence and loneliness

Note 1: The values being presented are from the standardized solutions.
Note 2: The goodness of fit indices are: $\chi^2(\text{df} = 38) = 68.52, p = .002$.

It is important to note that the family structure (e.g., single mother or single father families) was not a risk factor as such but its importance was significantly dependent on parenting self-efficacy beliefs. This is in line with the comparative study of different family structures by Lansford and colleagues, who came to the conclusion that the processes occurring in a family are more important than

the family structure in predicting children's well-being and relationship outcomes (Lansford, Ceballo, Abbey, & Stewart, 2001).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Children's loneliness may have its origins in the family system by means of complex influences, of which only a fragment has been discussed here. As a simple example, parents' loneliness is found to be linked to social network or social support variables (e.g., Henwood & Solano, 1994; Junttila & Vauras, 2005). It is important to recognize that we do not refer to severe, pathological loneliness stemming from, for example, childhood abuse or victimization, but to a phenomenon that is present as an everyday problem in our children's lives.

Children's behaviours originating from the family system and functioning are often manifested in school and peer relationships. Thus, the most effective way of intervening in the children's social and emotional ill-being, such as loneliness, may consist of conceptualizing the child's situation in terms of home and school and performing the intervention in both systems (Solomon, 2000).

We have carefully tried to avoid referring to one-way influences from the parent to the child. There is no doubt that the signs of a child's well-being and competence influence positively the self-efficacy beliefs of his/her parents, and vice versa. The child may also actively influence his/her parents' behaviour. As Schoenrock, Bell, Sun, and Avery (1999, p. 390) point out: «... we are not suggesting a one-way flow of influence from parent to adolescent. Socially competent adolescents surely play a role in fostering trust, support, and less restrictiveness and intrusiveness from parents».

A child's success cannot be measured merely as a cognitive outcome. Finland gives an intriguing example in this respect. Finnish students have already long been on the top in international comparisons of academic achievement in different domains (e.g., Lie & Linnakylä, 2004; Linnakylä, Malin, & Taube, 2004). This kind of success cannot blind us from other, less successful stories veiled in this story, though. Academic success does not have a one-to-one correspondence with social and emotional well-being of children and their families. Thus, in planning and implementing intervention schemes and school reforms, we must always perceive a student not only in cognitive, but also in social, emotional and motivational terms.

We like to conclude with the words of Aalberg (2001, p. 103), a Finnish child psychiatrist, as we agree that they capture well the whole picture gradually

emerging also from our own studies: «Psychological development (emerging) as well in childhood as in adolescence is based on a good-enough parenthood. Because there is more pressure directed to family in the form of increasing numbers of divorces and breaking up of families, the basic educational function of the family is endangered. Good-enough functioning of the family and of the parenthood is threatened by many factors in everyday life, such as unemployment or a threat of unemployment, economical distress, drugs, and changes in social support.»

REFERENCES

Aalberg, V. (2001). Moniongelmainen lapsi, moniongelmainen perhe [Multiproblematic child, multiproblematic family]. *In Proceedings of Koululaisten terveys* (pp. 99-105). Vammala, Finland: Duodecim.

Asher, S. R., & Gazelle, H. (1999). Loneliness, peer relations, and language disorder in childhood. *Topics in Language Disorders, 19*, 16-33.

Asher, S. R., Parkhurst, J. T., Hymel, S., & Williams, G. A. (1990). Peer rejection and loneliness in childhood. In S. R. Asher & J. D. Coie (Eds.), *Peer rejection in childhood* (pp. 253-273). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Asher, S. R., & Wheeler, V. A. (1985). Children's loneliness: A comparison of rejected and neglected peer status. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 53*, 500-505.

Black, B., & Logan, A. (1995). Links between communication patterns in mother-child, father-child, and child-peer interactions and children's social status. *Child Development, 66*, 255-271.

Bowlby, J. (1982). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 1. Attachment.* New York: Basic Books.

Bukowski, W. M., Hoza, B., & Boivin, M. (1993). Popularity, friendship, and emotional adjustment during adolescence. In B. Laursen (Ed.), *New directions for child development: Close friendships in adolescence* (pp. 23-37). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bullock, J. (1993). General interest. Children's loneliness and their relationships with family and peers. *Family Relations, 42*, 46-50.

Cassidy, J., & Asher, S. R. (1992). Loneliness and peer relations in young children. *Child Development, 63*, 350-365.

Coie, J. D., Dodge, K. A., & Kupersmidt, J. B. (1990). Peer group behavior and social status. In S. R. Asher & J. D. Coie (Eds.), *Peer rejection in childhood* (pp. 17-59). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Coleman, P. K., & Karraker, K. H. (1998). Self-efficacy and parenting quality: Findings and future applications. *Developmental Review, 18*, 47-85.

Coleman, P. K., & Karraker, K. H. (2000). Parenting self-efficacy among mothers of school-age children: Conceptualization, measurement and correlates. *Family Relations, 49*, 13-24.

Crick, N. R., & Dodge, K. A. (1994). A review and reformulation of social information-processing mechanisms in children's social adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin, 115*, 74-101.

Davis, M. H., & Franzoi, S. L. (1986). Adolescent loneliness, self-disclosure, and private self-consciousness: A longitudinal investigation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*, 595-608.

East, P. L. (1991). The parent-child relationships of withdrawn, aggressive, and sociable children: Child and parent perspectives. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 37*, 425-443.

Gertner, B. L., Rice, M. L., & Hadley, P. A. (1994). Influence of communicative competence on peer preferences in a preschool classroom. *Journal of Speech & Hearing Research, 37*, 913-923.

Hayden, L., Tarulli, D., & Hymel, S. (1988, May). *Children talk about loneliness*. Paper presented at the Biennial University of Waterloo Conference on Child Development, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

Henwood, P. G., & Solano, C. H. (1994). Loneliness in young children and their parents. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology, 155*, 35-45.

Hopmeyer, A., & Asher, S. R. (1997). Children's responses to peer conflicts involving a rights infraction. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 43*, 235-254.

Hoza, B., Bukowski, W. M., & Beery, S. (2000). Assessing peer network and dyadic loneliness. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 29*, 119-128.

Junttila, N., Kaukiainen, A., Voeten, M., & Vauras, M. (2006). Multisource assessment of children's social competence. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 66*, 874-895.

Junttila, N., & Vauras, M. (2005, August). *The social and emotional loneliness of fourth to fifth graders*. Paper presented at the 11th Biennial Conference of the European Association for Learning and Instruction, Nicosia, Cyprus.

Junttila, N., Vauras, M., & Laakkonen, E. (2007). The role of parenting self-efficacy in children's social and academic behavior. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 22*, 41-61.

Jöreskog, K. G., & Sörbom, D. (2004). *Interactive LISREL. Version 8.7*. Chicago, IL: Scientific Software International.

Kavale, K. A., & Forness, S. R. (1996). Social skill deficits and learning disabilities: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 29*, 226-237.

Laible, D. J., & Carlo, G. (2004). The differential relations of maternal and paternal support and control to adolescent social competence, self-worth, and sympathy. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 19*, 759-782.

Lansford, J. E., Ceballo, R., Abbey, A., & Stewart, A. J. (2001). Does family structure matter? A comparison of adoptive, two-parent biological, single-mother, stepfather, and step-mother households. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 63*, 840-851.

Larson, R., Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Graef, R. (1982). Time alone in daily experience: Loneliness or renewal? In L. A. Peplau & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Loneliness. A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy* (pp. 40-53). New York: Wiley-Interscience.

Lawhon, T. (1997). Encouraging friendships among children. *Childhood Education, 73*, 228-231.

Lie, S., & Linnakylä, P. (2004). Nordic PISA 2000 in a sociocultural perspective. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 48*, 227-230.

Linnakylä, P., Malin, A., & Taube, K. (2004). Factors behind low reading literary achievement. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 48*, 231-249.

Margalit, M., Tur-Kaspa, H., & Most, T. (1999). Reciprocal nominations, reciprocal rejections and loneliness among students with learning disorders. *Educational Psychology, 19*, 79-90.

Margalit, M., & Ronen, T. (1993). Loneliness and social competence among preadolescents and adolescents with mild mental retardation. *Mental Handicap Research, 6*, 97-111.

McWhirter, B. T., Besett-Alesh, T. M., Horibata, J., & Gat, I. (2002). Loneliness in high risk adolescents: The role of coping, self-esteem, and empathy. *Journal of Youth Studies, 5*, 69-84.

McWhirter, J. J., McWhirter, B. T., McWhirter, A. M., & McWhirter, E. H. (1995). Youth at risk: Another point of view. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 73*, 567-569.

Moote, G. T., Jr., Smyth, N. J., & Wodarski, J. S. (1999). Social skills training with youth in school settings: A review. *Research on Social Work Practice, 9*, 427-465.

Parker, J. G., & Asher, S. R. (1993). Friendship and friendship quality in middle childhood: Links with peer group acceptance and feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction. *Developmental Psychology, 29*, 611-621.

Patterson, G. R., DeBaryshe, B. D., & Ramsay, E. (1989). A developmental perspective on anti-social behavior. *American Psychologist, 44*, 329-335.

Peplau, L. A., & Perlman, D. (1982). Perspectives on loneliness. In L. A. Peplau & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Loneliness. A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy* (pp. 1-20). New York: Wiley-Interscience.

Putallaz, M., & Heflin, A. H. (1990). Parent-child interaction. In S. R. Asher & J. D. Coie (Eds.), *Peer rejection in childhood* (pp. 189-216). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rotenberg, K. J., & Kmill, J. (1992). Perception of lonely and non-lonely persons as a function of individual differences in loneliness. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships, 9*, 325-330.

Rubin, K. H., Bukowski, W., & Parker, J. G. (1998). Peer interactions, relationships, and groups. In N. Eisenberg (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 3. Social, emotional, and personality development* (pp. 619-700). New York: Wiley.

Rubin, K. H., & Rose-Krasnor, L. (1992). Interpersonal problem solving and social competence in children. In V. B. Van Hasselt & M. Hersen (Eds.), *Handbook of social development: A lifespan perspective* (pp. 283-323). New York: Plenum.

Sadava, S., & Matejcic, C. (1987). Generalized and specific loneliness in early marriage. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science, 19*, 56-65.

Schoenrock, C. J., Bell, N. J., Sun, S-W., & Avery, A. W. (1999). Family correlates of adolescent self-monitoring and social competence. *Journal of Psychology, 133*, 377-394.

Schneider, B. H., & Byrne, B. M. (1989). Parents rating children's social behavior: How focused the lens? *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 18*, 237-241.

Solomon, S. M. (2000). Childhood loneliness: Implications and intervention considerations for family therapists. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 8*, 161-164.

Valás, H. (1999). Students with learning disabilities and low-achieving students: Peer acceptance, loneliness, self-esteem, and depression. *Social Psychology of Education, 3*, 173-192.

Weiss, R. S. (1973). *Loneliness. The experience of emotional and social isolation*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Wintre, M. G., & Yaffe, M. (2000). First-year students' adjustment to university life as a function of relationships with parents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 15*, 9-37.

Young, J. E. (1982). Loneliness, depression and cognitive therapy: Theory and application. In L. A. Peplau & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Loneliness. A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy* (pp. 379-405). New York: Wiley-Interscience.