

The Role of Parenting Styles in Predicting Adolescent Behavioral and Emotional Problems

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Article info:

Received: 06 May 2014

Accepted: 23 Aug. 2014

Keywords:

Adolescence, Behavioral and emotional problems, Parenting styles, Parents

ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this study was to examine the role of parenting styles in predicting behavioral and emotional problems in adolescents.

Methods: This study is a descriptive, cross sectional, and correlation research. All students enrolled in the first grade in boys' guidance school of District 3 in Tehran city and their parents constituted the population. One hundred and eighty participants comprising 60 adolescents (boys) and their parents participated in the study. Convenience sampling method was used for recruiting these participants. Parents completed Baumrind's Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PSQ; Baumrind, 1972) and students responded to the Seattle Personality Questionnaire for Children (SPQC; Greenberg & Kusche, 1990). A stepwise regression analysis was utilized to address the prediction power of Behavioral and emotional problems

Results: The results indicated that authoritarian style in fathers is associated with depression, as well as behavioral and emotional problems (total score). However, the authoritarian style in mothers is related to anxiety, depression, as well as behavioral and emotional problems (total score). Moreover, permissiveness in mothers is associated with conduct problems.

Conclusion: The results are consistent with the results of previous studies stressing the role of parents in predicting children's behavioral-emotional problems.

1. Introduction

Family is a socio-cultural and economic arrangement that plays an important role on the development of children's behavior and character. Any failure on the parents' role may induce unwanted damaging results on children's growth and may lead to misbehavior problems (Baumrind, 1978, 1991). Parenting styles have crucial impacts on the psychological development of the adolescents and their future such as health, mental well-being, academic achievement, self-esteem, and risk-taking behavior (Chan & Koo, 2011). Teenage years are characterized by stressful events for both adolescents and parents. In this period, teenagers endure a number of developmental changes comprising emotional, biological,

cognitive, and social ones. For theorists and researchers, the main questions revolve around causes of these behavior problems. According to Schultz and Schultz (2005), many theorists have emphasized the role of family and child upbringing in the incidence of children's problems. For instance, Framo (2003) stressed more on the effect of family rather than other factors such as culture, relatives, and friends (Mahdavi, Esmailpour, & Khajeh, 2013).

Parenting plays an important role in the transition from adolescence to adulthood and socializing (Kopko, 2007; Okorodudu, 2010). According to Utti (2006), Okapko (2004), and Ofoegbu (2002), parenting is the act of parenthood, the child upbringing, training, rearing, or child education (Okorodudu, 2010). Parenting behavior can

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restrict or reinforce optimal individuation amongst adolescents. Parents who ignore sufficient freedom for their children (to follow friendships, date, or make decision) might restrain the improvement of suitable levels of individuality and autonomy (Aquilino and Supple, 2001). Parenting needs a well understanding of these developmental changes. Parents should know that their parenting style prepare a foundation for many healthful developmental consequences during puberty. Understanding the different types of parenting style and their effects on the parent-teen relationship may help them to overcome the problems of this phase (Kopko, 2007). Otuadah (2006) asserted that a warm and friendly relationship between adolescent and parents provides a healthy condition for the development of the youth. Adolescents in the accepted and loved families express good maturity traits, cheerfulness, and positive emotions (Okorodudu, 2010).

The influential model in research on parent-child relationship is mainly attributed to the early work of Diana Baumrind in 1960s and has been elaborated by several teams of researchers (O'Connor & Scott, 2007). Based on Baumrind's model, demandingness (control), sometimes called permissiveness-restrictiveness and acceptance-responsiveness are key dimensions of parenting behavior. Demanding parents impose the rules, monitor their children strictly and anticipate them to follow the rules; however, less controlling parents set less demands and give more autonomy to their children in displaying their feelings and opinions, making decisions, and discovering the environment. Accepting-responsive parents are those who provide affection and praise when their kids fulfill their expectations and let them know when they misbehave. On the other hand, less accepting parents often criticize and punish their children, ignore them, and rarely communicate with them. Combination of these two dimensions emerge four basic patterns of parenting: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful (Sigelman and Rider, 2009).

In authoritarian parenting style, which is a combination of high demandingness (control) and low acceptance-responsiveness, parents set the restrictive rules without explaining why the children should assent and often use physical punishment to achieve obedience. Authoritative parents are demanding and control their children but they are responsive and accepting as well. They impose the rules but they clarify the reasons behind the rules. They are more sensitive to their children's demand and contribute them in the family decision making. Permissive parents have few rules and demands, persuade children to present their emotions and impulses, and exert low control over their behavior. Finally, in neglectful

parenting style, which is mixture of low acceptance-responsiveness and low demandingness (control), parents rarely devote time and energy for children's upbringing. They are busy with their own problems and ignore or reject their children (Sigelman and Rider, 2009).

Baumrind (1991) stressed on the balance between parents' upbringing and limit-setting to improve independence, self-regulation, self-confidence, social responsibility, and internal control in children. Teens require supportive guidance as well as the opportunity to improve the autonomy (Smollar & Youniss, 1989). According to Baumrind, children of authoritative parents were the best adjusted children: they were socially responsible, achievement oriented, cheerful, self-reliant and collaborative. Children raised by authoritarian parents are seemingly unhappy, anxious, moody, insecure and almost aimless. Children of permissive parents tended to be aggressive, aimless, often impulsive, without self-control, and low in achievement and independence (Sigelman and Rider, 2009; Pearson, 2013).

Another research illustrated that the children of neglectful parents tended to become antisocial adolescents who use drugs and alcohol (Sigelman and Rider, 2009). There is a link between responsive parenting and academic competence, high self-confidence, secure attachments to parents, good social skills, and a strong sense of morality. However, deprivation of parental acceptance and affection is associated with depression and other psychological problems (Sigelman and Rider, 2009). Juveniles who develop independence within the context of a supportive relationship with parents achieve higher score on measures of identity, ego development, and ability to be responsible for their decisions (Aquilino and Supple, 2001). Mozafari (2014) also indicated that authoritative parenting style positively and significantly is associated with students' creativity and their academic achievement.

Several studies have been published about the role of family in children and adolescent behavioral problems. Among various variables, parenting style has been further investigated. However, the relevant findings are conflicting. For example, Miller, Cowan, Cowan, Hetherington, Clingempeel (1993), Dodge, Pettit, and Bats (1994) found that mother's supportive behavior had a negative correlation with the outside problems among preschoolers, while Galambos, Barker, and Almeida (2003) showed that parental support was not associated with adolescents' behavioral problems. The psychological control is in turn associated with internal problems such as anxiety and depressed mood among adolescents

and children. Some research suggests a relationship between high levels of psychological control and extroverted behavioral problems.

There is mounting evidence that support the correlation between the quality of parent-child relationship and anxiety, depression, as well as internalizing problems such as somatic complaints and social withdrawal (O'Connor & Scott, 2007). A study conducted by Wolfradt, Hempfle, and Miles (2003) on 276 school students revealed a positive correlation between authoritarian parenting style and problems such as anxiety and depersonalization. Moreover, adolescents who had authoritative and permissive parents presented the highest score on active problem coping. In a study conducted by Urooj and Atiya (2012), 100 teenagers between 13 and 17 years old from private schools in Karachi were selected. The Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) (Buri, 1991), and Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman et al., 1998) were applied to evaluate the variables. The result from Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient represented that there was a significant relationship between parenting styles of permissive/authoritarian and psychological problems among teens.

Permissive parenting is associated with children, who struggle with anxiety and depression disorders; however, they have lower level of depression than children who were raised in an authoritarian environment (Pearson, 2013; Sharma, Sharma & Yadava, 2011). Mahdavi et al. (2013) in a study on elementary school children found that permissive parenting style is positively associated with violence and disruptive, anti-social, outburst behavior, and hyperactivity tendency.

Rana, Akhtar, and Tahir (2013) found a significant relationship between the authoritarian, uninvolved parenting style and social anxiety. In addition, social anxiety score for girls was higher than boys. Two hundred college students (100 males, 100 females) between 18 and 20 years old participated in this research. The instruments were Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents, and Parental Attitude Inventory and Correlation, and t test, and two-way ANOVA were employed to analyze the data. Darling, McCartney, and Taylor (2006) found a significant relationship between parenting styles and depression. Their study illustrated that the level of depression in children of authoritarian parents is higher than that of children with the uninvolved parents (Alizadeh, Abu Talib, Abdullah & Mansor, 2011). On the other hand, in 2009, Ijaz and Mahmood indicated a significant relationship between parental authoritarianism and level of frustration tolerance (LFT), also a weak positive correlation with depres-

sion and anxiety. Moreover, results illustrated no correlation between maternal authoritarianism with anxiety, depression and LFT. In addition, they found a moderate significant correlation between paternal permissiveness and all variables; however, there was no relationship between maternal permissiveness and those variables. The participants were 232 female students and the instrument was Perceived Parenting Style Scale along with three scales; depression, anxiety and frustration tolerance (LFT) retrieved from Symptom Checklist-R (Rahman, Dawwod, Jagir, Rehman & Mansoor, 2000).

An overview of the literature shows a relationship between some parenting styles and psychological problems among children and adolescents. Authoritative style introduced the best one and authoritarian style was the worst style in child rearing. However, some research illustrated cultural differences in adaptability of some parenting styles; as a result they demonstrated different outcomes. For instance, Garcia and Garcia (2009) proposed that the optimum style of parenting in Spain is indulgent style and not the authoritative one.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the role of parenting styles in behavioral and emotional problems in adolescents. Particularly, in the present research, we studied the relationships among dimensions of behavioral and emotional problems in adolescents and parenting styles. The study hypothesizes that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles can predict emotional and behavioral problems in adolescents. It is worthy of note that the influence of parenting style in children upbringing is obvious, but it is still a controversial subject and needs more investigation in Iran.

2. Methods

This study is a cross sectional, descriptive, and correlational research. All pupils registered in the first grade in the boys' guidance school of District 3 in Tehran City and their parents constituted the study population. In autumn 2013, through convenience sampling method, 180 participants consisting of 60 students and their parents (60 fathers and 60 mothers) were selected to contribute in this research. Using Krejcie and Morgan table, a sample size of 150 was calculated. Considering the possible loss of some participants, 210 questionnaires were distributed among participants and finally 180 people completed the questionnaires. The inclusion criteria for the study were living with both parents, lack of psychiatric disorder, and not using psychiatric drugs. When the school authorities gave the permission to the researcher, a date was arranged for data collection. The purpose and

the procedure of the study were explained to the selected students. Then, the questionnaires with a consent form were given to them. The students gave the questionnaires to their parents. Participants completed the questionnaire at home and were brought them back by students to the school. The respondents were informed that the participation is voluntary and they can withdraw from the study at any time and their information will be kept confidential. They could follow the result by researcher's e-mail address, which was written in the consent form.

The data gathering instruments included Baumrind's Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PSQ), Seattle Personality Questionnaire for Children (SPQC), and a self-designed demographic questionnaire, which will be described as follows.

Baumrind's Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PSQ): This scale, which was first developed by Diana Baumrind in 1972, contains 30 items (each of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting style consists of 10 statements). PSQ is typically scored using Likert-type format from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Parents are instructed to respond to the items based on their opinions. Buri (1991) demonstrated the reliability of 0.81 for permissive, 0.92 for authoritative, and 0.92 for authoritarian parenting style using test-retest method. Moreover, Esfandiary (1995) reported the reliability of 0.69 for permissive style, 0.73 for authoritative, and 0.77 for authoritarian by test-retest method. To assess the validity of this instrument, Buri (1991) indicated the association between permissive and authoritarian at -0.50, and between authoritative and authoritarian at -0.52.

Seattle Personality Questionnaire for Children (SPQC): SPQC is a self-report measure developed to evaluate the general personality characteristics in children. In an earlier analysis, Greenberg and Kusche (1990) studied both the 1-year stability and the test-retest reliability of 3 factors within this instrument, including anxiety,

conduct problems, and somatization. The conduct problems factor consists of 14 items relevant to problem behaviors (e.g., "Sometimes I break things on purpose"). Greenberg and Kusche (1990) stated that the test-retest reliability of .49, ($P < 0.001$) for this factor. The anxiety factor contains 14 statements associated with anxiety (e.g., "I am often afraid something bad will happen"). Greenberg and Kusche (1990) demonstrated the test-retest reliability of 0.41, ($P < 0.001$) for this factor. A self-structured demographic questionnaire was also utilized, which was attached to the main questionnaire. This form comprised questions about age, gender, parents' age, and their level of education. Pearson correlation coefficient test and regression analysis were used to analyze the data by SPSS software.

3. Results

Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS 15. First, one-sample K-S test was utilized to examine the normal distribution and linear association between independent variables as the related assumption for multiple regression analysis. By endorsement of these assumptions, the regression analysis was done. The ineligible data were excluded from analysis process by using adjusted scores to conform the parametric assumptions. The demographic data of participants have been presented in table 1.

Sample consisted of 60 boy students of first grade guidance school, and their parents (60 mothers and 60 fathers). Table 1 illustrates the results from demographic form.

Results obtained from correlation coefficient test between children personality characteristics based on Seattle questionnaire and mothers parenting styles indicated that, among 120 respondents, authoritative parenting style had no correlation with the problems in Seattle questionnaire but in anxiety subtest with authoritarian parenting style, Pearson correlation coefficient is calcu-

Table 1. Parental demographic characteristics of the sample group.

Variable	Degree	No. (%)
Fathers' education	Elementary to Junior high school	16(26.7)
	Diploma	15(25)
	Academic education	21(35)
	No response	8(13.3)
	Total	60(100)
Mothers' education	Junior high school	37(61.7)
	Diploma	3(5)
	Academic education	16(26.7)
	No response	4(6.7)
	Total	60(100)

Mothers' age, y M= 35.92 SD=±8.84

Fathers' age, y M= 42.83 SD=±5.56

Table 2. Coefficient correlations between behavioral and emotional problems in adolescents and parents' parenting styles.

Group	Behavioral and emotional problems	Authoritative style	Authoritarian style	Permissive style
Father	Anxiety	-0.063	0.200	0.083
Mother		-0.085	0.431**	0.085
Father	Conduct problems	0.126	0.074	0.119
Mother		0.190	0.127	0.367**
Father	Somatization	0.094	0.250	-0.078
Mother		-0.064	0.206	-0.043
Father	Depression	0.091	0.371**	0.058
Mother		0.030	0.412**	0.224
Father	Seattle personality's Total score	0.070	0.314*	0.075
Mother		0.018	0.432**	0.224

**P < 0.01 *P < 0.05

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lated at 0.431 (Sig.=0.001). Therefore, there is a significantly positive relationship between these two variables, i.e. if mothers' authoritarian parenting style increases, the children's anxiety will also increase.

Pearson correlation coefficient of depression subtest with authoritarian parenting style is 0.412 (Sig=0.001). So, there is a significantly positive relationship between these two variables i.e., if mothers' authoritarian parenting style increases, the children's depression will also increase.

Moreover, results obtained from correlation coefficient test between total score of Seattle questionnaire and authoritarian parenting style indicated that among 120 study respondents, Pearson correlation coefficient with significance level (Sig. = 0.001) was calculated at 0.432. Hence, there is a significantly positive relationship between these two variables. In other words, if mothers' authoritarian parenting style increases, the children's problems will also increase (based on the total score of Seattle questionnaire).

Another finding concerning the correlation coefficient test between children's personality characteristics according to Seattle questionnaire and mothers' parenting styles indicated that a significantly positive relationship existed between children's behavioral problems and permissive parental style, also Pearson correlation co-

efficient was calculated at 0.367 (Sig=0.004). In other words, if mothers' permissive style increases, the children's behavioral problems also increase.

Multivariate regression analysis is used to predict behavioral problems of the sample group according to the scores of fathers' and mothers' parenting styles. The results are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Regression Analysis: A stepwise multiple regression was performed to examine the predictive power of parenting styles in relation to behavioral and emotional problems in adolescents. Tables 3 and 4 show regression results for the prediction of behavioral and emotional problems scores. As we can see, R² value indicates that parenting styles account for about 19% of the variance in behavioral and emotional problems.

Results shown in Table 3 indicate that the correlation of behavioral problems in a linear combination with the equation parameters equals 0.432. The coefficient of determination is 0.187 (R²=0.187) i.e., about 19% of the variance in behavioral problems is explained and justified through the independent variables and the rest belongs to other variables that are not included in this study.

Stepwise regression analysis for predicting children's behavioral problems indicated that mother's authori-

Table 3. Results of regression coefficients concerning the predictive variables.

Statistical index	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE	F	Sig.
Value	0.432	0.187	0.173	6.73991	13.301	0.001

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Table 4. The coefficients of regression analysis test for predicting children’s behavioral problems based on mothers and fathers’ parenting styles.

Independent variable	b	SEb	β	T	Sig.
Constant	2.313	2.313		15.584	0.001
Mother’s authoritarian parenting style	0.100	0.119	0.432	3.647	0.001

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tarian parenting style explains 19% .ANOVA test with $F=13.301$ and 99% confidence level indicates the significance of this finding.

4. Discussion

Parental authority plays an important role in the socialization process of juveniles, for instance, it influences the improvement of autonomy and prosocial values (Ferrari & Olivette, 1994). According to Baumrind (1970, 1971), children raised by authoritarian parents are dissatisfied and distrustful. Also, children of permissive parents suffer from lack of self-confidence and inquisitiveness. In his opinion, the ideal parenting style is authoritative style which upbring curious and self-controlled children (Ferrari & Olivette, 1994).

Based on the descriptive statistics, the scores of authoritative style had the highest mean, the permissive style had the lowest mean, and the authoritarian style was between these two styles. In addition, the results of correlation coefficient test between children’s behavioral problems and fathers’ parental styles indicated that there was no correlation between permissive and authoritative styles and each one of these problems enlisted in Seattle questionnaire. However, Pearson correlation coefficient of depression substest with authoritarian parenting style was calculated at 0.371 (Sig. = 0.004). Therefore, a significantly positive relationship exists between these two variables. In other words, if fathers’ authoritarian parenting style increases, the children’s depression will also increase. On the other hand, the correlation coefficient between total score of Seattle questionnaire and authoritarian parenting style was calculated at 0.314 (Sig. = 0.014). Hence, there was a significantly positive relationship between these two variables. In other words, if fathers’ authoritarian parenting styles increases, the children’s problems will also increase (based on the total score of Seattle questionnaire). Authoritarian parents are not only demanding, but also are unresponsive to their children requests. Punishments, harshness, and force are techniques that authoritarian parents use to display their authority. Physical punishment in childhood may lead to depression and suicide attempt in adulthood. Such fam-

ily is vulnerable to psychosocial behavior (Alizadeh et al., 2011).

In conclusion, there was no correlation between mothers’ and fathers’ authoritative parenting style and each one of the problems enlisted in Seattle questionnaire. However, mothers’ authoritarian style is associated with anxiety, depression, and behavioral and emotional problems amongst adolescents. These outcomes contradict with the results of Ijaz and Mahmood study (2009) which found no association between maternal authoritarianism and depression, anxiety, or LFT. However, they found a moderate relationship between paternal permissiveness and all variables, which was not found in this survey. Cultural differences in perception of parenting style may cause this contradiction. Maternal permissive style is also associated with students’ behavioral problems. Additionally, paternal authoritarian style is related to depression as well as emotional and behavioral problems in juveniles. Overall, these results are in line with the outcomes of the study conducted by Wolfradt et al. (2003), Urooj and Atiya (2012), and Rana et al. (2013). Similarly, Danesh, Takrimi, and Nafisi (2007) claimed that authoritarian style more than permissive and authoritative styles would cause depression. The results revealed that different childrearing styles are correlated with high or low adolescents’ behavioral problems. In authoritative style, in which parents are responsive and demanding, the children showed fewer behavioral problems. On the other hand, in authoritarian style, which parents are only demanding and unresponsive, the children expressed more behavioral and emotional problems. Therefore, being too strict and using harsh punishments may result in these behavioral problems. Accordingly, authoritative style is the best style, which parents should apply in the process of bringing up their children.

Family is the most fundamental institution for socialization of children, particularly in the critical early years of life. Under the right conditions, it prepares children to undertake beneficial roles in community. The results of this study are consistent with the previous research emphasized on the parents’ roles and adopted parental styles to predict children’s behavioral-emotional problems. Ba-

umrind (1991) stated that, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles contribute to dysfunctional home milieu. Therefore, parents regardless of their some instinctive skills seem to require some training to have more effective parenting, especially parents with authoritarian and permissive styles. Such training can improve their parenting skills and learn them to create an authoritative environment. It was shown that, when parents applied authoritative techniques, children showed positive behavioral changes (Pearson, 2013). Improving the quality of parent-child relationship can have positive influences on family, the individual's success, and even on the society. This research can help the parents to understand the influence of their strategies in their child upbringing and find the best style to apply. Also, it helps the clinicians and counselors to educate parents to bring up their children in a healthy environment.

There are some limitations in this research, which should be acknowledged. This study was limited to only one educational level (first grade of guidance school) and only male students. In addition, participants filled the questionnaire at home (the condition was not under the control of researcher); therefore, some distracting factors might affect their answers. Moreover, self-report measures are biased by the individual's feelings at the time they completed the questionnaire. Also, many factors influence the children's problem such as genetics, parent's income, socioeconomic status, peer pressure, school and society, however, in this study, only parenting styles was considered. It is recommended that future research should also investigate the influence of other factors like different gender, ages, and levels of education.

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