

Parenting Styles and Dimensions of Children's Maladaptive Behaviors

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Many behavioral problems are resulting from inappropriate parenting styles and inattention to behavioral-emotional difficulties in childhood. The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between parenting styles and dimensions of children's maladaptive behaviors.

Methods: 120 six-year old boys, who were enrolled in the first grade of elementary school, were selected and completed Baumrind's Parenting Styles Questionnaire, Adaptive Behavior Scale and Raven's Colored Progressive Matrices (RCPM).

Results: The results showed that permissive parenting style is positively related to violence and disruptive, antisocial, outburst behavior, and hyperactivity tendency. Maternal and paternal educations were positively related to outburst, and untrustworthy behavior, respectively. Intelligence of children was positively related to outburst, and untrustworthy behavior. There was not any significant relationship between parenting styles with parents' education and children's intelligence.

Conclusion: Based on current research results and adding up previous studies, new hypotheses for future studies were suggested.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, many scientific efforts about maladaptive behaviors of children and adolescents have been accomplished. Part of these efforts have resulted in classification of children maladaptive behaviors in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Disorders (DSM-IV; American psychiatry association, 1994), and two general categories: internalizing and externalizing problems (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). In this conceptualization, problems such as depression, anxiety, withdrawal, and physical complaints referred to internalizing problems, in which the patient usually bothers himself. Problems such as rule breaking, aggression and outbursts, which are associated with harming others, have been classified into externalizing problems. Fundamental questions for theo-

rists and researchers consistently were that how children and adolescents show their problems and what causes the behavior problems. Since 1920s, famous psychological theorists (such as Freud, Adler, Erickson, Horney, etc.) have mentioned the role of family as well as child rearing in children's problems incidence (Schultz & Schultz, 2005).

Some of these theorists have focused on social factors besides the family, but many have considered the role of family beyond the other social forces. For example, Framo (2003), one of the family therapy theorists, believes that the effect of family is more than all other forces that had already known. In his point of view, the role of family is beyond the culture, friends, and relatives and so on. Nevertheless, parenting styles, as a new field, have been introduced by Diana Baumrind in 1970s, and

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drew researchers' attention. Since that time, psychological theories in prevention and treatment of child problems, have focused more on parent-child interaction and parenting styles change specially through parent training (e.g. Patterson & Reid, 1973). Parenting styles of parents have also important role in mental-social growth and development of adolescence, family relationship, and educational success, decision ability and self-confidence (Seyed-Fatemi et al., 2010). Central to the process of the socialization of children are the parenting behaviors and discipline responses, which children experience within family settings (Halpenny, Nixon, & Watson, 2010).

In recent decades, vast amount of research literature on risk factors of behavioral problems in children has focused mainly on parenting and family correlates as behavioral problems predictors. These researches show that parenting style is one of the major factors in maladaptive behavior of children (Frick, 1994).

Baumrind (1971) has divided the parents' parenting styles into authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. In authoritarian parenting style, parents force their children to blindly obey. These groups of parents limit their children, give them less freedom and authority, and believe that they should monitor their children's behavior. As a result, standards of behavior would be inflexible and one-sided, and sometimes they punish their children for the same standards. In authoritative parenting, parents treat their children with authority. However, unlike the first group, they accept flexibility in children's behavior. These parents give their children opportunity to protest, if necessary, and develop certain discipline with clarification of reasons. The third kind of parenting style is permissive, in which parents have more tolerance for misbehavior of children and ignore their misbehaviors. With this description and according to Darling and Steinberg's (1993) definition, parenting styles are collection of trends, actions and nonverbal affects that indicate the nature of parent-child interactions in various situations. They describe parenting styles as emotional atmosphere that moderate effects of parenting behaviors.

In previous research, two trends can be found. Some researchers have studied the relationship of parenting styles, and others examined the association of parenting behaviors with children and adolescents problems or disorders. For example, Stormshak and colleagues (2000) in study of parents of elementary school students with disruptive behavior problems (e.g. oppositional, aggressive, hyperactive) concluded that parenting behaviors including punitive interactions associated with

elevated rates of child disruptive behavior problems. Low levels of warm involvement were associated with elevated rates of child disruptive behavior problems. Physically aggressive parenting was linked more specifically to child aggression. Milich and Lonely (1979) suggested that family correlates with children's aggression, such as hostile and punitive parenting, would show their effects on adulthood. Peterson and Zill (1986) also reported the relationship between parental control and children behavior problems. They concluded that inappropriately poor or high control was associated with child behavior problems.

Survey on researches about parenting styles show that there is association between parenting styles and risky behavior among children and teenagers. In Ferrari and Olivetti's (1993) research, the teenager girls, who perceived both parents as too arbitrarily, evaluate himself unable to make decisions. While there were no significant difference in decision-making reports of the girls who assessed their parents parenting styles as high or low decisive and confident (authoritative style), high, or low permissive. Dubow, Hesmman and Buxer (2003) concluded that permissive and authoritarian parenting styles are possible causes of aggression in childhood. These children also had poor school performance than children whose parents were authoritative.

In summary, it has demonstrated that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, both are related to negative behavioral outcomes, including aggression, internalize and externalize disorders (Dubow, Hesmman, & Buxer, 2003). However, authoritative parenting style is related with positive developmental outcomes including academic achievement, greater self-reliance, less deviant behavior, and positive relationships with peers. And it is confirmed that positive impact of this approach would be constant over the time, while impact of other parenting styles remain stable or may be increased (Steinberg et al., 1994). Contrary with these results, a few researchers also have expressed cultural differences in suitability of some parenting styles. For instance, Garcia and Garcia (2009) concluded that the optimum style of parenting for Spanish adolescents is indulgent one.

Despite the fact that association between some of parenting styles with children maladaptive behaviors have been distinguished, there are also contradictions. Therefore, current study sought to examine the probable relationship between parenting styles and children's maladaptive behaviors to determine which children maladaptive behavior is associated with the three par-

enting styles (authoritarian, authoritative or permissive) in their parents.

1. Methods

Participants

The statistical population of current study composed of all 6-years old male students in district 3 of Tabriz city that completed preschool and were ready to enter first grade of elementary school. Sample selection was made by single-stage cluster sampling, and 120 male students who were applicants to enroll in elementary school were selected from four elementary schools. Research instruments were implemented on the child, parents and children's preschool coaches. After describing the research purpose and getting parents informed consent, first Raven's Colored Progressive Matrices (RCPM) was performed to assess students' IQ. The ranges of participants' IQ were 80-130 and there was no retarded one in the sample. Parenting styles of parents evaluated by Baumrind Parenting Styles Questionnaire. To measure students' maladaptive behaviors, preschool coach of each student was asked to complete Adaptive Behavioral Scale.

Instruments

Baumrind's parenting styles questionnaire:

This questionnaire was designed by Diana Baumrind, first time in 1972, and consists of 30 items (each of permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parenting style contains 10 items). In this questionnaire, the parents' opinions are measured on a 5 degree Likert's scale. Thus, parents are asked to choose a choice that corresponds very well with their current opinions. The choices are completely agree, almost agree, do not sure, almost disagree, and completely disagree. Buri (1991) has reported the reliability of this questionnaire, by test-retest method, 0.81 for permissive, 0.92 for authoritarian, and 0.92 for authoritative parenting style. In evaluating validity of this instrument, he has reported relationship between permissive and authoritarian -0.50, and between authoritative and authoritarian -0.52. In Iran, Esfandiary

(1995) has reported the reliability of subscales by test retest, 0.69 for permissive style, 0.77 for authoritarian, and 0.73 for authoritative.

Adaptive behavior questionnaire-school edition:

This questionnaire provided first time by Lambert and colleagues in 1974. This questionnaire demonstrates beneficial descriptive information to diagnose maladaptive behaviors of elementary school students and provides behavioral profile. Early version of this questionnaire had 270 items and contained 12 subscales. In Iran, this questionnaire has been standardized and provided as a short form by Shehni Yailagh (1990). This revised short form consists of 84 items with 7 subscales. Total reliability of revised version was reported 0.86 in boys and 0.80 in girls.

The Raven's Colored Progressive Matrices (RCPM):

The colored Raven's test is used for measuring IQ in Children. This test includes 36 items divided across three sets. Each item shows a visual pattern or sequence that requires individuals to decide which of several stimuli best completes that item.

3. Results

Descriptive statistics of IQ level of participants and parents' education are presented in table 1. The IQ range of subjects were 80-130; children with IQ's of 80-90 were 11.7%, 90-110 were 66.6%, 110-120 were 11.7% and 120-130 were 10%. Maternal educational of most children (80%) were diploma or below diploma, while only 48.3% of fathers had diploma or below diplomas (Table 1).

Pearson correlation has been used for data analysis. First, the relation of parents' educations and children's IQ with their parenting styles has been examined. Then the relationship between these variables and children maladaptive behaviors has evaluated. The results are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 1. Maternal and paternal educations of subjects*.

Educational level	Father	Mother
Below diploma	12 (10.0)	28 (23.3)
Diploma	46 (38.3)	68 (56.7)
Associate degree	28 (23.3)	6 (5.0)
Bachelor degree	18 (15.0)	18 (15.0)
Master degree and above	16 (13.3)	0 (0.0)

* Frequency (P)

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Table 2. Coefficient correlations between parents' education, children's IQ and Parents' parenting styles.

Variables	Permissive	Authoritative	Authoritarian
Maternal education	-0.002	0.004	0.039
Paternal education	0.106	0.050	0.035
Child IQ	-0.028	0.171	-0.162

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The result of Table 2 indicates that there is no significant relationship between parents' education and children's IQ with each of parenting styles.

According to Table 3, there are no significant relationship between authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles with any of maladaptive behaviors, however, permissive parenting style has positive significant relationship with violence and disruptive behavior, antisocial behavior, outburst behavior, and hyperactivity tendency. In addition, there is a positive relationship between level of maternal educations and outburst behavior, and untrustworthy behavior. Similarly, high levels of child's IQ have positive relation with untrustworthy behavior.

4. Discussion

There was not any significant relationship between levels of parents' educations with parenting styles. This result is consistent with the finding Malekpour's (2003) study, in which he has not found significant relationship between levels of parents' educations and their beliefs about parenting. Of course, the relationship between parenting styles and maternal education has been reported in foreign studies (Querido, Warner, & Eyberg, 2002). Also, there was not found any significant relationship between child's IQ and parenting styles. To explanation these results, it can be said that parenting styles might be related to personality or cultural characteristics. Although, Garcia and Garcia (2009) concluded about cultural fitness of some parenting styles in Spain, this requires more studies in Iran.

In this research, significant relationship found between permissive parenting and several maladaptive behaviors including violence and disruptive behavior, antisocial behavior, outburst behavior and hyperactivity tendency. These results are consistent with the findings that obtained from studies performed on children in Iran, but in researches that have been done on adolescents, authoritarian parenting has been reported problematic. For instance, Seyed-Musavi, Nad-Ali and Ganbary (2008), a study of 7 to 9 years old children, had found positive relationship between permissive parenting style and externalizing syndromes. However, they did not find significant relationship between authoritarian parenting with externalizing syndromes. Razavi, Mahmoodi and Rahimi (2008) in study on elementary schools children had found significant relationship between parents' permissive parenting and children behavioral problems. While in foreign studies, both permissive and authoritarian parenting style had significant relationship with children behavioral problems. For example Dubow, Hesmman and Boxer (2003) resulted that permissive and authoritarian parenting styles may be a cause of aggression in children. In the study of Sohrabi and Hasani (2007) on 14 to 18 years old girls, authoritarian parenting style was effective in antisocial behaviors. Similarly, Komijani and Maher (1989) found that authoritarian parenting styles in parents of adolescents with conduct disorder are more than normal group. Thus, it might be said that permissive parenting style in childhood and authoritarian parenting in adolescence has negative contribution in maladaptive behaviors.

Table 3. Coefficient correlations of parenting styles, parent's education, children IQ with maladaptive behaviors of children ^a.

Variables ^a	Violen.	Antiso.	Outbu.	Untrust.	Withdra.	Habits.	Hyperact.
Authoritarian	0.035	-0.046	-0.048	-0.149	-0.086	0.020	0.030
Authoritative	-0.088	-0.108	-0.075	-0.031	0.185	-0.051	0.013
Permissive	0.393**	0.369**	0.193*	0.143	0.0064	0.102	0.246**
Maternal edu.	0.133	0.116	0.194*	0.053	-0.012	0.137	0.078
Parental edu.	0.077	0.149	0.168	0.269**	0.172	0.093	0.129
Child IQ	0.164	0.173	0.181*	0.220*	0.124	-0.109	0.089

a. Maladaptive Behaviors are Violence and Disruptive Behavior (Violen.),

Antisocial Behavior (Antiso.), Outburst Behavior (Outbu.),

Untrustworthy Behavior (Untrust.), Withdrawal (Withdra.), Strange Habits (habits.) and Hyperactivity Tendency (Hyperact.),

* P<0.05, ** P<0.01

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Previous studies about teenagers confirm this notion. For instance, Danesh, Takrimi and Nafisi (2007) found that authoritarian parenting styles more than authoritative and permissive styles cause depression in them. Rahmati, Eatemadi and Mehrabi (2007) in study of high school girl students, found that students with mental disorders including depression, obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, have parents with authoritarian or indulgent parenting styles.

Another interesting result that has been found in this research was positive relationship of maternal educations with outburst behavior and untrustworthy behavior. Child intelligence had positive relationship with untrustworthy behavior too. It might be said that higher education increased their perfectionist expectations. On the other hand, high intelligence of some children provides basis for outburst behavior and untrustworthy behaviors (that both of them are smart behaviors to avoid from tasks and outcomes). In Querido, Warner and Eyberg (2002) indicated that, significant relationship between maternal educations and children behavioral problems.

The results of this research, in accordance with previous studies, demonstrate that problematic parenting styles in children are different from problematic parenting styles in teenagers. Furthermore, parents with higher education degrees, high intelligence in some children and maybe some Iranian cultural characteristics have important contributions on effectiveness or problematic of some parenting styles. It is obvious that definite comments in this issue need more research.

The limitation that should be considered in generalization of results is that, the subjects of current study were 6 years old boys. Moreover, this research was a correlational study, and just the relationship of variables has been considered.

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