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## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTING STYLES AND ADOLESCENT'S IDENTITY AND AGGRESSION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background and Purpose:** family is the prime environment in which a child is developed. It is brilliantly effective on the subsequent behavior of the person. Type of incentives, punishment and prevision, indifference and behavior at the first stage of one's life leaves consequences to the next stages. Therefore, the general purpose of the research is to study the relationship between parenting styles and identity and aggression in male and female teenagers at high schools in Khodabandeh Town.

**Method:** research method is descriptive-correlational. Baumerind's questionnaire of parenting types, Aggression Questionnaire (AGQ) and Adams & Benton's identity measuring questionnaires (OMEIS) (Objective Measure of ego-identity Status) were used in the research. Adolescents aged 14 to 18 along with their parents in Khodabandeh Town were selected as the statistical population. 200 people (100 male and 100 female) were randomly selected as samples.

**Findings:** the results indicated that the relationship between parenting style and aggression is not significant. With regard to the relationship between parenting style and identity formation, democratic parenting has relationship with the formation of premature identity subscale, diffusion and advanced. Authoritarian style has relationship with all identity subscales and permissive style has relationship with the formation of identity diffusion, premature identity.

**Conclusion:** parent's beliefs, attitudes and conducts which are appeared as family patterns or child rearing styles, is a significant factor in identity development.

**Keywords:** *Parenting Styles, Aggression, Identity*

### **INTRODUCTION**

As a social system, family includes a group of people who live together by marriage, reproduction and rearing children. This social system and organization has played a vital role in developing and socializing of mankind in history. Family, undoubtedly, is the most important organization which paves the way for human to be developed physically, mentally and socially (Musavi, 2004).

The results of the studies conducted on behavioral disorders involved that behavioral disorders are mostly the outcome of parent's communicational approach rather than genetic or biological factors. Researchers have concluded that there is relationship between parent's misconduct and children's behavioral disorder. This relationship is significant and reveals that family's, particularly parent's, behavior at childhood plays an important role in the emergence of behavioral disorders at childhood and adulthood as well as in their identity formation (Zorufi, 2001).

Aggression is among the behavioral problems which are the production of the troubled families and the outcome of parent's unhealthy and undesirable behavior towards their children. In these families, generally, there is a stress stimulus like father addiction, parent's physical or verbal abuse, unhealthy relationship between parents and children, wrongful conduct towards children and so on (Michael and Raily, 1987).

The studies by National Institute of Mental Health in the United States indicated that children who are suffered neglect or physically abused by their parents, display high probability of aggressive and violent behavior (Farahani, 2001). The results of many studies specify that statistically, the relationship between parenting style and teenager's behavioral problems is significant (Argys, 2006).

### **Research Article**

Parenting styles are effective in reducing high-risk behaviors of teens. The results of the studies imply that parents, who spend more time supervising their children, have kids less inclined toward risky and poor behaviors (Velder and Valt, 2002; Smal and Laster, 1994).

Katz and Gutmann (1993) concluded in their research that parents, who apply hostile approaches to resolve their conflicts, have children with more symptoms of antisocial behavior (Borjali, 2001). Further studies in this field revealed that separation from parents and poor communication with children have a relationship with the degree of depression and aggressive behavior of the children (Marsh, 2001).

Father and mother are the most important and the most principal ones effective in the prevention of the identity crisis in adolescents. This is because parents are the first one whom a teenager builds a relation with. Parenting style plays an important role in the development of an adolescent identity. Going to extremes in parenting methods may pave the way for adolescent identity crisis. Unlimited freedom or limited one (i.e. dictatorship in the family, which is classified among parenting styles) leads to identity diffusion. Maintaining a balance between "self-unity" and "presence in the inner experience of others" is considered as the sign of the proof of identity. Thus, when the balance is disturbed and imbalance arise between them, a disorder or identity crisis occurs (Borjali, 2001).

Parenting involves parent's behavior and its relation with the different characteristics of their children. Methods of child rearing used by parents have a profound effect on the development of creativity and cognition as well as the future lives of the children. Methods of child rearing involve applying complex activities and conducts affecting child development process. Diana Baumrind is the pioneer among who classically studied educational approaches of child rearing. She classifies three types of parenting styles: Democratic, Authoritarian and Permissive.

Democratic parenting: by adopting this style parents give their children warm family environment and possibility of autonomy but place limitations as well. They nurture the children's individuality and independence and involve them in discussions. These parents explain discipline issues for their children, take the point of view of their children and provide them with guidance. Some characteristics of these parents include introducing regulations and limitations and presenting their children the right to choose. They do their best so that their children not make a mistake again. Through these accomplishments democratic parents exert decisive effect on the development of cognitive behaviors and creativity of the children. Children of these families are provided with mental security and have a comfortable feeling to their parents. They continue with more confidence in their own creative practices without being worried about obstacles or being blamed or being troubled by the rejection of their social behaviors by their parents.

Authoritarian style: parent's power-display is the first factor discriminating this style with the two others. These parents place high demands on the child but are not responsive to the child's needs. Authoritarian parents bring a negative effect about the development of creativity and cognition of children. Children who are repeatedly threatened have a tendency toward isolation, depression, low self-esteem, much stress, low curiosity and hostility to others. Researchers have found that authoritarian parents nurture children with lack of autonomy, curiosity and creativity.

Permissive style: in this kind, parents tend to give more freedom and there is little control or punishment or direction. They prefer to be indifferent. They spend little time with their children. Permissive manner has a negative effect on cognitive development and creativity of the children. Children of this class tend to be immature and rebellious, make immediate decisions, have low self-esteem, depend on adults and show less stability in doing their homework (Leylabadi, 1986).

Regarding what is said, researchers are to study if there is relationship between parenting styles (democratic, authoritarian and permissive) and identity and aggression in teenagers. Therefore, researchers propose the following hypothesis and they are going to put them to the test.

- 1- There is relationship between democratic parenting style and the degree of children's aggression.
- 2- There is relationship between authoritarian parenting style and the degree of children's aggression.
- 3- There is relationship between permissive parenting style and the degree of children's aggression.
- 4- There is relationship between democratic parenting style and the types of identity formation

### **Research Article**

- 5- There is relationship between authoritarian parenting style and the types of identity formation
- 6- There is relationship between permissive parenting style and the types of identity formation
- 7- Parenting style is able to predict types of identity and degree of aggression.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Method**

The paper utilizes correlational research method. Correlational studies, which are the sub-set of descriptive (non-experimental) studies, aimed at indicating the relationship between the variables.

Statistical population of the research includes all teenager students of Khodabandeh town who were studying in 1392-1393 academic year along with their parents. Age range in this study included adolescents aged 14 to 18.

Given the extent of the statistical population, at first, three male and three female high schools were selected out of the seven female and eight male high schools of Khodabandeh town by using cluster random sampling. Then, by simple random sampling, three classes were selected which included 200 students –100 males and 100 females. The students completed aggression questionnaires while their fathers or mothers filled out Baumrind parenting styles questionnaires. Then it was evaluated by statistical methods.

### **Instrument**

In order to evaluate research variables, three Paper-and-pencil questionnaires were utilized in the research.

#### **A) Baumrind Parenting Style Questionnaire**

Baumrind parenting style questionnaire was designed in 1972. It includes 30 sentences which identify three parenting styles including permissive, authoritarian and authoritative each of which takes account of 10 questions. Permissive style subscale comprised questions (13, 10, 6, 1, 28, 24, 21, 19, 17, 14), authoritarian style subscale comprised questions (29, 26, 25, 18, 16, 12, 9, 7, 3, 2) and authoritative style subscale comprised questions (30, 27, 23, 22, 20, 15, 11, 8, 5, 4). Each phrase headed 5 columns given the title of strongly agree, agree, disagree, almost disagree and strongly disagree. 5-point Likert scale, which is graded from 0 to 4, used to scaling responses. The total value of the phrases of each style yields three separate scores.

By using test- retest method, Buri (1991) reported reliability among mothers at 81% for permissive style, 86% for authoritarian style and 78% for authoritative style and among fathers at 77%, 85% and 88% respectively. Its diagnostic validity, also, revealed that authoritarian mothers have inverse relationship with permissive (-38%) and authoritative (-48%) styles. Authoritarian fathers have, also, inverse relationship with permissive (-50%) and authoritative (-52%) styles (Esfandiari, 1985). Moreover, content validity test was approved by 10 scholars of psychology and psychiatry (Leyabadi, 1986).

#### **B) Aggressive Questionnaire**

This questionnaire includes 30 items; 4 items respond to aggression factor, eight items to invasion and the other eight items to malice. AGQ scale is a self-report paper-and-pencil scale in which a subject responds to one of the four options of never, rarely, sometimes and always.

Values 0, 1, 2, 3 are respectively allocated to each of the 4 options except for item 18 which is a negative loaded factor and scored in the reverse direction. Total score from 0 to 90 are obtained by adding the scores of the questions. People, who scores below the average, have little aggression.

Test-retest coefficients among the subject's scores were calculated two times for all the subjects (N=91), female subjects (N=48) and male subjects (N=38) at  $r=0/70$ ,  $r=0/64$  and,  $r=0/79$  respectively.

Furthermore, at AGQ scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient (internal consistency) was 0/87 for all the subjects, 0/86 for female subjects and 0/89 for male subjects. Correlation coefficient was reported by Zahedifar among Pd subscale scores (one of MMPI subscales) and AGQ scale for all subjects at (N=105), ( $P=0/001$   $r=0/58$ ). Correlation coefficients between Bass and Durkee character - sin and AGQ scale was reported at (N=215), ( $P=0/001$   $r=0/56$ ) for all the subjects.

## Research Article

### C) Adams & Benton's Identity Measuring Questionnaires (OMEIS)

The first version of the questionnaire was developed in 1979 based on Erikson's theory. Many studies have been carried out to evaluate its validity and reliability which made it to be used increasingly. So far, several editions and revisions have been brought out of the questionnaire. Currently, the last edition is used as a precise measurement instrument in psychometric clinics of different countries.

Identity questionnaire is drawn up in two general domains (Adams and Gratevand, 1984) which includes the following:

- 1- Ideological identity (religion, occupation, politics and philosophical life-style)
- 2- Interpersonal relationship (friendship, dating, recreation and sex roles)

It consists of four subscales as follows:

- Identity diffusion subscale
- Premature identity subscale
- Delayed identity subscale
- Advanced identity subscale

Any of the subscales holds 16 articles of the questionnaire. The content of 8 articles measures ideological dimension and the other 8 is related to interpersonal relations of the subject. The scores of the questionnaire are graded in accordance with Likert scale. Following is the number of the questions of OMEIS questionnaire in the related sub-tests.

- **Premature Identity:** on ideological domain consists of the questions (17, 24, 28, 41, 44, 50, 58, and 64) and on interpersonal domain includes questions (3, 21, 27, 37, 38, 39, 62, and 63).

- **Delayed Identity:** on ideological domain consists of the questions (9, 12, 26, 32, 34, 36, 48, and 57) and on interpersonal domain includes questions (5, 11, 14, 31, 43, 47, 54, and 61).

- **Diffusion Identity:** on ideological domain consists of the questions (1, 2, 4, 10, 16, 25, 25, and 56) and on interpersonal domain includes questions (6, 7, 19, 23, 29, 30, 53, and 59).

- **Advanced Identity:** on ideological domain consists of the questions (8, 18, 20, 33, 40, 42, 49, and 60) and on interpersonal domain includes questions (13, 15, 22, 35, 45, 46, 51, and 55).

Statistical assessments showed significant correlation between premature identity and ??? with the coefficient at  $P > 0/001$ . Negative coefficient was seen in identity diffusion and positive correlation rigidity was indicated in advanced identity. In the calculations of the concurrent validity, achieved identity positively showed positive correlation with the coefficient significance at  $P > 0/001$  calculated by Rosenthal identity measure.

In an analysis by researchers and scholars, agreement coefficient was achieved at 94/04 in the revised materials (Adams, 1998).

A sample of 400 volunteer high school students participated in the experiment to evaluate the questionnaire reliability; 12 first grader, 10 second grader and 11 third grader responded to the identity questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated at 64% to 58% as follow.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

In this chapter we analyze the data by using suitable statistical approaches.

**Table 1: Pearson correlation between parenting styles and aggression**

Variable	Democratic	Authoritarian	Permissive
Aggression	0/12	0/07	0/005
Coefficient significance	0/071	0/28	0/94

### Hypothesis One

There is significant relationship between democratic (authoritative) parenting style and children aggression.

**Research Article**

Regarding table1 and given  $\text{sig}=0/07$  and that  $\text{sig}>\alpha$  and  $\alpha=0/05$ , we conclude that the first hypothesis was rejected and the relationship between democratic (authoritative) parenting style and children's aggression is not significant.

**Hypothesis Two**

There is significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and children's aggression. Regarding table1 and given  $\text{sig}=0/28$  and that  $\text{sig}>\alpha$  and  $\alpha=0/05$ , we conclude that the second hypothesis was rejected and the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and children's aggression is not significant.

**Hypothesis Three**

There is significant relationship between permissive parenting style and children aggression. Regarding table1 and given  $\text{sig}=0/9$  and that  $\text{sig}>\alpha$  and  $\alpha=0/05$ , we conclude that the third hypothesis was rejected and the relationship between permissive parenting style and children aggression is not significant.

**Table 2: Pearson correlation between parenting styles and identity formation**

Variables	Diffusion identity	Delayed identity	Premature identity	Advance identity
Democratic style	-0/28	0/093	0/28	0/41
Coefficient significance	0/00	0/19	0/00	0/00
Authoritarian style	0/36	-0/19	-0/16	-0/17
Coefficient significance	0/00	0/005	0/02	0/016
Permissive style	-0/19	0/39	-0/23	0/003
Coefficient significance	0/005	0/00	0/001	0/99

**Hypothesis Four**

There is significant relationship between democratic (authoritative) parenting style and children identity formation.

Regarding table 2 and given  $\text{sig}=0/05$  and that  $\text{sig}<\alpha$  and  $\alpha=0/05$ , we conclude that there is a significant relationship between democratic (authoritative) parenting style and children identity formation.

**Hypothesis Five**

There is significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and children identity formation. Regarding table 2 and given  $\text{sig}=0/05$  and that  $\text{sig}<\alpha$  and  $\alpha=0/05$ , we conclude that there is a significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and children identity formation. Then, the hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 3: ANOVA variance analysis**

	Sum of squares	of F test	The mean square	Degrees of freedom	of Significance level
Regression	62/278	140/564	31/139	2	0/00
Remaining	43/642		0/22	197	
Total	105/920			199	

**Hypothesis Six**

There is significant relationship between permissive parenting style and children identity formation.

### Research Article

Regarding table 2 and given  $\text{sig}=0/05$  and that  $\text{sig}>\alpha$  and  $\alpha=0/05$ , we conclude that there is a significant relationship with a confidence level of  $0/95$  between authoritarian parenting style and children identity formation at diffusion identity, premature identity and delayed identity subscales.

### Hypothesis Seven

Parenting styles can predict identity types and the degree of children's aggression.

F-value indicates that whether research regression model is a suitable one or not. In other words, are the independent variables able to explain the changes in the dependent variables or not. The issue is possible to be realized with F significance at less or more  $0/05$  error level. The obtained F value (140/564), which is significant at less than  $0/05$  error level, indicates that the independent variable enjoys high explanatory power and it is able to properly explain the degree of the changes and variance in the dependent variable. In other words, regression model of the research is an excellent model which enables us to explain the changes in identity – the dependent variable, and in aggression according to the independent variable.

**Table 4: The results of the regression effect coefficients**

	Standard deviation	B	$\beta$	T	Significance level
Fixed figure	0/142	0/943		6/658	0/00
Identity formation	0/031	0/515	0/769	16/762	0/00
Aggression	0/02	0/02	0/044	0/968	0/334

Since in regression analysis most independent variable scales consist of different units, it is difficult to measure the contribution of each independent variable to explain changes or variance in dependent variable. Therefore, the standardized regression coefficient  $\beta$  enables us to determine the contribution of each independent variable in the explanation of the changes in dependent variable i.e. the greater the  $\beta$  coefficient of a variable, the more it plays in the role to predict the changes in dependent variable. Standardized regression model:

Summary of model processing statistics (parenting style)  $0/769 =$  Identity formation

(Parenting style)  $0/044 =$  Aggression

Standardized regression coefficient is measured according to standard deviation values. i.e.  $0/769 \beta$  coefficient for identity formation indicates that variation in a standard deviation in the parenting style variable causes  $0/769$  standard deviation in identity variable.

Since T value is greater than  $2/58$  at  $\alpha=0/01$ , we realize that parenting style can predict children identity but not able to predict aggression.

### Conclusion

The approaches used by parents to rear up their children, plays an essential role in providing their children with mental health. Healthy relationships make it possible to specify children's needs and set up to address the needs of the children. According to the research findings, families play a key role in character building of the children. An adolescent is in need of his family's support to acquire confidence and develop identity. Family environment and parents conduct have a considerable effect on character development. The results of the study indicated that democratic (authoritative) parenting style has a significant relationship with the formation of identity diffusion, premature identity and advanced identity and that authoritarian style plays a significant role in the formation of the all identity subscales. The results were consistent in some way with the research findings of the National Institute of Mental Health in the United States (Argys et al., 2005), (Angrist et al., 1996) and (Wilder and Watt, 2002). The study results by Coper Smith showed that children of parents with authoritarian style tend to be avoidant. These children lack spontaneity and their son will be aggressive. Some surveys are indicative of the relationship between authoritarian approach of parents and underdevelopment of self-esteem in males. Huck, as quoted by Sifurian and Riazi (2001), believes that permissive parenting style up brings loose, coward and dependent children with fragile emotion. They have not enough self-confidence to deal with the problems. So, the only thing they do is to appeal for further help from their parents. The most common mistake parents make in this parenting style is that they believe that children should not be failed or upset. In these

### **Research Article**

circumstances, children will not learn to live with failure and will not be patient in the face of adversity. Under this parenting style, children soon find out to achieve their demands by crying, screaming and aggression at any time they are dissatisfied.

Levy's study (1943; quoted in Shamlu, 1993), also, revealed that applying both permissive and authoritarian parenting styles lead to the display of aggressive, delinquent and anti-social behaviors in children. The studies of Lamborn *et al.*, (1991), Rey *et al.*, (2000), Leylabadi (1996) and Esfandiari (1995) confirmed the role of authoritarian style in the creation of behavioral disorders. Consequently, family plays a key role in the creation or prevention of risky behavior like aggression and in the identity development of the adolescents. Therefore, preparing children for life outside the family is one of the social tasks of the parents and that the quality of family conducts has a deep and lasting effect on mental development of the children.

A sound parenting style is the one in which parents apply balanced mix of compliance and control in dealing with children. According to Anola (2000), consistent positive encouragement in authoritative style may increase motivation of the children to make progress and achieve identity. In addition, parents in this style reinforce independent behavior of the adolescents and strengthen breakthrough strategies by education, support and guidance. The studies of Mason *et al.*, (1996) revealed the fact that adolescents with conduct disorder come from families with authoritarian parenting style. Such a style, obviously, leads to different behavioral disorders, conflict and neurotic, common among them. Adolescents reared up in this style, usually suffer from neuro-psychiatric disorders and behavioral disorders. In this parenting style, parents blame and punish youths for their faults but never explain about the grounds of punishment. Usually, there is no rational relation between the type of the punishment used and the wrong behavior of the juvenile. Any mistake made encounters with excessive violence and attack on the character of juvenile and causes feeling guilty. Continuing to blame drives a teenager to develop a poor image of him, which gradually weakens his self-confidence, worsens his behavior and leads to the realization of his conception of what his parents think of him. These circumstances are unfavorable enough to lead children to disruptive behaviors such as aggression and conduct disorder. Vindictive punishment, continued reproach, loss of identity and cause of feeling guilty instigate adolescent to believe that he is so bad to be disrespected and disregarded. In most anti-social behaviors like, flee home, drug abuse, theft, forming hooligan and criminal groups and so on, we can see traces of these parenting styles. In order to prevent the creation and severity of behavior disorders, such as aggression, in adolescents and youths, it is suggested that Education Office authorities provide the families with necessary and sufficient training on how to deal properly with children through holding family education classes to develop a suitable identity in adolescents by choosing a suitable parenting style. Besides, parenting styles should not be very authoritarian or annoying. Moderation should be observed and parents should avoid physical punishments, blaming, mocking and disregarding adolescents.

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**Research Article**

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