Identifying the parenting style of students' parents of an school at Shiraz University of medical sciences

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between parents and children is one of the important things that have attracted the attention of experts and educators for many years. The family is the first base that creates a bond between the child and the environment around him. The purpose of this study was to determine the parenting styles of parents of the Shiraz School of Medical Sciences complex. This study is a descriptive study and 329 fourth-sixth grade students were selected to participate in the study by random cluster sampling. In this research, a questionnaire of parenting styles developed by painters based on Schiffer's work (1965) in Shiraz in 1358 was used. The results show that one-third of the parents of the students have a simple parenting style and most of the parents are in this group. Most parents simply maintain order in the family instead of setting precise and regular rules at home, reducing children's responsibility, and increasing their emotional problems and aggression.

Keywords: Parenting styles, School of medical sciences, Authoritative parenting, Permissive parenting, Authoritarian parenting, Indulgent parenting

Introduction

Parenting styles are defined as a set of behaviors that describe parent-child interactions over a wide range of situations and create an effective interactive atmosphere. Parenting style is a determining and influential factor that plays a major role in the pathology and growth and development of children. It is impossible to address any of the problems of children without considering the attitudes, behaviors, and parenting styles [1]. Each family applies a special style of personal and social education to their child. These styles are influenced by various factors, including cultural, social, political, economic, etc., and are called parenting styles [2]. Parenting has also been considered an important issue in various religions since religious rules and principles have also been defined for rearing children. In Islamic texts, parenting is a complex activity that includes behaviors, teachings, interactions, and methods that separately and interactively influence cognitive, spiritual, emotional, behavioral growth and development at individual and social dimensions, since the family forms the first path of the child relationship with the surrounding world [3]. From the Islamic point of view, parenting is the responsibility of the parents. Imam Sadegh, one of the leaders of Islam, emphasized the influence of parents on their children's mental health. He has stated that immunity from psychological, moral, personality and social disorders of children and future generations depends on the type of educational performance of parents [4].

Proper support of the parents from their child and their authority is directly associated with positive outcomes in adolescence [5]. Some parents pay very much attention to their children so that

they fail to achieve full social maturity in the coming years. Although it is necessary to support the child, it is sometimes necessary to leave him or her to find a solution himself or herself. In contrast, the children who are humiliated and disrespected in childhood or grow up in an environment full of parental disputes and conflicts, deprivation, and frustration, become violent and maladjusted people in their youth and vulnerable to crime, leaving home, physical and mental illness, despair and dissatisfaction [6] and emotional disorder, suicide, smoking, alcohol consumption and sexual problems [7]. Monitoring and control are two parts of the process of child-rearing that determine the parenting style [8, 9]. Therefore, recognizing the psychological atmosphere governing the family and educating them in guiding this space towards the desired educational conditions is crucial [8] because many behaviors of the child and his or her behavioral norms and abnormalities are formed and changed in these conditions and environment. Also, parenting style plays a key role in shaping children's identities. As parents show more affection, acceptance, and friendly behaviors toward their children, the more they reinforce the processes that lead to the development of an advanced identity [10].

Despite the importance of this issue, studies in this area should increase to enhance our knowledge of the situation governing parenting space in real life. A review of studies in this area shows that with increasing authoritative parenting style, stronger "I" will be seen in children. Also, the strength of "I" has a significant positive relationship with the permissive parenting style [11]. In another study that investigated the relationship between parenting and responsibility in adolescents, the results showed that the dimensions of control parenting and affection are positive and significant predictors for adolescent responsibility [10]. Sense of hope and security is also one of the components that has been studied and it has been shown that there is a positive relationship between authoritative and permissive parenting styles and a negative relationship between authoritarian parenting style and hope [3]. Also, the authoritative parenting style showed a positive and significant relationship with academic achievement, while a negative and significant relationship was found between authoritarian and permissive style and academic achievement [12]. Some of the studies focus on parenting styles of adolescents [13-16] but it is more essential to investigate the parenting styles of children. The present study aims to examine the parenting style of parents of fourth to sixth-grade students. This group was aged between 9 and 13 years, and the parenting style of their parents can be very important. In this regard, the objectives of the present study are:

1. Studying the parenting style of parents of fourth to sixth-grade students of an educational complex at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences.
2. Describing the parenting style of parents of male and female students according to the level of education of the parents.
3. Describing the parenting style of parents of students according to the student's gender.
4. Describing the parenting style of parents of students according to the birth rank of students.

Theoretical principles

Baumrind is one of the pioneers in studying the parenting style. He argues that socializing the child is based on the will of society, but maintaining the sense of individual integrity is a key element of parenting roles [17]. Based on early studies of Baumrind, parents are divided into three groups according to their parenting style: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. In the early 1980s, this three-part model was firmly established in the field of child growth and development. The Baumrind typology transformation, developed by Macoubi and Martin, facilitated the work of researchers to generalize the Baumrind model to very different populations (quoted in Sadr, Mohammad Mehrdad, *et al.*, 2018).

Shifer (1965) is also one of the researchers in this field. Based on his observations of the interaction of 1 to 3-year-old children with their mothers, he proposed a classification based on two aspects of parental behavior: freedom-control (permissive versus strict) and coldness-warmth (acceptance versus rejection) [10]. He concluded that accepting or rejecting mothers could be strict or permissive. These two dimensions refer to the levels of emotional support that parents apply to their children and also refer to the control that parents have over their children. Thus, by combining these two dimensions, different models of parental behavior are formed. In general, many parental behaviors can be modeled in four dimensions. Ziegelman (1999) has divided the methods of communication between parents and children into four general classes: 1-Authoritative parents, 2-Authoritarian parents, 3- permissive parents, 4- neglectful parents.

1. Authoritative parents are flexible and demanding. They apply control over their children, but they are also receptive and responsive. They are constantly enforcing the rules. They also explain the reason and logic of these rules and restrictions. They are receptive to the needs and views of their children, and when they are advising their children, they also respect their children [18]. These parents set clear rules for children's behavior. They are powerful, but they are not strict. Their disciplinary methods are supportive rather than punitive. They want their children to express themselves. Also, the children of these parents are socially responsible and self-organized and participate in social activities [19]. While setting clear standards of behavior for their children, authoritative parents encourage them to be independent and allow them to make independent decisions and behaviors within a specific framework. As a result, children experience different ways of solving problems in the face of conflicts [11]. Parents who use a rational authoritative style teach their children that conflict and disagreement will be effectively resolved by considering the other people's point of view and through dialogue and conversation. They give responsibility for their children based on their age and provide the necessary conditions for their children to reach the maximum level of development necessary to achieve a secure and independent individuality.

2. Authoritarian parents: These parents impose rules inflexibly. They are highly disciplined and punitive. They punish the

child who commits misbehavior and show a low level of affection towards children.

Authoritarian parents are high-level in terms of demanding and ordering, but they are not responsive. They are rule-oriented and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation. Also, they do not provide structured environments with clear rules [18].

3. Permissive parents: These parents are lenient in teaching social behaviors. General order and rule govern in this type of family, and members' adherence to social rules and customs is very low [19]. Anyone can do whatever he or she wants. Children in such families have intellectual and practical independence, and due to the chaos, a kind of mental instability is seen in such families. It results in unrestrained children and makes them not feel responsible for life. Also, one of the characteristics of children raised in such families is their resilience and stubbornness towards adults. They have low self-esteem, become easily angry and happy. They are impulsive and aggressive and have difficulty coping with stress [19].

4. Neglectful parents: neglectful parenting is characterized by the low responsibility of parents. Parents have no control over their children, and warmth and intimacy are very low. Little attention is paid to the needs of the child and the distance between parents and children is high. However, little information is available about this parenting style compared to other styles, which is due to the lack of responsibility and attention to the child, leading to non-participation of these parents in the relevant studies [4].

With a little reflection, we find out that Ziegelman's view is not much different from Shifer's one, and the difference is more in words. Shifer's view has remained unchanged despite many years because authoritative parents of Ziegelman are the same warm and controlling parents of Shifer, authoritarian parents of Ziegelman are the same cold and controlling parents of Shifer, permissive parents of Ziegelman are the same warm and lenient parents of Shifer, and neglectful parents of Ziegelman are the same cold and lenient parents of Shifer. Therefore, parents should pay attention to the balance of autonomy and reducing control in raising children, especially in adolescence. Nurses should also acquire the necessary knowledge about the improper behaviors of adolescents and their underlying factors such as race, ethnicity, psychosocial status, and family structure [3] and fulfill their role of controlling and eliminating weaknesses and improving the strengths of education by identifying the strengths and weaknesses and parenting styles. Hence, the researchers decided to evaluate the parenting style of the parents of students of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences.

Materials and Methods

The present study was conducted quantitatively using the survey method. The statistical population of this study included fourth to sixth-grade students of an educational complex at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. The sample size was determined to be 320 people based on Cochran's formula and the samples were selected using the proportional sampling method. After visiting the desired school (girl and boy schools), the researcher tried to randomly select some fourth to sixth-grade students and complete the questionnaires.

Measurement tool

In the present study, a parenting style questionnaire, developed by Naghashian in 1979 based on Shifer work (1965), was used. This questionnaire includes 77 questions based on two dimensions of affection (coldness and warmth) and control (control versus freedom) was developed and the questions of each section were distributed to the students in two separate sessions. In this questionnaire, students select one of the five options of I strongly agree, agree, no idea, disagree, and I strongly agree according to their conditions. Finally, based on the obtained scores, one of the following four parenting styles is obtained.

High control – high affection: authoritative parenting style
Low control-high affection: permissive parenting style
High control - love affection: authoritarian parenting style
Low-control, low-affection: neglectful parenting style

Naghashian (1979) reported the reliability coefficient of this test at 87% using the split-half method and Yaghoub Khani [19] reported its reliability at 92% and 82% using Cronbach's alpha and split-half methods, respectively. Also, Tahmtan (1998) reported its Cronbach's alpha of 74% for the control-freedom dimension and 89% for coldness-warmth and 85% for the whole scale. In his initial study, Naghashain (1979) obtained test validity through content validity. Yaqub Khani used the main components analysis method through the Varimax rotation method to examine the validity of the questions and in general, the result showed that the analysis of the factors confirmed the validity of the questions [19].

Results and Discussion

The results from investigating the sample demographic characteristics are presented in **Table 1**. The number of female and male respondents (with a slight difference of 5%) was equal. The respondents are all studying in three grades of primary school: fourth grade: 29.5%, fifth grade 35.3%, and sixth grade: 35.3%. The majority of the respondents (63.5%) were the first child in the family. About one-third of respondents were the second child and the rest (6.1%) were the third, fourth, or fifth child of the family. The level of education of the parents was the minimum of diploma and the maximum of specialized Ph.D. In terms of the father's level of education, the minimum percentage (9.1%) belonged to a diploma and the maximum percentage (49.2%) belonged to a bachelor's degree. In terms of the mother's level of education, the minimum percentage (7.3%) belonged to a specialized Ph.D. and the highest percentage belonged to a bachelor's degree (59.6%).

Table 1. Percentage of demographic characteristics of the sample

demographic characteristics of the sample	%	demographic characteristics of the sample	%
gender		ffather's level of education	
female	52.6	diploma	9.1
male	47.4	bachelor	49.2
age		master	18.2
9 years	1.8	general PhD	6.7
10 years	24.3	specialized PhD	16.7
11 years	32.5	mother's level of education	
12 years	31.9	diploma	10.9
13 years	9.4	bachelor	59.6
education grade		master	16.1
fourth	29.5	general PhD	6.1
fifth	35.3	specialized PhD	7.3
sixth	35.3	sample number: 329	
birth rank			
first	63.5		
second	30.4		
third and more	6.1		

As stated before, the parents' parenting style is divided into four classes permissive, authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful. The results of this study also identified the parenting style in these 4 classes **(Table 2)**. The highest percentage belonged to the permissive parenting style (32.21%), followed by an authoritative parenting style (27.96%), authoritarian parenting style (20.97%), and neglectful parenting style (18.18%), respectively.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of parenting style

parenting style	f	%
authoritative	92	27.96
authoritarian	69	20.97
permissive	106	32.21
neglectful	62	18.84

Parenting style can be described in terms of gender, birth rank, and parental education. If we divide each parenting style into three levels of low, moderate, and high, we see that the highest percentages are at a moderate level. The parenting style of girls seems to be more authoritarian than permissive, as the permissive style is more in boys by about 5 percent and strictness is lower by about 7 percent compared to girls. Between the authoritative-neglectful parenting styles, the rate of neglectful parenting for boys is higher (15.2%) than that for girls (6.9%).

Table 3 indicates the parenting styles of neglectful- authoritarian and authoritative-permissive vary from the first to the second child, and from second child to the third, fourth, and fifth so that the parenting style of the first child and the third to fifth child seems to be more authoritarian and permissive, and the parenting style of the second child seems to be more neglectful and authoritative.

Table 3. Percentage of parenting style by gender and birth rank

permissive			authoritative			authoritarian			neglectful				
high	moderate	low	high	moderate	low	high	moderate	low	high	moderate	low		
15.2	69.7	15.2	13	67.4	19.6	10	77.5	12.5	20	77.1	2.9	boy	gender
6.9	75.9	17.2	11.4	77.3	11.4	17.2	62.1	20.7	15.5	69	15.5	girl	
13.5	70.3	16.2	12.7	76.4	10.9	14.3	69.4	16.3	19.7	71.2	9.1	first	
10.5	73.7	15.8	13.3	66.7	20	6.7	80	13.3	13.9	72.2	13.9	second	birth rank
0	83.3	16.7	0	60	40	20	60	20	0	75	25	third and more	

Describing the parenting style of students in terms of parental education **(Table 4)** indicates that the highest level of permissive parenting style is applied by parents who have a specialized Ph.D. level of education (33.3%). The highest authoritative style is applied by mothers with a professional Ph.D. level of education (28.6%), the highest authoritarian parenting style is applied by fathers with a professional Ph.D. level of education (25%) and the highest neglectful parenting style is applied by mothers with a specialized Ph.D. level of education (37.5%).

Table 4. Percentage of parenting style according to the parental level of education

		neglectful			authoritarian			authoritative			permissive		
		low	moderate	high	low	moderate	high	low	moderate	high	low	moderate	high
Father's education	diploma	0	100	0	0	100	0	37.5	50	12.5	16.7	83.3	0
	bachelor	11.3	67.9	20.8	20	60	20	18.2	68.2	13.6	10.3	86.2	3.4
	master	20	65	15	33.3	66.7	0	10.5	78.9	10.5	27.3	54.5	18.2
	professional PhD	20	80	0	0	75	25	0	83.3	16.7	14.3	71.4	14.3
	specialized PhD	5.3	73.7	21.1	7.1	85.7	7.1	7.7	84.6	7.7	22.2	44.4	33.3
mother's education	diploma	0	87.5	12.5	0	100	0	26.7	60	13.3	0	100	0
	bachelor	9.2	73.8	16.9	15	65	20	18.2	27.7	9.1	16.7	80.6	2.8
	master	18.2	68.2	13.6	33.3	66.7	0	0	90.9	9.1	18.2	54.5	27.3

professional PhD	33.3	66.7	0	40	60	0	0	71.4	28.6	0	75	25
specialized PhD	12.5	50	37.5	0	85.7	14.3	0	50	50	33.3	33.3	33.3

Parenting style is one of the most important social issues in today's world. Although the importance of the educational organization and the media in socializing children has increased, it is still the family that plays a key role in the socializing process, so understanding parents' parenting style can provide important information on the way of socializing and preparing children and adolescents to enter the community where they live. The present study was a descriptive study in which 329 fourth to sixth-grade students were selected by the cluster random sampling method and participated in the study to determine the parenting style of their parents. The results of the present study show that more than half of the respondents were the first child in the family. One of the reasons for this is that most of them were single children and only 6.1% of the respondents were the third, fourth, or fifth children of the family. These students were in the age range of 9 to 13 years old, and the increase in the number of single children born in the 1990s and 2000s confirms this issue. The level of education of parents of students in this school is relatively high, and about 23% of fathers and about 13% of mothers have a general and specialized Ph.D. level of education. The results show that neglectful, authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful parenting styles have the highest percentages, respectively. Most parents simply maintain order in the family instead of setting precise and regular rules at home, reducing children's responsibility, and increasing their emotional problems and aggression. If we divide parenting styles into two classes of neglectful-authoritarian and authoritative-permissive, the parenting style of girls is more authoritarian and authoritative. Previous studies have shown that the authoritative parenting style is associated with "I" strength and academic achievement is associated with neglectful and authoritative parenting style. However, it seems that there is more sensitivity in raising girls than boys.

Conclusion

The results also show that the highest level of neglectful and permissive is applied by mothers who have specialized Ph.D. studies, while the authoritative parenting style is more expected with the increase in the level of women's education. One of the limitations of this study was the age group of the research sample. Although it was not difficult to access this group, as respondents were in the 13-9 age group, their ability to complete the questionnaire was less than that of young and adult age groups, and it made researchers face difficulties in this regard. It is recommended that future studies investigate parenting styles in broader age groups from 3 to 12 years. It is also recommended that studies be conducted under the interpretive paradigm and with the help of in-depth interviews on parents and children to understand the parents' subjective meaning of parenting and gain a better understanding of the children's experience of this process. As one of the results of this study was that parental education at higher levels does not necessarily lead to better parenting, it is recommended measures be taken to educate parents on a serious and effective issue. These educations can be provided in different forms ranging from free education courses to university and public education courses.

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