

Investigating the relationship between perceived parenting styles and mental health of high school girls

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of present research was to explain the relationship between perceived parenting styles and mental health of high school girls. The method of present research was descriptive of correlation type. The statistical population of research included high school girl students in the 18th and 19th districts of Tehran in the academic year 2017-2018, and 229 people were selected as samples using multistage cluster sampling method and simple random sampling method. In order to collect data, three valid and reliable scales including Parenting Styles Questionnaire of Robinson, Mandelco, Alsen and Hart (2001), and Mental Health Questionnaire of Goldberg and Hiller (1979) were used. Data analysis was performed using Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis. The findings showed that there was a significant positive relationship between perceived authoritarian parenting style and mental health. One of the factors affecting mental health is family. The styles parents use to raise their children have an important role in their children's mental health. It seems that adolescents and young people in families with authoritarian parenting style are self-relying, calm and hopeful, and their personal identity is not harmed. Moreover, this style seems to be accompanied with greater attachment to the parents, especially in childhood, and a greater sense of satisfaction with life, and provides the context for feeling more valuable and self-esteem of the adolescents, and thus a more favorable mental health status.

Keywords: Perceived Parenting Styles, Mental Health, High School Girls.

Introduction

Family is the most important social institution in human societies and it has many effects on the development of personality and its development in children and the adaptation of an individual to the society. The influence of the family on

the comprehensive growth of the child begins from the moment of birth and is manifested by special power and learning and remains throughout the life. Researches showed that among various factors that influence the training and the healthy personality of children and adolescents, the interaction between the child and parents is considered as one of the most important and fundamental factors ^[1]. Parents through parenting and training methods prepare their children to deal with various situations in the community, and in fact shape the process of socializing their children. When the children reach the age of education and knowledge and enter school, parents specify criteria for themselves according to their level of expectations and guide their children in accordance with those criteria. According to Diana Baumrind's researches, high-expecting parents set excellent criteria for their children and expect them to fulfill their duties ^[2]. One of the most effective factors in human growth is family environments. Children in

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the family environment acquire the sense of affection, security, learning ability, and learn the necessary social skills through the quality of relationship between parents as well as playing with their brothers and sisters or other children. Satisfying emotional needs leads to mental health, compatibility and success, and conversely the lack of satisfaction, or incomplete satisfaction of these needs, leads to incompatibility and lack of success^[3]. The World Health Organization (1948) has defined mental health as a complete state of social, psychological and physical welfare, and not just the absence of illness and disability^[4]. Undoubtedly, mental health plays an important role in ensuring the dynamicity and efficiency of individuals in each community. For this reason, it is very important to investigate the influential factors of it. One of the factors affecting mental health is family. The styles parents use to train their children have an important role in the mental health of their children. It seems that adolescents and young people in authoritarian parenting style are self-relying, calm and hopeful and their personal identity is not harmed. This method also seems to be accompanied by greater attachment to the parents, especially in childhood, and a greater sense of satisfaction with life, and provides the context more for a sense of being valuable and self-esteem in adolescents, and as a result a more favorable mental health status. While the authoritative encounters with children, the undesirable emotional effects and low self-confidence can provide the context for the emergence of mental disorders and disturbances. In this regard, some scholars believe that the authoritarian parenting style unlike authoritative style is related to individuality and the sense of independence of the child in the family that has a major importance in promoting mental health and psychological well-being, while authoritative parenting style by violent, restrictive, and radical control encounters hurts the individuality and independence of children in the family^[2]. The research results of Jahan and Surrey (2016) showed that there is a positive significant relationship between maternal parenting styles' dimensions and children's mental health^[5]. There is a significant relationship between indulgent parenting style and anxiety and between authoritative parenting style and tension. Chu, Ney, Ran and Zanck (2017) found that parenting styles have relationship with social anxiety in adolescents. Adolescents behaved with warmth and affection by their parents, experience less social anxiety. Also, Ala'i (2013) showed that the authoritative parenting style has a positive relationship with psychological disorders^[6]. It was specified in the research of Takoing, Chan and Ainttaco (2011) that parenting style is related to family structure and not social class, and there is a strong relationship between parenting style and a wide range of psychological conditions including: psychological well-being, self-esteem, mental health and risk taking behaviors, school outcomes, and acceptance. Problems in the field of mental health are one of the cases that nowadays affect people's life in various social, economic and other domains. The mental health problems in early ages can affect cognitive, behavioral and social functions as well as in adulthood can affect their occupational and marital functions.

Therefore, awareness of parenting styles and their effects on children's behaviors and cognitions can prevent the emergence of many psychological and behavioral problems that disrupt healthy life and waste psychological energy for positive interaction with others and their dynamism and self-actualization. Therefore, the purpose of present research was to investigate the relationship between perceived parenting styles and mental health of high school girls.

Methodology

In the present research, the descriptive method of correlation type was used to investigate the relationship between perceived parenting styles and mental health. Multi-stage cluster sampling method and simple random sampling method have been used for sampling. At first by clustering method from eleven high school girls in the 18th and 19th districts of Tehran, four schools were selected, and three classes were chosen from each school. Then, 20 people were selected from each class using simple random sampling method. Finally, the questionnaires were distributed among the students and 229 people completed the questionnaire completely, and the remainders were excluded from the research process due to being distorted. The measurement tool of present research included the questionnaire of parenting styles and dimensions developed by Robinson, Mandelco, Alsen and Hart (2001). This questionnaire is a 32-question scale that is scored by a five-grade Likert's spectrum. The questions of this questionnaire have been compiled to measure three authoritarian, authoritative and indulgent styles based on Baumrind's theory (1991). In addition to the three parenting styles, this questionnaire has 7 communication dimensions. The mental health questionnaire was also presented by Goldberg and Hiller (1979). This questionnaire has 28 questions and it has 4 subscales and each subscale has 7 questions and the mentioned subscales are: somatic symptoms scale, anxiety and sleep disorder symptoms scale, social function scale, and depression symptoms scale. To analyze the data, the descriptive level including center oriented measures (mean) and scattered from center measures (standard deviation) were used and at the inferential level to determine the correlation ratio between research variables, Pearson correlation coefficient and multivariate regression analysis and SPSS, version 24, software were utilized.

Results

Linear Relationship between Parenting Styles and Mental Health of Students

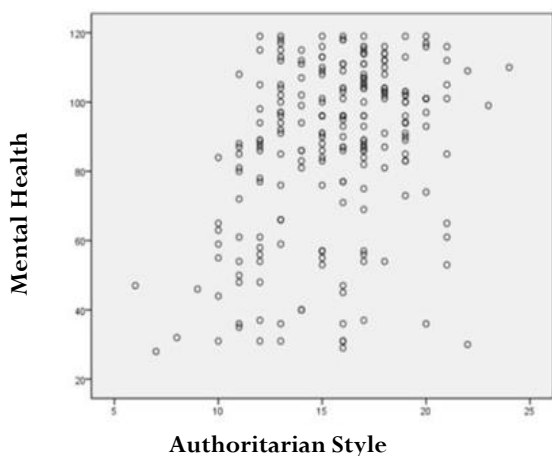


Figure 1: Point Diagram of the Relationship between Authoritarian Style and Mental Health

Having observed the point diagram in figure 1, the density of the points was around a cylinder, therefore the relationship between the authoritarian style and mental health of students was a linear relationship.

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients of Perceived Parenting Styles with Mental Health, Academic Performance and High-Risk Behaviors

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----------------------------|---------|----------|----------|---------|---------|
| Mental Health | 0.456** | | | | |
| Authoritarian Style | 0.325** | 0.373** | -0.391** | - | |
| Authoritative Style | 0.212** | -0.308** | 0.136** | 0.204** | - |
| Indulgent style | -0.364 | -0.189* | 0.205* | 0.120** | 0.131** |

*: P < 0.05 **: P < 0.01

Based on the results obtained from the Pearson correlation test in table 1, it is observed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the authoritarian style and mental health ($R = 0.373$, $P < 0.001$). This finding confirmed the first hypothesis of the research indicating that "there is a positive relationship between the authoritarian style and mental health".

Table 2: Summary of Mental Health Regression Based on the Dimensions of Perceived Parenting Styles

| Model | Total Squares | df | Mean Squares | F | P |
|------------|---------------|-----|--------------|--------|-------|
| Remaining | 589.18 | 1 | 589.18 | 13.848 | 0.001 |
| Regression | 8344.1 | 228 | 37.34 | | |
| | 9234.29 | 229 | | | |

The results of multiple regression analysis indicated that F value was significant ($F = 13.848$ and $P < 0.001$) (table 2). In the sense that this equation was statistically correct and the correlation of variables was linear.

Table 3: Model Summary (Mental Health)

| Variable | R | R ² | SE | F | Sig. |
|-----------------------|-------|----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Model (Mental Health) | 0.395 | 0.156 | 22.710 | 13.848 | 0.001* |

P < 0.001

The results of multiple regression analysis ($F = 13.848$ and $P < 0.001$) confirmed the significance of the model (table 3). Accordingly, parenting styles predicted the significance in explaining the variance of their mental health. Based on the obtained determination coefficient (R^2), parenting styles explained 16% of the students' mental health variance. The role of each one of the parenting styles in explaining students' mental health has been investigated in table 4.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients for Predicting Mental Health of Students with Parenting Styles

| Model | B | SEB | β | t | Sig. |
|---------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|-------|
| Fixed value | 74.734 | 13.640 | | 5.479** | |
| Authoritarian style | 2.359 | 0.523 | 0.301 | 4.513** | 0.083 |
| Indulgent style | -0.548 | 0.486 | -0.074 | -1.127 | 0.005 |
| Authoritative style | -1.195 | 0.482 | -0.155 | -2.480* | 0.027 |

** : P < 0.001 * : P < 0.05

The results of multiple regression analysis test in table 4 showed that the authoritarian style ($t = 4.513$ and $P < 0.001$) positively had a significant single contribution in explaining the mental health of students. In addition, the authoritative style ($t = -2.480$, $P < 0.05$) also negatively had a significant single contribution in explaining the mental health of students, but the indulgent style ($t = -1.127$; $P = 0.001$) did not have a significant single contribution in the mental health of students. In addition, the results of multiple regression analysis (table 4) showed that the authoritarian style ($R^2 = 0.083$) alone explained 8% of students' mental health variance positively, and authoritative style ($R^2 = 0.027$) alone explained 3% of students' mental health variance negatively.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this research were consistent with the researches' results of Chu et al. (2017), Jahan and Surrey (2016), Takoigi et al. (2011), Timco and Harris (2006). One of the factors affecting mental health is family. The styles parents use to train their children have an important role in the mental health of their children. It seems that adolescents and young people in families with authoritarian parenting style are self-relying, calm and hopeful, and their personal identity is not harmed. This style also seems to be accompanied with greater attachment to the parents, especially in childhood, and a sense of greater satisfaction with life, and provides the context for feeling more valuable and self-esteem of the adolescents, and thus a more favorable mental health status. While the authoritarian encounters with children, by undesirable emotional effects and low self-confidence, can provide the context for the emergence of mental disorders and disturbances. In this regard, some scholars believe that the authoritarian parenting style unlike authoritative style is related to individuality and the sense of independence of the child in the family that has a major importance in promoting mental health and psychological well-being, while

authoritarian parenting style by violent, restrictive, and radical control encounters harms the individuality and independence of children in the family. Parenting style has been well known today as a predictor of child's health in the field of social ability, academic performance, psychological growth and difficult behaviors [7]. In the researches of Takoing, Chan and Ainttaco (2011) it was specified that parenting style is related to family structure and not social class, and there is a strong relationship between parenting style and a wide range of psychological status including: psychological well-being, self-esteem, mental health and risk taking behaviors, school outcomes, and acceptance. Performed researches have indicated that the acceptance of the child by the parents and their accountability and rationality predicts the social adequacy and mental health of the child in the future, and the lack of accountability of the parents towards the child has negative consequences in his/her future growth and leads to withdrawal, aggression and lack of attention in the child. Conducted researches on students indicated that the proper style of parents' behavior on an individual's psychological resources continues until adulthood and self-esteem and personal control beliefs are definitely accompanied with the desired mental, physical and social health, and include subjective mental well-being and mental health and avoiding health-threatening behaviors and improving illness and lifetime. Authoritarian and rational parents, in addition to controlling children and setting provisions for them, discuss and talk with their children, they clearly express their affection to the children and have clear criteria for recognizing the right behaviors. These people share the power reasonably and equitably, allow the children to speak and comment, which causes the children's mental health and self-actualization, and these individuals suffer less mental and personality disorders [8]. The research results of Jahan and Surrey (2016) showed that there is a positive significant relationship between maternal parenting styles dimensions and the children's mental health. There is a significant relationship between indulgent parenting style and anxiety and between authoritative parenting style and tension. Parents' authoritarian parenting style make the child equipped with realistic understanding of him/herself and the world around him/her, reconciling individual beliefs and feelings, controlling feelings and behaviors, purposefulness in life and meaningful effort towards determined goals, communicating effectively with others, positive attitude towards him/herself and others. Children who are raised in this type of families deal less with a variety of emotional problems, such as depression, helplessness, and committing suicide. In general, the research results showed that authoritarian and decisive parents have high-skilled children in

expressing existence, self confidence, and instead of disappointment and despair, use helpful solutions [8]. In contrast authoritative parents decide for their children and expect the children accept their judgments, values and goals without any question. This causes mental tension and stress in the child and, if continued, it may lead to the reduction of mental health [9].

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