

The Role of Parents' Rearing Behaviors and Parenting Styles in Student's Shyness

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Received: May 5, 2014; Revised: July 21, 2014; Accepted: August 4, 2014

Background: Family is one of the main factors forming children's personality.

Objectives: The present study examines the role of different parenting styles in the manifestation of children's shyness based on Seifer's (1965) pattern (including authoritarian, authoritative, easy parenting, and insensitive parenting styles).

Patients and Methods: Sample of the study consisted of 205 children (105 boys and 100 girls). They were randomly selected from the first grade high school students of Shahrood Province that completed Seifer's parenting style questionnaire and Cheek and Buss shyness scale. The data were analyzed by t-test and SPSS 21 software and ANOVA were used at the significant level of $P < 0.05$.

Results: Results demonstrated that there is a significant difference in shyness construct among children regarding various parenting styles. Amongst these styles, firstly authoritarian style and then insensitive style had maximum effect on children's shyness ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusions: Parenting styles and family atmosphere have important effect on children shyness at school. But educational styles can also affect students and peer group must not be ignored. Finally, we recommended parents to care about their behavior with their child as much as impossible. We recommended parents to pay attention about their behavior with their children more carefully.

Keywords: shyness; Parenting Style; Authoritarian; Authoritative; Easy Parenting and Insensitive Parenting

1. Background

Dimensions of children's temperament, like shyness and negative emotionality, have been regarded as the early markers of childhood internalizing problems (1, 2). Parenting has also been found to play a salient role, particularly in early childhood (3). Parent-reported shyness has been found to be moderately stable in early childhood (4), although it is also a flexible variable, because shyness has been related to problems with friends and with adjustment problems such as internalizing (5). Moreover individuals lack social skills (6). In numerous studies, it was shown that there is a relationship between parenting styles and children and adolescents disorders including shyness. In a study by Van Zalk and Kerr (7), they have noted how parenting styles influence the development of shyness in children. Different forms of socially fearful behaviors, such as shyness, behavioral inhibition, social anxiety, social withdrawal, and reticence are associated in young children with different forms of parental psychological control. Families have different parenting patterns. This difference has an impact on family structure and children's mental health. The quality of parents-children relationship affects sense of worth and social competence during childhood (8). Parenting styles have significant effect on psychological aspects such as social adaptability, sense of worth, confidence, and behavioral problems (9). Various patterns of parenting styles are presented. Seifer

et al. (10) pattern that developed by Naghashian was used in this study. It is the evolved pattern of Diana Bamrind parenting model. In this pattern, four parenting styles are gained. Each has its own specific features:

Authoritative parents have close and compatible relationships with their child. At the same time, they also limit the child. They apply logic and reasoning to bend the child (11). These parents respond to their children's needs to a rational degree and appreciate their positive deeds (12). They barely resort to punishment when children make mistakes (13). This style helps children to adapt to social norms in a more effective way (11). Authoritarian parents have cold narrow relationship with children. Yet, limited independence and obligatory control are also seen in these families. These parents are disciplinarian. They make decisions about everything. They demand a lot but they are not responsive to children (11). In these families, children learn to rely on parents in decision making rather than using their decision making skills (14). These parents ignore children and use harsh punishment and constraints (13). Easy parents are responsive, child-centered, and kind. They have trivial control on their children. These parents are nice and open. They do not expect so much. Most of the times, they bend to their child's will. They barely make friend with their children (9). In these families, children's negative behavior is not

responded harshly (15). Insensitive parents have cold relationship with children. They barely control their children and generally treat them in an insensitive way. These individuals do not allocate adequate time and energy to their children. They are generally separated from their children's life (16). Insensitive families rarely communicate with their children. They have faintest interaction with children and partially leave them on their own (14). Several studies have emphasized the relationship between parenting styles and parents' behavioral methods with children's shyness. Huang (17) studied the effect of family's patterns on personality features including shyness. Results showed that communication aspect has positive effects on children. Results from Kelly et al. (12) regarding reticence showed that children are more shy and reticent in families with weaker communication. They are reluctant to talk in family and (or) when other people are around. Based on Weeks and peer (18) research, parents who are less intimate and open to their children nurture shy and anxious children. Results from Fitzpatrick and Ritchie (19) showed that although shyness-as a genetic factor-may affect children's sociability, its emergence and manifestation can be modified by family atmosphere. Eastburg and Johnson (20) results indicate that authoritarian behavior leads children to become irritable, shy, and reticent. Schlette et al. (21) and Seifer et al. (10) also showed positive relationship between parents' denial of children and children's timidity. Similarly, Coplan et al. (5) indicated that authoritative parenting has negative significant relationship with children's shyness. Previous (22) results approve that children's shyness will lead to anxiety disorders in adolescence.

2. Objectives

Regarding the past studies literature review and the importance of family role as well as rearing and parenting styles, this study examines the relationship between parenting styles and shyness and the role of different parenting styles in children's timidity. Following hypotheses are posed: 1) There is a difference in the extent of children's shyness based on various parenting styles. 2) There is a correlation between different parenting features and family atmosphere. 3) Children's shyness is predictable with respect to various parenting dimensions (distance and warmth as well as kindness and control).

3. Patients and Methods

The study sample consisted of first grade high school students of Shahrood Province. Random clustering was applied to select 105 boys and 100 girls. That is, first, two boy and girl high schools were selected. And then, four classes from each high school were randomly selected. Afterward, each class students were asked to respond to questionnaires accurately. Researcher ensured participants that the information would merely be used for the research and that they did not need to mention their

specifications. Here, descriptive-inferential statistics methods were used. In descriptive part, maximum and minimum, mean, standard deviation, frequency table, and diagram were applied. In inferential part, Pearson correlation coefficient, t-test of independent groups, and Tukey's test were used. Data analysis was carried out by means of SPSS presented in the next chapter. It must be noted that levels of significance $\alpha = 0.1\%$ and $\alpha = 0.5\%$ were considered for hypotheses testing.

3.1. Research Instrument

3.1.1. Seifer Parenting Styles Questionnaire

Unlike certain nurturing behaviors, parenting styles do not follow cultural patterns. Namely, these styles are the same in different cultural patterns and various societies (23). In Iran, parenting styles comply with the same global patterns. In 1979, Naghashian developed this questionnaire based on Seifer's works. The questionnaire consisted of 77 closed questions scored based on Likert scale including five aspects of parents' familial relationships such as freedom-control and warmth-distance. Naghashian reported the reliability and validity coefficients of questionnaire as 87%. In a study by Yaghoukhani Ghiasvand (24), the questionnaire reliability coefficient was calculated through alpha and retest. It was obtained as 63% and 74% as well as 82% and 93% for freedom-control and warmth-distance aspects of relationships, respectively. Total reliability coefficient was gained as 92% and 80% by alpha and retest, respectively. In a study on students, Sadeghi (25) reported reliability coefficient as 78% for freedom-control aspect and 90% for warmth-distance aspect using Kronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was reported by Sadeghi (25) as 78%, 94% and 88% for freedom-control, warmth-distance, and total questionnaire, respectively. Naghashian determined the questionnaire validity by using content validity. To determine four family atmospheres, first, the mean of each aspect of kindness and control was separately calculated. And then, four atmospheres were gained as follows:

- 1) Excessive control-excessive kindness (authoritative parenting style)
- 2) Limited control-limited kindness (easy parenting style)
- 3) Excessive control-limited kindness (authoritarian parenting style)
- 4) Limited control-limited kindness (insensitive parenting style)

Similarly, Buri (26) used retest method to examine the questionnaire reliability. He reported the reliability respectively as 0.81 for easy style, 0.86 for authoritarian style, 0.78 for authoritative style among mothers as well as 0.77 for easy style, 0.85 for authoritarian style, and 0.88 for authoritative style among fathers. Using diagnostic validity, he also showed that mother's authoritarian style had negative relationship with easy style (0.38) and

Table 1. Difference Between Students' Shyness Mean Score and Tukey's Test Results ^{a, b}

| Variable | Tukey's Test Results | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------|---------|-------------|------|---------------|---------------|
| | Number | Results | F | P Value | Insensitive | Easy | Authoritative | Authoritarian |
| Insensitive | 50 | 60.11 ± 13.01 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Easy | 57 | 54.2 ± 12.49 | 89.02 | 0.001 | 29.2 | - | - | - |
| Authoritative | 49 | 57.3 ± 12.25 | - | - | 3.09 | 5.09 | - | - |
| Authoritarian | 54 | 66.21 ± 12.63 | - | - | 4.55 | 2.68 | 6.06 | - |

^a Data are presented as Mean ± SD.^b $P < 0.05$.**Table 2.** Regression Analysis Results for Predicting Students' Shyness

| Predictors | R | R ² | Regression Coefficients |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------------------------------------|
| Shyness | | | |
| Kindness | 0.380 | 0.14 | $B = -0.17; \beta = -0.32; P < 0.001$ |
| Control | 0.360 | 0.12 | $B = 0.12; \beta = -0.16; P < 0.03$ |
| Distance | 0.400 | 0.16 | $B = 0.40; \beta = 0.04; P < 0.001$ |
| Warmth | 0.420 | 0.17 | $B = -0.003; \beta = -0.03; P < 0.001$ |

authoritative style (0.48). Again, father's authoritarian style had negative relationship with easy style (0.50). Using retest method with one week interval, Esfandiyari (27) also reported test reliability for a sample of mothers ($n = 12$) respectively as 0.69 for easy style, 0.77 for authoritarian style, and 0.73 for authoritative style.

3.1.2. Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale

This 20-statement scale was applied in this study. This questionnaire is measured based on 5 degrees of Likert scale (from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree). Each participant is scored between 20 and 100. Questions 16, 13, 10, 7, 4, and 19 are reversely scored (28). Kronbach's alpha was respectively reported as 0.94 and 0.92 by Cheek & Buss (29) and Cheek and Krasnoperova (30). In Iran, again, Hossein Chari et al. (31) reported the scale validity as 0.87 using factor analysis.

4. Results

H1-the difference between children's shyness based on various parenting styles -was tested by means of the analysis of variance and Tukey's test. Results are shown in Table 1.

Based on Table 1, students' shyness extent is significantly different (89.02) regarding various parenting styles. That is, there is a significant difference between the extent of shyness in the students with authoritarian style and authoritative style or easy and (or) insensitive styles. Results also indicated that authoritarian style more significantly leads to students' shyness. Hence, H1 is approved. To test H2, first, the relationship between shyness and different aspects of parenting styles and family atmosphere was gained using Pearson's correlation coefficient: there was

a correlation between shyness and control ($r = 0.19, P \leq 0.001$), shyness and kindness ($r = 0.32, P \leq 0.01$), shyness and warmth ($r = -0.21, P \leq 0.05$), and shyness and distance ($r = 0.31, P \leq 0.03$). Based on results, there is a significant correlation between different aspects of parenting and family atmosphere and shyness. Regarding warmth, the correlation is negative and significant. Then, H2 is approved. Based on the results of correlation between variables, H3 was tested with respect to parenting style and family atmosphere aspects by regression analysis.

Table 2 shows that kindness; control, distance, and warmth aspects can predict shyness. Yet, kindness and warmth both are negative predictors of shyness. However, prediction is more significant in kindness aspect. Hence, it can be said that students' shyness can be predicted as -0.32 through parents' kindness, 0.16 through control, and 0.40 through distance. Based on the results, H3 is approved.

5. Discussion

In general, it can be concluded from the results that parenting styles can considerably affect children's shyness. Results approved research hypotheses. They showed that different aspects of parenting have a significant relationship with shyness (32). These aspects can predict shyness in children. Based on the results, in families with various parenting styles, children are nurtured with different shyness degrees. Children's shyness is based on their communication with parents, the ability to comment, and participation in various decision makings. First, authoritarian style and then insensitive style had maximum effect on children's shyness. That is, families with weak relationship with children have more timid and shy children. These results correspond with the results of studies by Huang (17) and Spokas (33). Based on Huang, children with weak relationship and little communication in families are timid and shy. As also reported by Spokas (33), parents who have less intimate relationship with their children and ignore their children's opinion have anxious, shy and timid children. Similarly, Koerner and Maki (14) mentioned that in families where children cannot comment and have verbal and nonverbal communication with their parents, they will be timid which shows their shyness. Results of the present study also approve research by Jantzer et al. (34), Ballantine

(9), Baumrind (15), and Hossein Chari et al. (31). As seen in Table 1, insensitive style has significant effect on children's shyness, after authoritarian style. It is consistent with results reported by Klonsky et al. (35) and Eggum et al. (36). Children of such parents are ignored. They feel being rejected. Hence they have low confidence and feel lonely (37, 38). Finally, they become a shy individual. Based on results, mean scores were low for authoritative and easy styles. It corresponds with results reported by Coplan et al. (5) and Chen et al. (39), and Patock-Peckham and Morgan-Lopez (40). However, low scores in easy style are not resulted from children's behavioral health and normality. It cannot be a reason for the acceptability of the method. Since, based on Casas et al. (41) and Ballantine (9), easy style brings about the manifestation of aggressive and violent behaviors in children. Yet, regarding the positive effects of authoritative style, this style can be considered as partially suitable. Results also showed that control aspect is the positive significant predictor of children's shyness. This is consistent with results of the studies by Rosenbaum et al. (42) and Mills and Rubin (43). Regarding kindness, it can be said that this aspect is the negative significant predictor of children's shyness. Idea of Sharma and Sandhu (44), Estburg and Johnson (20), and Seifer et al. (10) is consistent with this result. Yet, kindness as the most reliable emotional and social source can lead to high social competence and ability in children (31). Results of the present study showed that warmth and distance aspects can also be positive significant predictor of shyness in children. Nevertheless, warmth and distance can respectively predict shyness in negative significant and positive significant ways. It corresponds with the results reported by Arrindell et al. (45) and Bell et al. (46, 47) regarding the relationship between warm atmosphere in family and children's shyness. In research by Burton et al. (47), Darling and Steinberg (23), and McBride and Chang (48) it is indicated that distance aspect is the significant predictor of children's shyness. There is a relationship between adverse atmosphere and cold familial communication and depression, anxiety, and social relationships (49). Apparently, due to their sensitivity to their environment, adolescents more seriously react to negative behaviors such as cold and tough relationships in family and authoritarian behavior with parents' demand. This can result in irritation, lack of confidence, and shyness (31). Applying improper nurturing methods has undesirable effect on behavioral problems, social relationships, and even education (50). Although parenting styles and family atmosphere have significant effect on children and adolescents' shyness, schools educational styles can also affect students. Again, peer group must not be ignored. It is suggested that the role of these factors in the manifestation of shyness should be also explored in future studies.

Authors' Contributions

Tahere Rezaei; for study concept and design, acquisi-

tion of data, analysis and interpretation of data, drafting of the manuscript, critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content, study supervision and Hossain Fakoori Hajiya; statistical analysis, administrative, technical, and material support.

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