

# Relationship between Parenting Style and Academic Achievement among Iranian Adolescents in Sirjan

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## Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to determine the relationship between parenting styles and academic achievement among adolescents in Iran. The respondents were 382 high school adolescents (251 female and 131 male) in the age range of 15 to 18 years old from selected high schools in Iran. The instrument used to measure parenting style was the parenting style scale by Baumrind (1991). The result of the study indicated that authoritative parenting style has positive significant correlation with academic achievement, while permissive parenting style has negative correlation with academic achievement. The result of the study also showed that there is no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and academic achievement. The results of the present study implied that academic achievement among adolescents can be enhanced through positive parenting style. Thus, it is recommended that parents be equipped with knowledge and skills appropriate to the needs and development of their adolescents children.

**Keywords:** Parenting style, Academic achievement, Adolescence

## 1. Introduction

The education system is very important for all country, and Iran is not exception; strong and effective education can help boost the development of the country. Researchers (Mehrafruz, 2004; Sabouri, 2008) have indicated a problem of low academic achievement among the students in Iran. According to Mozaffari (2001), about 27% of high school students in Iran have low academic achievement. Low academic achievement may create many negative consequences for students. Students with low academic achievement may be more vulnerable to

problems such as stress, hopelessness, delinquency, psychopathology, and substance abuse (Assarian, Biqam & Asqarnejad, 2006). Therefore, it is essential to investigate factors that may influence academic achievement amongst school going adolescents in Iran. The findings will be an input to agencies and professionals that provide programs or services to promote adolescents/high school students' development, specifically in the academic aspect.

Various factors have been examined in relation to students' academic achievements. These factors ranged from family socioeconomic status, family structure, family functioning, peer association, to school and educational environment (Olige, 2008). Past studies (examples: Chao, 2001; Querido et al., 2002) have shown that parents, through their parenting styles built critical foundations for various aspects of children's development and achievement. Jacobs and Harvey (2005) indicated that parenting style is one of the significant contributors to student's academic achievement in school. Spera (2005) asserted that parenting styles emphasizes on the response parents provide to their children and the method which parents used to demand compliance from their children. Baumrind (2005) categorized types of parenting style based on two dimensions which are responsiveness and demandingness. According to Baumrind, responsiveness refers to the degree that parents promote self-assertion and individuality by showing care and acceptance to children's desires. Care and acceptance includes kindness, support for independence, and logical contact. Demandingness refers to demands that parents make on children to be included into society (Baumrind, 2005). The demands are imposed through monitoring and controlling of children's behaviors, as well as communicating the demands directly to the children.

The combination of the levels of responsiveness and demandingness creates three types of parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative and permissive (Baumrind, 2005). Authoritarian parents are highly demanding and unresponsive, and tend to emphasize obedience and respect for authority. Permissive parents have low levels of demandingness and high levels of responsiveness, and moderately imbalance in leniency. In contrast, authoritative parents show a sense of balance between high levels of demandingness and high levels of responsiveness. Parents who are authoritative will communicate with their children, monitor their children's behaviors, and express warmth and support their children's needs and challenges.

Past studies showed that authoritarian parenting is related low academic achievement (Attaway & Bry, 2004) and higher levels of school problem (Roche, Ensminger, & Cherlin, 2007). Permissive parenting was also found to significantly correlate with academic achievement (Lee, 2006; Roche, Ensminger, & Cherlin, 2007). This means that parents with too high or too low demandingness and responsiveness have children with low academic achievement. Past studies have established a positive correlation between authoritative parenting style and academic achievement (Slaten, 2006; Roche et al., 2007; Simons & Conger, 2007; Pong, Johnston & Chen, 2009). Students with better academic achievement have parents who are more authoritative.

## 2. Objective

The aim of present study is to determine the relationship between three types of parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive) and academic achievement among adolescents in Sirjan, Iran.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Design, sample and procedure

The present study is cross-sectional in nature. The sample consists of 382 high school students aged between 15 and 18 years old from twelve high schools in Sirjan-Iran. Respondents were selected by using stratified random sampling technique. The data for the present study were collected using a self-administered questionnaire.

### 3.2 Measure

Parenting style. The Parenting Style Scale developed by Baumrind (1991) consisted of 30 items was used to assess parenting styles. This scale has three dimensions that are authoritative parenting style (10 items), authoritarian parenting styles (10 items), and permissive parenting style (10 items). Adolescents rated their parent on the items using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale scores are from 10 to 50 for each dimension with high score indicating a high level of parenting style in each dimension. The Cronbach alpha values for the parenting style subscales in the present study are as follows: authoritative (.82), authoritarian (.82), and permissive (.70). Examples of items in the scale are "as I was growing up, once family policy had been established", "my mother/father discussed the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family", "whenever my mother/ father told me to do something as I was growing up, she/he expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions" and "as I was growing up my mother/father did

not feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority had established them”.

*Academic achievement.* Academic achievement score was assessed by computing the student's average grade points for one year. For each course work, the academic point is 0 to 20. The grade points are categorized into four levels: Grade D= 0-9.99 (failed), grade C = 10-14.99 (weak), grade B = 15-16.99 (moderate), and grade A = 17-20 (excellent).

#### 4. Result

Descriptive statistics was employed to describe the variables of the study. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the association between parenting style and academic achievement.

##### 4.1 Descriptive findings

The age of the high school students in the present study was 15 to 18 years old (mean=15.80, standard deviation=1.44). Majority of them (66.75%) were 15 to 16 years old and 33.25% of them were 17 to 18 years old. More than half of the respondents (65.6%) were female and 34.4% of them were male. The means and standard deviations for authoritative style, authoritarian style, permissive style, and academic achievement are presented in Table 1. The mean score for authoritative style was 38.9, for authoritarian style was 28.37, and for permissive style was 29.92. The mean score for academic achievement was 17.28. Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents by categories of parenting style and academic achievement. Majority of the respondents (75.4%) had parent with authoritative style. Based on the total score, more than 50% of the respondents reported to have excellent academic achievement.

##### 4.2 Correlations between variables

Table 3 displays the correlation matrix for variables in the present study. The findings of Pearson Correlation analyses indicated a significant correlation between authoritative parenting style ( $r=.24$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and permissive parenting style ( $r= -.16$ ,  $p<.01$ ) with academic achievement. However, there was no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style ( $r=-.037$ ,  $p>.05$ ) and academic achievement.

#### 5. Discussion and conclusion

The results of Pearson correlation analysis showed that authoritative style had a positive and significant influence on academic achievement among adolescents. Adolescents who had parent with authoritative style were more successful in school. The results are consistent with Park and Bauer (2002), Attaway and Bry (2004), Gonzalez-DeHass et al., (2005), Slaten (2006), Roche et al. (2007), Simons and Conger (2007) and Ling Pong et al. (2009) which found that authoritative parenting style promote school achievement. Durkin (1995) highlighted three reasons for the association between authoritative parenting and high school achievement. First, he recommended that parents with authoritative style give emotional security to their children with a sense of calm and autonomy, and also, they assist their children to be successful in school activities. Second, he cited that parents with authoritative style explain the consequences of their children's actions. Explanations give children a sense of knowledge and understanding of their parents' principles, desires, and goals that are associated to school context. Thirdly, he suggested that authoritative parents involve in reciprocal contact with their children. Authoritative parents support their children, encourage them to do well academically, and explain the need for education in order to become a successful adult. Thus, children growing up in the authoritative environment have better overall well-being and higher performance in school related activities (Baumrind, 1991).

The finding also indicated that there was a significant negative relationship between permissive parenting styles and academic achievement indicating that adolescents who had parent with permissive style had lower academic achievement in school compared to other adolescents. This result is in line with the previous finding by Roche et al. (2007) who showed that levels of permissive parenting was significantly related with academic strain. Parents with permissive style allow their children to have free control of their behaviors and actions. Parents are more passive and give little input in many important decisions made by adolescents. Therefore, it is likely that adolescents from highly permissive environment do not have clear rules and expectations for high achievement, which consequently may lead to low achievement motivation and poor academic performance among adolescents. In contrast, there was no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting style and school achievement. The present finding is similar to the findings by Kim and Rohner (2002), Park and Bauer (2002), and Olige (2008). Authoritarian parents tend to practice rigid and high level of monitoring. Rigid monitoring may demotivate adolescent and children to succeed (Cooper et al., 2000). However, these characteristics do not have any relation to academic achievement amongst high school adolescents in the present study.

In conclusion, the findings of the present study implied that parents play a significant role in determining the level of academic achievement among adolescents. Thus, it is essential that parents are equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills so that they can provide better guidance for their adolescents' positive development, especially in academic achievement.

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Table 1. Mean and standard deviation for main variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Authoritative style	38.09	6.46	11	48
Authoritarian style	28.37	6.46	12	46
Permissive style	29.92	6.35	13	49
Academic achievement	17.28	2.32	11	20

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by categories of parenting style and academic achievement

Variables	N	%
Parenting style		
<i>Authoritative style</i>	288	75.4
<i>Authoritarian style</i>	52	13.6
<i>Permissive style</i>	42	11
Academic achievement		
<i>Excellent</i>	297	77.7
<i>Medium</i>	34	8.9
<i>Weak</i>	51	13.4
<i>Fail</i>	0	0

Table 3. Correlation matrix for all the variables

Variables	2	3	4
1 Academic achievement	-	.244**	-.037
2 Authoritative style		-	-.254**
3 Authoritarian style			-
4 Permissive style			