



## Original Article

### The relationship between parenting styles with the aggression of their children in Sanandaj primary school students



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#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Aggression is a conscious behavior which its purpose is to exert physical and psychological suffering. In order to reduce this social disorder, we should search the causes in the family as the first and most effective child behavioral pattern. Regarding the relationship between aggression and children's health, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and the aggression of their children among elementary students in Sanandaj city in 2016.

**Methods:** In this cross-sectional study, the study population included 337 elementary students residing in Sanandaj. Samples were selected through multistage cluster sampling. Eysenck and Glyn Wilson aggression questionnaire was used for students and Baumrind Parenting Style Questionnaire was used for parents. The data were analyzed by SPSS-18 software. Chi-Square, ANOVA and T-test were used for data analysis.

**Results:** 39.2% of 337 students were boys and 60.8% of 337 students were girls, 66.2% of students had low-level aggression, 32.9% had moderate-level aggression and 0.9% had high-level aggression. The mean rate of permissiveness parenting style is  $15.52 \pm 4.77$ , autocratic parenting style is  $15.8 \pm 6.56$  and rational authority parenting style is 31.92 with a standard deviation of 4.14. There was a significant and inverse relationship between aggression and the rational authority parenting style ( $P < 0.05$ ), so that children in a family with rational authority parenting style have less aggression than the other children.

**Conclusion:** Considering the role of families in shaping the behavior of children, increasing the level of awareness of parents about the parenting styles and their effects on children is necessary to reduce children's behavioral problems in the future.

## Introduction

Aggression refers to any visible behavior that is intended to harm others (1). By definition, aggression is distinct from dare; dare refers to the defense of rights or belongings (such as when a child

doesn't allow anyone to touch his toys) or expressing desires and wishes, so the person who defends his own rights shouldn't be called aggressive (2). While aggression is a desirable behavior in the normal course of the child's growth, it can be shattered excitement if it is not controlled correctly. Excessive

aggression indicates that the child has failed to learn how to behave in the face of stimuli that provoke his anger (3). Hostility and aggression are one of the main reasons for adolescents and young people to go to the consulting and psychotherapy centers (4). The lack of inhibition of aggression causes various types of physical and psychological problems such as stomach ulcers, headache and depression, special crime and infringing the rights of others (5) in addition to causing interpersonal problems and crime (1); also in Severe cases, it can hurt personal growth, reduce learning opportunities and adaptive behavior, and ultimately affect the quality of personal life (6). The role and extent of the secretion of hormones is effective in aggressive behaviors (7), like the inadequate interactions between serotonin and dopamine systems in the forehead cortex, which cause the link between impulsive aggression and its subsequent disturbances (4). Also, the role of mass media such as television (8) and computer games (9) in the train of aggression cannot be ignored. Studies have shown that aggression has a completely imitative aspect. In this experiment, children set adults behavior as an example, and the observation of another aggressive behavior encouraged them to have new aggressive behaviors (10). Experts believe that aggression in children may be either due to fundamental failures, or because of the existence of aggressive models (11). Therefore, the root of the human aggression should be sought in childhood such as if someone prevented a child from moving and frustrates him, he would be aggressive. Aggressive behavior in childhood can be seen as a predictor of delinquency, drug misuse, depression and academic failure (12). Various methods have been proposed for preventing and controlling aggression, including the treatment of neurological disorders and neuropsychological disorders, nutritional habits modification, elimination of failures and the presence of non-aggressive models. The role of punishment and forgiveness (13) and the role of cognitive interventions (6) have been known effective in reducing aggression (14). Parenting styles can be known as a set of behaviors that describe parent-child interactions across a wide range of situations (15). Bamirand found that the ways of parenting are different in two dimensions. The first dimension is the expectation and control, and the second dimension is acceptance and response (15). There is a significant relationship between parenting styles and behavioral problems in adolescents (16). Therefore, parenting styles are effective in decreasing or increasing the high-risk behaviors in adolescents (17). Research shows that aggression is higher in severe families that think physical punishment is

necessary for child rearing. It is believed that some types of aggression are rooted in the homes allowed for any kind of aggression, and the children are never rapidly punished (10). Considering the role of families in shaping the behavior of children as well as the modeling of children from their parents, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and their children's aggression in elementary school students in Sanandaj city.

## Methods

This study is a cross-sectional study. The study population included elementary school students (10-12 years old) in Sanandaj city in the academic year of 2016 and their parents. The exclusion criteria included parents who did not want their children to participate in the study. Sampling method in this study was a random two-stage cluster type. Each geographic area was selected as a cluster, then from 2 educational districts in each cluster, four primary schools including 2 girl's schools (profit and nonprofit) and 2 boy's schools were randomly selected by the list of the primary schools (which was received from the department of education). Overall, 8 schools were selected from educational districts 1 and 2; then, a number of students were selected as the sample from the list of the students and in proportion to the number of students in each school (according to the overall sample size). The sample size was estimated 322 people by Cochran formula with confidence level of 95%. The instruments used in this study were demographic information, the Eyesenck's and Wilson's Aggression questionnaire and the Baumrind's Parenting Styles Questionnaire. A demographic checklist containing two parts was also used. The first part of this questionnaire was related to students - birth rates, gender, educational level and the second part was related to parents - age, education, and income. The aggression questionnaire designed by Eyesenck and Glyn wilson has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.68 (18). The validity of this scale is content validity; content validity means that questions must include different aspects of aggression. The validity of the test is set up by Eysenck by executing that to carry out clinical trials on more than 120,000 women, men, children, adults, normal, nervous, psychiatric and criminal people, 2000 twin couples, and a large number of adults and children. This questionnaire has 30 categories, which 20 categories have positive answers and 10 categories have negative answers, and the respondents answered the questions with "yes", "no" and "no answer". The score range is

between 0 and 30, the maximum score is 30. A score above 20 indicates severe aggression, a score 12 to 20 indicates aggressive at an average, and a score less than 12 indicates poor aggression, that is, those who are kind-hearted and good-natured. The Baumrind Parenting Style Questionnaire was designed in 1972 (19). The questionnaire contains 30 questions that assesses three parenting styles, 10 questions for rational authority parenting style, 10 questions for autocratic parenting style and 10 questions for permissiveness parenting style. The answer to the questions is based on the 5-point Likert scale. This questionnaire has been examined in several studies and its reliability and validity have been reported desirable (14). In this test, parents, specify their opinions by studying each question in terms of a 5-point scale, which is scored from zero to four (Totally opposite= 0 to totally agree= 4). The questionnaire has three sub-scales: permissiveness, autocratic and rational authority. By gathering scores, three distinct scores are obtained for permissiveness, autocratic and rational authority for each respondent. The highest score in each of the three sub-scales is 40 and the lowest score is 0. The highest score in each of the three subscales represents the parenting style. The reliability of the questionnaire was made by Buri in 1991 by reconsideration, that 81 percent for permissiveness, 85 percent for autocratic and 92 percent for rational authority has been reported (20). The information of the studied students' parents was obtained from the principals after obtaining a license from the Sanandaj Department of Education and the agreement of the selected school principals. By contacting parents of the students and obtaining informed consent from them, a brief explanation about the research goals was given and invited them to participate in the study while obtaining the consent about the presence of their children in the study. The right not to participate in the study and the commitment to secrecy of the information obtained during the investigation of the studied subjects was taken into consideration. The safekeeping of their entire information has been emphasized. Eyesenck and Glyn wilson aggression questionnaire was completed by students at school and the parenting questionnaire was completed by their parents as a self-report. The trained questioners have been present in schools according to the predetermined schedule. They read the questions for students and asked them to mark the answer in the questionnaire in one of the classrooms; one of the interviewers was present in the classroom to answer the probabilistic questions of the student. In the next step, the questioners asked the students' parents to complete the Parenting Style

Questionnaire in the school or in a non-attendance way. The data was analyzed by SPSS-18 software. The significance level in this study was considered to be  $P < 0.05$ . After entering the data frequency table was prepared for the nominal variables and the concentration and distribution indicators was estimated for quantitative variable, for all the mentioned parameters, the 95% confidence interval was also calculated. Independent t-test and ANOVA were used with due attention to quantitiveness of dependent variable, and to investigate its relationship with independent variables, Chi-square test was used to determine the relationship between aggression variable and demographic variables.

**Results**

This study was conducted on 337 elementary students of Sanandaj city in 2016. There were 132 boys (39.2%) and 205 girls (60.8%) in this study. The mean age of students was  $11.2 \pm 0.9$  year. Most of the students were in fourth grade (44.5%). Most of them which were 174 people (51.6%) declared that their fathers are self-employees and 253 people (75.1%) declared that their mothers are housewives. 179 people of them (53.1%) declared that their parents have diploma degree.

**Table 1.** Frequency distribution of demographic characteristics of elementary students in Sanandaj city

Variable	Group	Frequency	%
Sex	Girl	205	60.8
	Boy	132	32.9
Grade	Grade 4	150	44.5
	Grade 5	132	39.2
	Grade 6	55	16.3
Father's job	Employees	109	32.3
	Self - employed	174	51.6
	Declared	12	3.6
	Other	42	12.5
Mother's job	Employees	60	17.8
	Housewives	253	75.1
	Unemployed	13	3.9
Stepfather / Stepmother	Other	11	3.3
	Stepfather	4	66.7
	Stepmother	2	33.3
	Father's education	Illiterate	13
Diploma		179	53.1
High diploma and bachelor degree		111	32.9
Master degree and higher		34	10.1
Mother's education	Illiterate	16	4.7
	Diploma	219	65
	High diploma and bachelor degree	94	27.9
	Master degree and higher	8	2.4

**Table 2.** Comparison of aggression based on parenting styles of primary students in Sanandaj City

Variable	Grouping	Permissive style	Authoritarian style	Authoritative style
Aggression	Low	15.54	15.39	33.19
	Moderate	15.36	16.60	30.32
	Severe	20.33	17	28.67
	P value	0.204	0.266	0.04

Most of the students which were 175 people (51.9%) declared that they are two kids in the family. The mean and the standard deviation of the Subcategories of parenting styles are as follows. The mean of permissiveness parenting style is 15.52 with a standard deviation of 4.77, autocratic parenting style 15.8 with a standard deviation of 56.6 and the rational authority parenting style 31.92 with a standard deviation of 4.14. The most observed parenting style among the sample is rational authority. Among the sample, 223 people (66.2%) had low aggression, 111 people (32.9%) had moderate aggression and 3 people (0.9%) had high aggression. There was a significant difference between rational authority parenting style and the aggression of the students ( $P < 0.05$ ) (Table 2). Chi-square test results demonstrated that there are significant differences between the Autocratic parenting style and the gender ( $P < 0.001$ ), the rational authority parenting style and the grade ( $P < 0.01$ ) and mother's education ( $P < 0.05$ ), the Autocratic parenting style and father's job ( $P < 0.01$ ) and father's education ( $P < 0.05$ ) and mother's education ( $P < 0.05$ ); But no significant statistical difference was found with other demographic variables ( $P > 0.005$ ). Based on the results of Tukey's post-hoc test, the most difference was between the mother's diploma and associate's degree and mother's bachelor degree, as well as the father's job, there was a significant difference between employees and self-employees. Also, the results of chi square test revealed a significant relationship between aggression with gender ( $P < 0.05$ ), the grade ( $P < 0.05$ ) and father's occupation ( $P < 0.05$ ), but there were no significant statistical differences in other demographic variables ( $P > 0.05$ ). Based on the results of Tukey test, the greatest difference was from the fourth grade; this difference was also significant in the employee and self-employee.

## Discussion

Considering that the education of children is influenced by their parents' character, parents' attitudes and behavior can be a reason to facilitate or to hinder the development and evolution of children. Therefore, one of the most important causes and risk

factors that are involved in the emergence of child violence is their parenting styles. Various studies have shown that aggression has a completely imitative aspect, and observing the aggressive behavior of others has been an incentive for them to embrace new and aggressive behaviors (10). Although aggression is a desirable behavior in normal in the child's development, but if not controlled, it can be transformed to an interspersed excitement (3). A rational authority parenting style is a rational way in which the rights of parents and children are respected, parents have reasonable demands from their children, and these requests are made with affection and kindness, as well as by setting limits and emphasizing that the child should comply with them. These attributes contribute to the mental, social and educational achievement of children, and the social acceptability of these children. The results of current study revealed that the rational authority parenting style has a significant relationship with children's aggression, that the children educated with this style during childhood and adolescence suffer less from behavioral problems than the other children, which is consistent with the results of previous studies (21). Alizadeh and Andreas examined the interrelationship between parenting styles and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in a study. Results demonstrated that there is a negative relationship between ADHD and rational authority parenting style (3). The permissive and authoritative parental style indicates inappropriate intercourse and irrational control of children. In the present study, there was no relation between permissive and authoritative style with aggression. However, in some studies, the relation between permissive style with aggression (22) and authoritative style with aggression (23 and 24) is mentioned. This inconsistency of some of the results of studies together can be due to differences in the type of instrument used and the data collection conditions or type of test that has been used to analyze the data of the research. Also, the disparity can be attributed to the family, cultural, and psychological conditions governing the life of the child. Parental behavior with children is often done according to the specific cultural model in which the community is located. In general, according to the

results, considering cultural and social conditions of the people of the region, it seems that both authoritarian and permissive parenting styles are ineffective in educational styles, and each of them, causes various behavioral problems in children. Wilder et al. have shown that aggression is more common in strict families which consider physical punishment as a necessary tool in child-rearing, and it is also believed to be the root of aggression in families that have never shown a clear and rapid response to child aggression (11). Williams et al. showed that there is a significant positive correlation between the permissive style and the internalization problems (24), but Cheevers et al. showed that there is no statistically significant relationship between parental parenting styles and behavioral internalization problems in the first year of the school of studied children. (25). One of the important reasons that caused more students to have less aggression was the high level of education in most mothers of the sample. Therefore, they used a suitable educational method; these results were in line with the results of the Hemmati Alamdarliou et al. study (26) which the prevalence of aggression in low-income students in Shiraz has been attributed to mothers' low education. The results of this study showed that the authoritarian style of parenting in girls was significantly higher than that of boys. These results are consistent with the results of Heydari et al. (27). The results of this study showed a significant difference between gender-related aggression; which the percentage of boys was high and moderate in aggression compared to girls, which is in line with the study of Kaheni et al. (28). Therefore, in the absence of adequate prevention and counteraction to the violence of children in families, it can be expected that in the future there will be other psychiatric disorders for children; as in the study by Yousefi et al., boys are more likely to face oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) than girls (29). Other findings from this study are that father's job and parenting education are influential in their parenting style; therefore, it seems that increasing family education will improve the education of their children and hence improve the community's future. The importance of the father's job in these results cannot be easily passed through, so that community managers by providing a suitable job for fathers can largely prevent future community problems and reduce the cost of treatment and anti-aggression.

## Conclusion

According to the results of the study, the rational

authority parenting style over authoritarian or permissive parenting style reduces violence in children. Therefore, it seems that families, if they use this parenting style to educate their children, in the future face reduction of violence in their children. The results of this research can be used to design care programs for families with children with behavioral problems. The main limitation of this study is the low student age for answering questions related to the violence, as well as students' fears of losing scores or embarrassment from correct answering to questions. It seems that conducting this study in other age groups as well as examining the relationship between childcare and child abuse can provide useful results. Regarding the importance of work-related accidents and its complications at the community level, in order to obtain better and more accurate results, it is necessary to have accurate and standard information recording system, and skilled individuals in this field. Since most of these incidents can be prevented, and accident prevention programs, such as the use of personal protective equipment, safety and health education, effective monitoring of plants and factories, and increasing the education level of workers can reduce the incidents. High rate of unsafe acts as the cause of the incident and reporting its adverse consequences in this study shows that, although the importance of work-related accidents and its consequences has been revealed today, relevant executive agencies have failed to address this issue. Therefore, in order to achieve safety at the optimum level, the pursuit of safety regulations seriously by the relevant organizations, and the obligation of employers and workers to comply with the safety regulations will be more effective.

## Ethical disclosure

The Ethics Committee of University of Kurdistan approved the study (with number: MUK.REC.1395.224).

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## Authors' contribution

All the authors have accepted responsibility for the entire content of this submitted manuscript and approved submission.

## Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

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