

# Pharmacophore

ISSN-2229-5402

Journal home page: <http://www.pharmacophorejournal.com>



## PREDICTING THE BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS OF 6 TO 10-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN BASED ON PARENTING PATTERNS

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### ARTICLE INFO

**Received:**

03<sup>th</sup> Jun 2017

**Accepted:**

29<sup>th</sup> Nov 2017

**Available online:**

14<sup>th</sup> Dec 2017

**Keywords:** Children's Behavior Problems, parenting styles

### ABSTRACT

The main goal of this research was to predict the behavioral problems based on parenting styles. Study design was correlational predictive method and participants were 220, 6-10 y/o children (133 girl & 87 boy) with their families using convenient sampling. The research tools included Caners' Children's Behavioral Problems (CCBP) and Robinson's Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ). The results of correlation coefficients indicated that authoritative parenting styles negatively and, autocratic parenting positively were significant predictor of the children behavioral problems. parenting styles totally explained 26% of the children's Behavior Problems variance. Based on the results, it is concluded that the parenting styles have a remarkable impact on Children's Behavior Problems.

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**To Cite This Article:** Mehrnaz Bahraman, Masoud Mohammadin. (2017), "Predicting the behavioral problems of 6 to 10 year old children based on parenting patterns", *Pharmacophore*, **8(6S)**, e-117390.

### Introduction

Children, as one of the most vulnerable age groups, are at the risk of psychological problems. Vulnerability in this age group is affected by the active growth process and particular requirements of this stage on the one hand and controlling the environmental and positional conditions of the child by adults on the other hand (1.). That's why researchers are looking for the roots of deviant behavior of children and ways of dealing with it. Behavioral problems in the school-aged children, which are sometimes the inevitable consequence of poverty, ignorance, disorganization of the family and cultural shortcomings, undoubtedly hinder their growth and development and, thus, preventing and treating these problems is extremely important (2). The most common behavioral problems in preschool children include lying, aggression and tantrum attacks (melodramatics), theft, the use of inappropriate and ugly words, and competition between siblings (3). These inappropriate behaviors of children create many problems in school and in addition to harming the children's education, they lower the self-esteem of the children and lead to failure in subsequent years (4). Identifying children with behavioral problems at an early age will lead to effective interventions in the field of treatment and improving behavior and preventing the continuation of inappropriate behavior into adulthood. Without effective specialized interventions, exogenous behaviors such as aggression put the individual at the risk of anti-social and criminal behavior in adulthood; and endogenous problems like depression slacken and even stop the mental growth of the children. Effective educational and treatment intervention requires assessing the child's behavior and recognizing his weaknesses and strengths and needs. In fact, one of the primary objectives of the assessment is facilitating decision-making on the problems and recognizing them in order to improve the treatment process (5). In this regard, several studies that examined the causes and consequences of behavioral problems of children suggest that

the children's problematic behavior comes from the multiple interactions of biological, environmental, and family factors (6). Among the family factors, parenting has a direct relationship with retention and transference of children's behavioral problems to subsequent developmental stages (7). Therefore, interference with parenting practices increases the parents' ability to understand their own thoughts, feelings and behaviors and has a positive effect on the process of changing themselves and their children, as well as the relationship between them and other family members (8) and, finally, it can be effective in reducing the behavioral problems in children (9).

Parenting is a complex activity including special procedures and behaviors which separately interact with each other to affect the child development and, in fact, the basis of parenting practices explains the parents' efforts to control and socialize their children (10). Parenting practices are specific behaviors that parents apply in relation to their children which have a deep and significant impact on the formation, development and evolution in childhood and subsequent character traits (11). So that multiple studies have mentioned parenting as one of the most effective factors on the occurrence or continuation of behavioral problems in children (12; 13; 14; 15; 16; 17). Therefore, the main objective of this study is to predict behavioral problems in children based on parenting patterns.

### Methodology

The method of this study is predictive correlation that explores the relationship between the roles of parenting styles on the children's behavioral problems. The study population consisted of 31,230 children aged 6 to 10 years old in the Shiraz schools, district 1, in the first semester of the academic year 2016-2017. The group being studied consisted of 220 parents of children (133 girls and 87 boys) and the sampling method was targeted.

In order to gather the data, the two questionnaires of Conner's Parents rating of childhood behavior problems and Robinson's parenting styles questionnaire were used.

**- Conner's Parents rating of childhood behavior problems:** Conner's Parent Rating Scale (1990) has 48 items that parents score the questions in the forms graded based on the Likert scale using the 4 options. The scores for each question range from zero (is not true, or never, seldom) to 3 (very true or often, almost always). During the study, 31 items were categorized under the following factors and other items were not categorized under the personal factor. 1. Conduct Disorder: This subscale consists of 12 items and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale has been reported 85%. 2. Hyperactivity: This subscale consists of 7 items and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale has been reported 68%. 3. Social Anxiety: This subscale consists of 6 items and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale has been reported 66%. 4. Depression: This subscale consists of 6 items and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale has been reported 61%. Standardization and the validity and the reliability of this scale were estimated by Shahayyan and colleagues 2007.

**- Robinson's parenting styles questionnaire (PSDQ, 1995):** This test has 32 questions which are scored based on the 5-degrees Likert scale of 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = about average, 4 = very often and 5 = always. And the minimum score of the participants is 32 and the maximum score is 160 in this test which is filled by the parents separately. The questions of the questionnaire measure the three styles of authoritative (15 questions), authoritarian (12 questions) and permissive (5 questions) which are formulated based on the theory and the parenting style of Baumirand. In this study, based on the sample group, the alpha coefficients of the authoritative, authoritarian and permissive styles questionnaire were respectively 90%, 81% and 50%. The content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by the professors and professional judges (18), and according to the calculated internal consistency coefficients, this test has one of the evidence of desirable validity. It should be noted that after explaining the purpose of the research and the cooperation of the parents of the sample group, they were asked to respond the questionnaires according to their instructions and only one parent (father or mother) should respond. There is no time limit for these questionnaires, and the parents were asked to insert the gender of the children.

### Results

In order to affirm the findings, firstly descriptive measures (mean & standard deviation) of the variables will be provided. Then, the inferential statistics of Pearson correlation coefficient and simultaneous multiple regression method will be used.

Table 1 and 2 respectively show the mean and standard deviation of the research variables in both groups of the respondents (male and female) and the relationship between the variables from the correlation matrix.

Table 1. The mean and standard deviation of the variables according to gender

$\bar{x}$  = mean, SD = Standard deviation, N = the number of participants

As can be seen in the above table, in the parenting patterns, the scores of boys are slightly higher than girls in permissive and authoritative parenting patterns. On the other hand, the scores of the girls in the authoritarian parenting pattern are slightly higher than boys. Regarding the behavioral problems, the boys had higher means than girls in terms of conduct disorder, hyperactivity and social anxiety. The scores of girls are slightly higher than boys in the depression dimension. The mean of the overall behavioral problems is 23.57 for boys and 21.15 for girls.

Table 2. The correlation matrix of variables

Variables	Dimensions	Girl			Boy			Total		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	N
Parenting patterns of parents	Permissive	11.70	3.31	132	11.58	3.15	84	11.76	3.24	216
	Authoritative	59.26	9.32	124	59.85	10.94	79	59.49	9.96	203
	Authoritarian	24.87	7.14	127	24.70	6.06	84	24.80	6.72	211
Behavioral problems in children	Conduct disorder	6.55	4.95	130	7.20	5.88	82	6.80	5.32	212
	Hyperactivity	7.43	3.54	129	8.04	3.90	85	7.67	3.69	214
	Social Anxiety	3.69	2.68	131	4.48	3.14	87	4.00	2.90	218
	Depression	3.74	2.53	132	3.67	2.86	87	3.71	2.66	219
	General behavior problems	21.15	9.92	125	23.75	11.75	81	22.10	10.72	206

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Permissive parenting pattern	1							
2. Authoritative parenting pattern	-0.12	1						
3. Authoritarian parenting pattern	0.51**	-0.27**	1					
4. Conduct disorder	0.27**	-0.40**	0.42**	1				
5. Hyperactivity	0.26**	-0.29**	0.34**	0.51**	1			
6. Social Anxiety	0.13	-0.15*	0.10	0.37**	0.20**	1		
7. Depression	0.12	-0.16*	0.24**	0.35**	0.31**	0.29**	1	
8. General behavior problems	0.29**	-0.38**	0.42**	0.87**	0.74**	0.59**	0.62**	1

\*\*P < 0 /01 \*P < 0 /05

Some of the findings of the above table are as follows:

- a. The permissive parenting patterns had a significant positive relationship with the general behavioral problems of children and the conduct disorder and hyperactivity dimensions had no significant relationship with other aspects of children's behavioral problems, including depression and social anxiety.
- b. The authoritative parenting pattern had a significant negative relationship with the general behavioral problems of children and all aspects of behavioral problems, including conduct disorder, hyperactivity, social anxiety and depression.
- c. The authoritarian parenting patterns had a significant positive relationship with the general behavioral problems of children and the dimensions of behavioral problems including conduct disorder, hyperactivity and depression and only had no significant relationship with the social anxiety dimension.

Table 3. simultaneous multiple regression analysis.

Predictive variables	B	$\beta$	R	R <sup>2</sup>	T	P
y-intercept	24.28				4.09	0.0001
Permissive	0.44	0.13	0.51	0.26	1.81	0.07

Authoritative	-0.30	-0.28			-4.12	0.0001
Authoritarian	0.45	0.28			3.71	0.0001

According to table 3, among the family parenting styles, the authoritative parenting style has been a negative predictor and the authoritarian parenting pattern has been a positive and significant predictor of children's behavioral problems. In other words, an increase in the authoritative pattern is associated with a reduction in behavioral problems in children and an increase in the authoritarian pattern is associated with the increase in behavioral problems in children. Family parenting patterns explain a total of 26% of the variance of behavioral problems in children.

### Discussion and conclusion

These findings indicate that among the family parenting patterns, authoritarian parenting pattern has been a negative predictor and the authoritative parenting pattern has been a positive and significant predictor of children's behavioral problems and the permissive parenting pattern has had no significant effect on the children's behavioral problems. These findings are consistent with the findings of Hassanpoor (19), Shafipoor and colleagues (20), Yar Mohammadian and colleagues (21). The results are also in line with the findings of Kamijani and Maher (22), Masen and colleagues (23), Edalat manesh (24), Alizadeh and Yari (18) who found that authoritative and authoritarian parenting patterns had a significant relationship with conduct disorder. In addition, the findings are consistent with the findings of Cheng and colleagues as well as Guo and Cheng (25) who explored paternal parenting and maternal parenting patterns on the hyperactive children and the results showed that the authoritarian control had a significant relationship with the hyperactivity increase. But the results are in contrast with the findings of FarKhojasteh and Allahyari (26) who found that parenting patterns had a significant relationship with social anxiety.

In explaining the findings, it can be stated that the use of parenting patterns in raising children is a difficult task that is the responsibility of parents, and building a positive relationship with children and young adults is the primary principle of positive parenting. And good parenting methods can be applied in the context of a positive relationship. The process of raising a child requires the knowledge of the all aspects of health, physical, personality, mental, emotional, and social development from infancy to adulthood. Therefore, parents having children with behavioral problems often do not have the required educational skills. Moreover, successful parents consider parenting as teamwork, rather than placing the responsibility of parenting on only one person and the other one only watches. Thus, parents should be coordinated in the behavior training and reactions in relation to children.

Accordingly, the appropriate style of parenting in the family can lead children in the right direction, and the lack of proper parenting styles in the family can cause many behavioral problems in the child including conduct disorder which is shown by conflicting behaviors and aggression or depression which appears by irritability and mood instability. Finally, it can be stated that an authoritative parenting style in the right emotional atmosphere in the family can prevent behavioral problems in children.

One of the limitations of the study was that the study population was limited and only included 6- to 10-years students in the city of Shiraz; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other ages and other cities. Another important limitation of the research is that other factors which are involved in the children's behavioral disorders have not been included in the study.

According to the abovementioned issues, the following research and practical suggestions can be mentioned: regarding the research suggestions, it is suggested that the other behavioral problems in children and their relationship with parenting patterns must be examined in other research. Considering the practical suggestions, it can be suggested that the family status should be emphasized in the educational and training systems and educating families should be placed at the head of training programs and parents should become aware of parenting practices through proper training, and educational methods should be reformed and improved so that attention to them underlies better understanding of the problems and thus provides better health care.

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