

# The Relationship between Perceived Parenting Styles and Loneliness in Students

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## Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between perceived parenting styles with loneliness in single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz. This is a correlation research. The statistical population included all single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz (12 thousand students) in the year 2014 -2015. This is a convenience sampling type. A total of 200 students are selected as subjects. The research tools include perception of Parenting Styles Questionnaires (PAQ) and the UCLA loneliness. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistics including Pearson correlation coefficient, multiple regression, univariate and multivariate variance (MANOVA) analysis, Schaeffer test and Cronbach's alpha method are used in order to analyze the data. The results of correlation coefficient showed that there is negative and significant relationship ( $r=0.05$ ) between perceived authoritative parenting styles and loneliness and there is positive and significant ( $r=0.18$ ) between perceived permissive parenting styles and loneliness. Also, there is a positive and significant relationship between perceived authoritative parenting styles and loneliness (0.15). In sum, it can be found from this research that authoritative parenting style plays an important role in non-lonely children.

**Keywords:** perceived parenting, loneliness

## 1. Introduction

Families are the first centers of social life, manifestations of love and educational institutions. So, human civilization has emerged from the "family" as the primary cores of education. Transmission of cultural traditions, evaluation and critique of cultural heritage and even the cultural development have been carried out by families. That's why the family institution has always been the center of social evolution and the origin of human changes as the old center, culture maker and people-based views.

Cultural and people-based views of the distant past has always been the center of social evolution and the origin of human changes. This role not only retains its importance over thousands of its life but also the human knowledge is increased to discover the importance of family institution (Borzooei, 2013). Child domestic life in important in his character development and it is also determined by the parent. Mothers and fathers who feel insecurity and uncertainty in carrying out their tasks due to their previous experiences of childhood, are lack of stable emotionality and do not consent to their children, or do not agree with each other about educational methods. In this case, they will provide non-desirable home life for the children's personality development (Shoary Nezhad, 2003)

Parents and their parenting styles is one of the most important factors in shaping the child's personality. Parenting styles can be explained in several aspects, such as acceptance, love, control, kindness, warmth, flexibility, limit and demanding (Mussen et al., 2001). On the other hand, adolescence is characterized by dramatic changes in interpersonal relationships as a critical period of growth. Among the major crises of adolescence that makes into the trouble the individual's adaptation with the environment is loneliness. Loneliness arises when the person's relationship with the others is false, so that a common emotional experience for the bilateral relationship with others is not expected and the person has no real and sincere relationship in the process of contact with others (Van Hulst et al., 2012; Faresani, 2013). One of the reasons to create fear and

loneliness are problems that occur in childhood and adolescence between family's important individuals in relation to children and also in his social and emotional relationships. The most important of them are parenting styles.

Researches are conducted on the relationship between parenting styles and mental health, assertiveness, resilience, confidence, sociability, and healthy characteristics in children that in all of the above cases, authoritative parenting style had the strongest relationship. Also, researches are conducted on the relationship between parenting styles with creativity foster and secure attachment with the more relationship result of these variables with permissive and authoritative style (Kashefi, 2013; Darwishi et al., 2013; Nesayi et al., 2013; Hatamloo, 2013; Mohammadi, 2011; Shahidi & Sarihi, 2007). In the studies, there is significant relationship between authoritative parenting styles and obsession, psychosis, shyness, worry in the adolescents and loneliness (Rahmati et al., 2007; Taghavi et al., 2010; Krdmhlh et al., 2013). The research conducted by Roboteg et al (2014) showed that adolescents who have been brought up with authoritative styles of parents are happier, more confident and more satisfied with their life. The adolescents are happier in the authoritative styles than the dictatorship styles.

In a study by Orozkan (2012), it was determined that anxiety has a direct relationship with an authoritative and supportive method (increase the anxiety and reduce the self-esteem) and it has inverse relationship with permissive approach. The research conducted by Aylaz et al. (2012) shows that there is a positive relationship between depression and loneliness in the elderly people who are lower than the average population and in the communities with social and job security. The research conducted by Bass (2010) shows that there is a direct relationship between loneliness and shyness. Koo & Chan conducted a research entitled "parenting and its consequences" and concluded that parenting styles have significant effects on the large number of individual behaviors such as happiness, mental health and self-esteem, and academic achievement. Adolescence is characterized by dramatic changes in interpersonal relationships as a critical period of growth. The scope of adolescence relations is exceeded the family range and the adolescent faces with wide range of new social situations. One of the major crises during this period that makes the individual's adaptation to the environment in trouble, is loneliness. Loneliness is unpleasant individual experience such as person's thinking to stand apart from others that is determined by behaviors such as avoiding contact with others.

Parental influences on the socialization of children have been considered as the mainstream of psychological theories. More research on the parents behaviors have been launched according to their importance in parenting role and socialization of children and their social relationships in adulthood. According to previous research and the relationship between parenting styles and the different variables and that less has been paid to the relationship between parenting styles and loneliness, in the present study we seek to examine the relationship between perceived parenting styles and loneliness and to answer this question that whether there is a relationship between perceived parenting styles and loneliness in the single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz?

## 2. Method

The present study is correlational research. The study population included all single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz in the academic year 2014-2015 (12 thousand students). The sample size in this study were involved 200 students. In the case of sampling from single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz, these people were selected by convenience sampling. The questionnaires were given to the students to be taken to complete them. Finally, after reviewing the questionnaires, 25 questionnaires were excluded due to failure to complete and 175 questionnaires were analyzed. The age range of participants was between 18 and 40 years. Data collection tools in this study include:

### 2.1 Perception Questionnaire from the Bamrind Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PAQ)

The questionnaire was designed in 1972 by Diana Bamrind. Bamrind parenting styles questionnaires included 30 questions that assess the retrospective perceptions of adolescents and young adults from the parenting styles imposed by their parents (Nuri, 1991). This tool was created to examine parenting practices. 30 questions of this questionnaire measures three types of parenting. 10 questions assess authoritative practice, 10 question assess authoritarian practice and 10 question assess permissive practices. People specify their opinion as 5 point Likert scale. For criterion validity of the questionnaire, this tool was compared with parent's affinity (Buri et al., 1991). The results provide the conceptual basis for the dimensions of the tool (PAQ). The reliability for the authoritarian mothers is 0.85, for the opinionated mothers is 0.86, for the neglectful mothers is 0.81 and for the authoritarian fathers is 0.92, for the opinionated fathers is 0.85 and for the neglectful fathers is 0.77. A similar reliability is reported by Berzonsky (quoted Mahmoudi, 2014). In this study, the reliability was assessed by Cronbach's alpha and the numbers 0.65 to 0.70 are obtained.

2.2 Loneliness Questionnaire of UCLA

This scale was created by Dun Russell, A.Pelau & Karolin E Katrona (1980). This revised scale is translated by Shekarkan and Mirdarikond (2008) according to the UCLA scale and it was applied after reforms. In the original scale of UCLA, there is bias- possibility in response. Therefore, the experts decided to create new scale with a series of reforms. The reports provide evidence of concurrent validity of this tool. The Shekarkan and Mirdarikond (2008) contents reported the correlation of new scales and main scale as 91% that shows the credibility of this new scale. The correlation between revised scale and time severity that each person is alone every day was  $r=0.41$  and the frequency they had dined alone was  $r=0.44$ .

Also, considering the significant difference between main scale and anxiety and depression, the basic correlations are found between depression and loneliness scores of Beck (up to 0.5), Barag (1979) and Cooper Smith test. It is reasonable that the loneliness is accompanied with the depression and low self-esteem. These findings support the validity of Revised UCLA scale. In Mirdarikond (2008, quoted by Asgari et al., 2013), the reliability of loneliness is calculated with Cronbach’s alpha and Split-half method that are 0.77 and 0.72, respectively which represents the acceptable coefficients of the scale.

In this study, descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation coefficient) were used in order to analyze data. To analyze the data, computer software "SPSS 18" was used. In addition, significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  was considered for all of the hypotheses.

3. Findings

Of the total sample, 176 people are delivered their questionnaires. The descriptive findings of this study including statistical indices such as mean, standard deviation and the number of sample subjects for all of the variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of subjects in parenting practices variables (permissive, strict and authoritarian) with loneliness

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	No.
Permissive parenting style	27.77	5.35	176
Strict parenting style	25.34	5.30	176
Authoritarian parenting style	41.64	4.10	176
Loneliness	19.91	10.23	176

This study includes the following hypotheses. Each hypothesis is presented with the results of the analysis presented in this section.

The first hypothesis: There is a relationship between permissive parenting style and loneliness in single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz.

The second hypothesis: There is a relationship between strict parenting style and loneliness in single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz.

The third hypothesis: There is a relationship between authoritarian parenting style and loneliness in single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz.

Table 2. The simple correlation coefficients between parenting style and loneliness in students

The criterion variable	Statistical index Predictive variable	Correlation coefficient (r)	Significant level (p)	Number of sample (n)
Loneliness	Permissive parenting style	0.18	0.013	176
	Strict parenting style	0.15	0.039	
	Authoritarian parenting style	-0.05	0.466	

As can be seen in Table 2, there is a positive and significant relationship between permissive parenting styles and loneliness in students ( $r=0.18$ ,  $p=0.013$ ). Thus, the first hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, students' loneliness is increased by increasing their permissive parenting style.

There is also positive and significant relationship between strict parenting style and loneliness of students ( $r=0.15$ ,  $p=0.039$ ). The second hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, the more the strict parenting styles, the more their loneliness.

There is negative and significant relationship between authoritarian parenting styles and loneliness of students ( $r=-0.05$ ,  $p=0.466$ ). The third hypothesis is confirmed.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between perceived parenting styles with feelings of loneliness. The study population consisted of single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz, which are 12 thousand people. In the present study, taking into account the fact that Lindeman et al (1980) have stated that the sample size should be at least 10 to 20 times the number of variables, 200 questionnaires were distributed among students in which 24 questionnaires were excluded due to lack of full complete and finally 176 questionnaires were analyzed. In analyzing the data, descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation, multiple regression, multivariate variance analysis (MANOVA), Scheffe test and also Cronbach's alpha method to calculate the reliability coefficient) are used. The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient showed that there is a negative and significant relationship between permissive parenting style and loneliness of students. In addition, there is positive and significant relationship between authoritative parenting style and loneliness.

First hypothesis: There is a relationship between authoritative parenting style and loneliness of single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient showed that there is a negative and relationship between authoritative parenting style and loneliness ( $r=-0.05$ ). This hypothesis is confirmed. In general, it can be said that the accountability of parents, intimate relationships with children and proper support can lead to the mutual relationship with parents and increase their self-confidence in social relationships and finally reduce the loneliness, effectively. These results are consistent with the Ahmadi et al (2013), Kashefi (2013), Darwishi et al. (2013), Lali phase, et al. (1387), Rabutegh et al. (2014).

The second hypothesis: There is a relationship between strict parenting style and loneliness of single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz. The results of the correlation coefficient showed that there is a positive relationship between strict parenting style and loneliness ( $r=0.15$ ). This hypothesis is confirmed. These results indicate that parents with strict parenting style with coercion, punishment or blame, ultimately leading to unpleasant feelings in their children and parents and children will be non-emotional. These results are consistent with the Ahmadi et al (2013), Kashefi (2013), Nesai et al (2013) and Nagi pour (2011).

The third hypothesis: There is a relationship between permissive perceived parenting style and loneliness of single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz.

The results of the correlation coefficient showed that there is a positive relationship between permissive parenting style and loneliness ( $r=0.18$ ). This hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, these findings suggest that permissive parents do not have any control over their children and these children show the lowest levels of confidence, curiosity and self-control in each group. These results are consistent with the research of Dasht Bozorgi et al (2013), Khatamloo et al (2013), Ahmadi et al (2013), Karimi et al (2013) research.

#### 5. Limitations of the Study

1. This research was conducted on single students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz. Therefore, it is not applicable to the single students of the other public and private universities.
2. Several factors are causing loneliness that presentation of all of them at a time and a study is not possible. Therefore, all relevant factors and reasons are not examined in this study.
3. The assessment of parenting styles of parents is performed from their children's vision and this factor creates restrictions because their reports may not be accurate and complete or have different and false impressions of questions.
4. Because of too many questions and lack of appropriate time and place to response, students may not respond with enough accuracy, patience and honesty.

## 6. Suggestions

1. It is recommended that the relationship between the variables of the research about students, married students and students of public, Payam Noor and private educational centers be investigated.
2. It is recommended that other factors influencing the feelings of loneliness (parents and children's education level, number of children, age gap between parents and children) will also be examined.
3. Due to the increasing use of the Internet in families and expanded parental employment, the need for more thorough and extensive review of loneliness is suggested.
4. It is recommended that parents' perception of their parenting practices will also be examined.
5. Because of the importance of the role of parenting styles, it is suggested to hold educational classes and workshops for parents in order to teach correct parenting practices and their results.
6. It is recommended that in the schools and institutions, the ways to deal with social anxiety (especially loneliness and fear of loneliness) are taught.
7. Holding educational classes and workshops for parents to raise awareness of negative consequences of loneliness in adolescents is recommended.

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