



## Prediction of adolescent social anxiety based on parents' parenting styles

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### ABSTRACT

**Background and Aim:** Social anxiety is one of the most common anxiety disorders that are influenced by factors such as parenting styles. Parents' parenting styles play the most important role in raising children. Considering the importance of this issue, the present study was conducted with the aim of predicting social anxiety based on parents' parenting styles. **Methods:** This research is of applied type and its method is survey and quantitative in terms of implementation. The statistical population of this research was all male students of the first level of secondary school in Tehran, who were studying in the second semester of the academic year 2014-2016. Considering the size of the population (26600 people) and referring to the table of Morgan and Karjesi, 258 male students were selected as a sample by multi-stage cluster sampling method. The instruments studied were Baumrind's parenting style questionnaires (1973) and Leibovitz's social anxiety questionnaire (2003). Data analysis was done using Spss software version 23. **Results:** Data analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between permissive parenting and performance anxiety, as well as between authoritarian parenting and performance anxiety and authoritarian parenting and situational anxiety. There was a positive and meaningful relationship between social groups. In contrast, there was no significant relationship between permissive parenting and social situation anxiety, authoritarian parenting and performance anxiety, and between authoritarian parenting and social situation anxiety. Also, data analysis using multiple regression showed that authoritative parenting style is a negative and significant predictor of social anxiety ( $P < 0.01$ ) and permissive and authoritarian parenting styles are predictive. Social anxiety is positive and significant ( $P < 0.01$ ). **Conclusion:** According to the findings, it is very necessary to design and hold family education programs and workshops in the field of informing parents about parenting styles and the effect of each of them on their children. It is possible to reduce children's social anxiety by changing parents' attitudes and improving family relationships.



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## Introduction

Anxiety is an emotion that is involved in a wide range of psychological harms (Camacho et al., 2022). In other words, anxiety is a negative mood characterized by physical symptoms such as physical tension and fear about the future (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). It can include a mental feeling of restlessness, a set of behaviors (worry, anxiety, and restlessness), or a physiological response that originates from the brain and is reflected in increased heart rate and muscle tension (Bakhsipour et al., 2020). The fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychological Disorders places anxiety disorders under four headings: Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Panic and Transphobia Disorder, Specific Phobias, and Social Anxiety Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Social anxiety or social phobia is the most common anxiety disorder (Jia et al., 2022) and occurs when a person feels excessive fear, discomfort, and anxiety (Voncken et al., 2021). People with social anxiety experience stress, negative thoughts, and social isolation (Pilkioniene et al., 2021) and avoid social interactions to avoid negative experiences in the social environment and peers. All of these factors severely impair their quality of life (Tomaz Barbosa et al., 2021) and can be significantly disabling due to excessive anxiety in social situations, leading to futility and dysfunction. (Huneke et al., 2022). According to Lang's three-dimensional theory (1968), social anxiety emerges through a three-dimensional reaction system (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral). The first dimension is related to the fear of negative evaluation by others, and the other two dimensions reflect social avoidance and distress in new and general situations (Yu et al., 2021).

In relation to the causes and factors affecting social anxiety disorder, some experts believe that the family and its mechanisms are one of the important social factors that should be studied (Grazzani et al., 2015). The way parents communicate with their children is considered to be the strongest factor affecting family interaction patterns (Karzare et al., 2015). Research on children's psychological injuries shows that many families use unfavorable educational methods that are the source of fear,

distrust, dissatisfaction, pessimism and anxiety in children (Ghasemipour & Bazzazian, 2013). One of the most important family factors in the development of these behavioral problems is the parenting style (Yananda et al., 2020). Parenting style can be considered as a set of attitudes and behaviors of parents that are transferred to their children. These attitudes and behaviors create a special kind of emotional atmosphere for children's lives. In general, parenting style is the expression of strategies that parents use in raising their children (Schonning Vigdal & Kallestén Bronnick, 2022). There are several parenting styles that have different characteristics and have an observable effect on children's behavior (Purnama et al., 2022). A scientist named Bamrind (1991) introduces the most valid parenting styles of the family as authoritative, authoritarian and permissive (Besharati et al., 2011). Some researchers believe that inappropriate parenting style often leads to negative behavior in adolescents (Pickering & Sanders, 2016; Moon & Bai, 2020). In the study of Schonning Vigdal & Kallestén Bronnick (2022), a direct relationship between authoritarian parenting styles and symptoms of anxiety and depression is seen. Nneka Onyekachi et al. (2022) showed that children with authoritarian and permissive parents experienced higher social anxiety than those with authoritarian parents. Romero-Acosta et al. (2021) showed that students with authoritarian parenting styles reported lower general anxiety symptoms than students whose parents used authoritative parenting. Yaffe (2021) believes that adolescents with anxiety disorders are more likely to be raised by authoritarian and authoritarian parents who use harsh and inconsistent behaviors. Konok et al.'s (2020) studies show that the most important factor in adolescent behavior is the use of authoritarian parenting style. Authoritarianism can lead to aggressive behavior, depression, anxiety, delinquency, and other problems later in life. The result of Mahmoudzahi's research (2021) showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between authoritarian parenting styles and learning anxiety and a negative and significant relationship between logical authority parenting style and learning anxiety. The results of Pearson's correlation coefficient have also shown the absence of a

significant relationship between permissive parenting style and learning anxiety. Fatehi Peykani and Salehi (2020) showed that parenting education based on compassion for parents is effective on the cognitive regulation of emotion and self-efficacy of female students with social anxiety. The research results of Azagh et al. (2019) indicated that among the three parenting styles, authoritarian style had the highest correlation with academic burnout and exam anxiety, and as the parenting style increases, the level of academic burnout and exam anxiety of students decreases. Through authoritative educational style, it is possible to predict academic burnout and exam anxiety of students. Shiralena et al. (2019) showed that the behavioral problems of adolescents can be influenced by the quality of parents' relationships with their children. In their study, Farkhojasteh and Allahyari (2014) showed that permissive, authoritarian, and authoritarian parenting practices have a meaningful relationship with the category of social anxiety. They showed that authoritative style is associated with reducing children's social anxiety.

The purpose of this research is to predict the social anxiety of adolescents based on the parenting styles of parents and it can provide the basis for future studies. Finding the relationship between parents' parenting style and children's social anxiety can lead to providing guidance in the prevention of social anxiety. Therefore, considering the relationship between parents' parenting styles and social anxiety, the current research seeks to find a scientific answer to the basic question of whether parents' parenting styles predict adolescents' social anxiety.

### Method

In terms of practical orientation, in terms of strategy, survey and based on the purpose, this research is among basic researches. The statistical population of the current study includes all male students of the first level of high school in Tehran in the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021. According to the size of the population (26600 people) and referring to Morgan and Krejcie's table, 258 male students in the first secondary level in Tehran schools were selected by multi-stage cluster sampling method. After getting their consent and cooperation and providing assurance about the confidentiality of the results, they were studied.

### Materials

**1. Bamrind Parenting Style Questionnaire:** The parenting style questionnaire was created by

Bamrind in 1973 and then revised in the following years. This tool has 30 questions that include the following three subscales: negligent practices (questions 1, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24 and 28); authoritarian ways (questions 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 25, 26 and 29); authoritative ways (questions 4, 5, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22, 23, 27 and 30). Borai (1991) used a differential method to check the validity and validity of this questionnaire and observed that the autocratic style has a negative relationship with laxity and logical authority, and the lax style had no significant relationship with the assertive style. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha, Pudine et al. (2016) obtained 0.77, 0.83 and 0.75 respectively for authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles. (Zokaeifar & Mousazadeh, 2020).

**2. Leibovitz Social Anxiety Scale:** The Leibovitz Social Anxiety Scale was developed by Massia-Warner et al. and was standardized in 2003. This scale has 48 items, in front of each of which there are four options with the titles of none, little, medium and severe, as well as never, sometimes, most of the time and usually, which are scored from 0 to 3 respectively. It can be used as a self-report or interview for ages 7 to 18 and includes the following two subscales: performance anxiety (questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20 and 21); Anxiety in social situations (questions 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23 and 24). Massia-Warner et al. in 2003 reported the validity of this scale for children and adolescents through internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) of 90%-97% and its retest validity of 89%-94%. (Moghaddampour & Sepahvand, 2018). Validation of this test in the Iranian sample was obtained by Dadestan et al. (2016) through internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) and retest equal to 0.93 and 0.87, respectively. The validity of the scale was also achieved using the method of differential construct validity. The obtained results showed that Leibovitz's social anxiety scale for children and adolescents can distinguish between clinical and non-clinical groups (Dadsetan et al., 2007).

### Implementation

After data collection, descriptive statistics methods such as mean and standard deviation and inferential analysis such as Pearson correlation coefficient, Scheffe's post hoc test and regression analysis were used simultaneously. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 23 statistical software.

### Results

The demographic characteristics of the studied sample, which included male students in the first secondary school in Tehran, showed that most of the participants in this study (36.8%) were students in the seventh grade. 33.1% were in eighth grade and 30.1% were in sixth grade,

and the average age of the subjects studied was 13 years. The minimum age was 12 and the maximum age was 14. In order to examine and describe the data obtained from the studied sample, regarding the research variables, central and dispersion indices were used, the results of which can be checked in Table No. 1. If the

values of skewness and kurtosis of a distribution are in the range of -2 and +2, it can be claimed that this distribution is normal. As can be seen, the values in Table 1 include the aforementioned rule, so it can be concluded that the research data has a normal distribution.

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
<b>Performance anxiety</b>	12/35	2/32	-0/389	-0/214
<b>Anxiety in social situations</b>	10/84	3/02	-0/624	-0/354
<b>Permissive parenting style</b>	26/95	4/08	-0/680	-0/065
<b>Authoritative parenting style</b>	42/63	3/71	-0/651	-0/218
<b>Authoritarian parenting style</b>	23/88	3/55	-0/488	-0/315

The results of the mean test showed that the authoritative parenting style obtained the highest average of 42.63 and the authoritarian

parenting style obtained the lowest average with an average of 23.88.

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig
<b>Between-group</b>	40/748	1	13/595	5/527	0/001
<b>Within-group</b>	971/648	257	2/460	-	-
<b>Total</b>	1012/434	257	-	-	-

The results of Table 2 showed that there is a significant difference between the average of social anxiety in 3 levels of parents' parenting

styles (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative). Therefore, Scheffe's post hoc test was used to compare the means.

	Mean diff	Standard error	Sig.
<b>Permissive</b>	Authoritarian -0/836	0/217	0/218
	Authoritative 0/426	0/221	0/215
<b>Authoritarian</b>	Permissive -0/836	0/217	0/218
	Authoritative -2/215*	0/216	0/006
<b>Authoritative</b>	Permissive 0/426	0/221	0/215
	Authoritarian -2/215*	0/216	0/006

According to the results of Scheffe's post hoc test, social anxiety is different according to parenting styles. The results of the Scheffe test showed that the differences obtained from the averages of social anxiety in autocratic and authoritarian levels are significant. In this way,

the amount of social anxiety of adolescents in a situation where the family has an authoritarian style is significantly higher than when the family has an authoritarian style (Table 3). In Table No. 4, correlation values between social anxiety and parenting styles are reported.

	1. Permissive	2. Authoritarian	3. Authoritative	4. Performance anxiety	5. Social anxiety
<b>1</b>	1				
<b>2</b>	-0/025	1			
<b>Sig</b>	0/692				

<b>3</b>	-0/175*	-0/030	1		
<b>Sig</b>	0/005	0/637			
<b>4</b>	0/255*	0/495**	-0/092	1	
<b>Sig</b>	0/040	0/007	0/143		
<b>5</b>	0/106	0/222**	0/098	0/094	1
<b>Sig</b>	0/084	0/003	0/115	0/132	

The results of Table 4 show that there is a positive and significant relationship between permissive parenting and performance anxiety ( $r=0.255$ ,  $sig=0.040$ ). There is no significant relationship between permissive parenting and anxiety of social situations ( $r=0.106$ ,  $sig=0.0844$ ).

There is a positive and significant relationship between authoritarian parenting and performance anxiety ( $r=0.495$ ,  $sig=0.007$ ). There is a positive and significant relationship between authoritarian parenting and social situations anxiety ( $r=0.222$ ,  $sig=0.003$ ). It can be seen that the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and the anxiety of social situations is direct and meaningful.

There is no significant relationship between authoritative parenting and performance anxiety ( $r=0.092$ ,  $sig=0.143$ ). There is no significant relationship between authoritarian parenting and anxiety in social situations ( $r=0.098$ ,  $sig=0.115$ ). It can be concluded that the relationship between authoritarian parenting style and anxiety in social situations is not significant.

In the following, the multiple regression method is used in the simultaneous method to predict

the criterion variable by predicting variables. The result of regression is an equation that shows the prediction of a variable from the independent variable (Kalantari, 2010). Before performing the regression analysis, the assumptions of this analysis, including the normality of the variables, the independence of the errors, and the absence of multiple collinearity, were examined. The results of the skewness and kurtosis test based on Table 1 showed that the data distribution is normal. The value of Durbin-Watson statistic in this research is 1.98. Values between 1.5 and 2.5 indicate the existence of independent errors in the data (Kalantari, 2009). Therefore, it can be said that in the present research, there is independence of errors to perform multivariate regression. The statistic of the variance inflation factor in the present research was 1.13, and a number less than 10 indicates the absence of multicollinearity. Therefore, it can be said that there is no co-linearity between the independent variables in the present research. According to these cases, multivariate regression analysis can be used, the results of which are reported in Table 5.

**Table 5. Results of regression analysis of social anxiety based on parenting styles**

<b>Model</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Error</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>1</b>	655/0	613/0	612/0	05/2	000/0

According to table number 5, the correlation coefficient between parenting styles of parents and social anxiety of teenage boys in Tehran is  $r=0.655$ . According to the value of the adjusted coefficient of determination,  $R^2=0.612$ , about 61.2% of social anxiety can be explained by parents' parenting styles (permissive,

authoritarian and authoritarian). The regression model is significant because the F value is significant at the 0.05 level ( $Sig = 0.000$  and  $F = 55.515$ ). It can be said that parenting styles of parents are able to explain the variable changes of "social anxiety of adolescents in Tehran".

**Table 6. Regression coefficients related to predicting social anxiety through parenting styles**

<b>Mode</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>S.E</b>	<b>Standardized B</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig</b>
<b>Permissive</b>	432/0	012/0	476/0	621/1	000/0
<b>Authoritarian</b>	794/0	017/0	729/0	503/25	000/0
<b>Authoritative</b>	212/0-	022/0	189/0-	983/43	000/0
<b>Constant</b>	459/5	970/0	-	-	-

Table No. 6 shows the standard coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and non-standard coefficients (B) of the variables. The value of t and its significance level test the significance of the coefficients of each variable. The standard coefficients show that authoritarian parenting style with a coefficient of  $\beta=0.729$  has the largest contribution and authoritative parenting with a coefficient of  $\beta=0.189$  has the least contribution in predicting the social anxiety of adolescents. The positive effect of permissive and authoritarian parenting style on social anxiety indicates that the higher the value of a person with permissive and authoritarian parenting style, the higher the level of social anxiety. The negative effect of authoritative style on social anxiety indicates that the higher a person's authoritative style is, the lower the level of social anxiety.

### Conclusion

Family is the first society in which a person is present and from the beginning of life, he learns all kinds of personal and social skills in it. It is obvious that family conditions can play a significant role in the occurrence of individual and social characteristics of people (Bakhshipour et al., 2020). Healthy communication between parents and children is one of the important issues that has attracted the attention of education experts for years (Yananda et al., 2020). According to the objective evidence, it can be said that anxiety disorders have the highest frequency in the whole population. However, regardless of the severity and duration of the disorder, emotional anxiety is a fundamental emotion that is not alien to adolescents (Biglar & Gholami Fesharaki, 2020). Studies show that social anxiety is one of the most common complications that affects the development stage of children and teenagers, and its cause lies in parenting styles. According to descriptive statistics, authoritative style scores had the highest mean, authoritarian style had the lowest average, and permissive style was between these two styles. The results of the correlation coefficient between research variables showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between permissive parenting and performance anxiety, while there is no significant relationship between permissive parenting and social situation anxiety. In

explaining this finding, it can be said that permissive parents are at the lowest level in terms of control and demands. According to available reports, both parents have little control over their children, they use guilt methods to control their children, and in most cases, they give up when faced with the child's excuses and complaints. The behavioral style of these parents is associated with an increase in behavioral disorder and an increase in performance anxiety. Children of negligent parents may suffer from performance anxiety due to lack of independence and lack of responsibility, because teenagers feel abandoned and suspended without family control and do not find a safe haven for critical times, so they experience more anxiety. For example, Oyserman et al. (2012) showed in a study that easy parenting style was related to more symptoms of depression and anxiety in adolescents. The results of Ghasemipourkord Mahaleh and Bezarian's research (2012) showed that among the 3 styles of parenting, authoritarian, authoritative and permissive, none predicts social anxiety and there is no significant relationship. The results of the following studies are consistent with the present research: Mahmoudzahi (2021), Keshavarz Afshar et al. (2018), Hosseinpour and Babapour (2016), Tabatabaei-Rad & Akbari Balutbangan (2016), Yaghoobirad (2014), Nneka Onyekachi et al. (2022), Romero-Acosta et al. (2021). The research results show that there is a positive and significant relationship between authoritarian parenting and anxiety in social situations. Considering that the parenting style is one of the important and effective factors that influence the upbringing of a person, and according to the definition of Sherry-Beton et al. How authoritarian parents can cause personal and social vulnerability of their children with their upbringing style. It seems that this group of parents, by depriving their children of the ability to control, comment and express themselves, deprive them of the opportunity to face various emotions in various situations, which is a prerequisite for strengthening the emotional regulation skill. In other words, if parents' authoritarian parenting style increases, children's problems also increase. Authoritarian parents are not only demanding, but also unresponsive to their children's requests.

Punishment, strictness and force are techniques that authoritarian parents use to show their authority. Corporal punishment in childhood may lead to depression, emotional and behavioral problems and increased social anxiety in adulthood. In explaining this finding, it can be said that authoritarian parenting style is associated with many negative consequences, such as low flexibility, low self-esteem, decreased happiness, low progress motivation, lack of appropriate coping strategies, and increased types of anxiety. At the same time, authoritative parenting styles can act as a protective factor in the development of social anxiety (Mishra et al., 2018). Parents who used authoritarian parenting methods in relation to teenagers, the teenagers of these parents had a high level of anxious thoughts and symptoms of obsessive thought and action. Most of the mental anxiety problems of teenagers reflect the complex interpersonal conditions of family members, especially parents. Arbitrary dealings with children can create the ground for psychological disturbances and disturbances with adverse emotional effects and low self-confidence. Authoritarian parenting style with harsh, limiting and extreme control harms the individuality and independence of children in the family. For example, in the study of Schonning Vigdal & Kallestén Bronnick (2022), a direct relationship between authoritarian parenting styles and symptoms of anxiety and depression was seen. Khanjani et al.'s (2012) data analysis showed that obsessive-compulsive symptoms and anxiety thoughts have a significant positive relationship with authoritarian parenting styles and a significant negative relationship with authoritarian parenting styles. They also believe that parenting methods have the ability to predict the level of symptoms and practical mental disorders and anxious thoughts of teenagers. The results of the following studies were consistent with this finding: Mahmoudzahi (2021); Foulavand et al. (2020); Biglar and Fesharaki (2020); Keshavarz Afshar et al. (2018); Askari (2017); Hosseinpour & Babapour (2016); Schonning Vigdal & Kallestén Bronnick (2022); Jaffa (2021); Moon and Bai (2020); Konok et al. (2020).

The results of the present study confirmed the role of parents' parenting styles in the social anxiety of adolescents. The results indicated

that authoritarian parenting style has a greater effect on social anxiety than authoritarian and permissive parenting style. Based on this, it is suggested to inform parents about the types of parenting styles and the relationship of these styles with the growth and personality of their children. It is necessary to inform parents in various ways, such as holding courses for parents or seeking help from the school, that their interactions in the smallest cases are highly related to the growth and development of children in various fields such as academic progress, mood problems, and disorders such as social anxiety. . The use of social media can be recommended as an effective way to reduce social anxiety in teenagers so that parents can be informed about the benefits of behaving in an authoritarian manner. Many parents create unfavorable conditions for their children simply because they do not know the correct way of parenting. It is necessary to educate parents through holding scientific meetings, public media, providing suitable educational services in counseling centers, producing scientific resources in simple language, etc.

#### Conflict of Interest

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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