

## Investigating the most important factors related to domestic violence rate towards children

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**Abstract:** The present study aimed at investigating the main factors related to parents' domestic violence toward children. This research conduct through survey method and the questionnaires was used to do this study in Ahwaz city. The population was all high school students in Ahwaz and their parents with sample size of 384 that calculated by Cochran formula. The sample was selected from various parts of Ahwaz city through cluster sampling and questionnaires were given to them randomly. To evaluate each of these variables, items were designed using a Likert or other scale and the required data was collected through questionnaire technique.

It is worthy to note that 55 questions of questioner related to independent variables including: social isolation and marital conflict statues were answered by parents and 40 questions relates to dependent variable namely parental violence towards children were responded by students, in this study child abuse and trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) (Bernstein et al, 1995) the social isolation scale (UCLA) of Russell (1976) Marital Conflict Questionnaire (MCQ) Sanaei et al (2000) were used. The results indicated the significant correlation between marital conflicts and social isolation with parents' domestic violence toward children so it is worthy hat the families and the competent authorities pay more attention to the issue in order to prevent, control and decreasing its negative consequences at family and society level.

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### 1. Introduction

Domestic violence is a global scourge and as nation's longstanding problem and no country or society is except from violence is not (Segal: 213 1999). Domestic violence is a problem which children are dealt with in all over the world and almost all children can experience Domestic violence to some extent and know it as a source of stress (Cummings, Korus and Pop, 2007). And its effects can be seen in other realms of social, educational, cognitive and psychological actions of children (Emery, Robert E.; Laumann-Billings, Lisa.1998). However, domestic violence against children seems a personal phenomenon at a glance, since its negative consequences disturb the order and health of society and it is the source of deviated behaviors such as misuse of narcotics and Alcohol, suicide, prostitution, escape from home, criminal behavior and sexual offenses, etc. necessitates the problem is considered as a very serious social damage. World Health Organization knows child maltreatment including all forms of physical or emotional abuse, sexual harassment, neglect, or negligent behavior, commercial or any other form of exploitation as a violence against children or child abuse which leads actual or potential harm child's health, survival, evolvment or dignity (Emiko A Tajima. 2000). According to the World Health Organization statistic (2005) forty million children are exposed to all kinds

of abuse in all over the world. Unicef also reported of killing 3500 children for physical violence and negligence, various statistics are estimated even in developed countries and the reality is more than formal statistics, any way, child abuse in any kind is unacceptable in any society is and considered a crime in many countries with legal aftermath (Brown,1998). Belsky, J findings (1993) shows that social loneliness and parental social restrictions lead to violence and neglect the children. JOHN FANTUZZO.et.al (1997) in their research findings showed that family with lower education, job statues, and income employment likely are more tensioned relations and domestic violence. Rennison, C. M., & Welchans, S. (2000) show that low illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, confidence, antisocial behavior, lack of social support and social loneliness of parents, their spousal abuse as well as substance abuse are considered as influential factors on child abuse Sullivan, C. M., & Bybee, D. I. (1999) indicated in their research that families with single parent, depressed parent, history of alcohol consumption by mother, parental violence exposure in childhood, and low household income experience significantly greater child abuse. Tajima, Emiko A. 2002 suggested that high family size, low education, parents' depression, social loneliness, lack of social support of parents, father's job and housewife mother are the other precipitating factors in child abuse.

Researches (Davies, P. T., & Cummings, 1994; Grych J., and Fincham, 1990) indicated the relationship between the child's exposure to parental violence leads to emotional problems (depression, anxiety) and behavioral (aggression and delinquency, suicide) in children. Parents' violence makes children stressed, fearful and angry - and repeated exposure of Conflict experience can lead to behavioral problems (Cummings and Davies, 1994) and Physical health problems in children (El-Sheikh, M, Harger, and Whitson, S, 2001). Domestic violence is a potential threat for children and adolescent health and growth (Chickiti and Tooth, 1997). Parents' violence can influence children as a stress factor and longitudinal study predict high level of discord in 1 to 3 years old children after parents' conflict (Neyborz, forehead, and Bawo, 1997), (Katz, L.F., and Gottman, 1997).

Due to the patriarchal family system in Iranian society and tribal or traditional subcultures, poverty, unemployment, lack of proper parenting practices, poor education, lack of social support from family, rising divorce rates, increasing trend to drug, large size family, loss of family religion believe and numerous other factors, the domestic violence against children is increasing day by day. These factors led to the emergence of adverse outcomes at the individual, family and social level, such as aggression, anxiety, low self-esteem, delinquency, running away, suicide, drug abuse, and several other social injuries.

### 1.1. Research objectives:

1. Prevalence rate and kind of parental violence towards children
2. The relationship between social isolation and marital conflict and domestic violence towards children.

### 1.2. Hypotheses

- 1 - There is a significant relationship between the social isolation and parental violence towards children.
- 2 - There is a significant relationship between the marital conflict and parental violence towards children.

### 1.3. Theoretical Research

Since the parents' violence toward children is an effect of several causes and a theory explains just a specific aspect of it, a combination of theories of Blaksky's environmental theory (1980), Bandura's social learning theory (1978) has been used as the theoretical basis for this study.

### 1.4. Environmental theory

In "Blaksky environmental" theory, family external system or social formal and informal structures is considered important to explain family domestic violence matter. According to this theory, family's social loneliness and their social percept support from their external environment is affecting

factors on the incidence of violence against children (Blume, Thomas W. 1996).

### 1.5. Social Learning Theory

According to Bandura social learning theory (1978), behavior can be learnt through two ways: Either rewarding to actions (instrumental learning), or via deliberately or accidentally observation others' behavior (modeling). So the children, who somehow learn to be harsh, may continue the learned pattern till adulthood. Bandura also pointed to the underlying role of conditions such as socioeconomic status, population density, observing and experiencing parental violence in childhood and etc in the emergence of violence and aggression that can be used to explain the role of family aspect in child abuse (Boffey, Phillip M. 1983).

### 1.6. Frustration -aggression theory

According to Dollard frustration-aggression theory (1941), the frustration and failing is a result of stopping target-seeking behavior and is a cause of aggression. The violence may be directed to source of frustration or goals that are related to a primary source of frustration. The theory indicates the effect of frustration resulting from marital conflict on aggression toward children- as goals that relate to a primary source of failing

### 1.7. Resource Theory

According to William Goode source theory (1971), all the social systems (including family) have the authority system and anyone who access to major resources of family more than others can force the other members to obey his/her will. The mechanism of exerting authority is different based on the level of access of powerful person to other sources and the most powerful family member physical force resorts to exerting force via physical violence less than the others but the one with weak socioeconomic status, physical force and applying it is the only power source.

### 2. Methods and variables measurement tools:

This study is conducted via survey method using a questionnaire in Ahwaz city. The population is all high school students in Ahwaz and their parents in 2012; sample size was 384 calculated by Cochran formula. The number was selected by cluster sampling from various parts of Ahwaz and questionnaires randomly were given to them. To measure each variable, items were designed by Likert scale and the data was gathered through technique questionnaire (it is worthy to note that the 58 questions of questionnaire refer to Independent variables: socioeconomic status, social loneliness, marital conflicts that have been answered by the student's parents). In the research Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) (Bernstein, 1995) is used to measure child abuse. CTQ is a self-report instrument

used to measure the level of injury in childhood. CTQ measure the abuse in five subscale of emotional abuse (EA), physical abuse (PA), sexual abuse (SA), Emotional Neglect (EN) and Physical Neglect (PN). Due to cultural issues, the item relate to sexual abuse was omitted. Generally, 40 items were applied to measure the level of parental violence toward children. In the study, the questionnaire and Children Trauma scale (CTQ) (Bernstein et al, 1995), Duncan (1986) socioeconomic statuses scale (SES), Russell (1976) social loneliness scale (UCLA), Sanaei et al (1379) Marital Conflict Questionnaire (MCQ) were used to measure variables. In this study, Duncan (1986) socioeconomic indicator was applied as the most widely used scale in the field of social research to measure the socioeconomic base, and three factor of job, income and education is assessed as a basis of social status. Marital Conflict Questionnaire (mcQ) is made based on Dr. B. Sanaei et al (2000) clinical experience to measure couples' conflicts. The questionnaire measures seven aspects of marital conflicts include decreased cooperation, decreased sexual relationship, increased emotional reactions, increased children support, increased personal relationship with her/his relatives, decreased familial relationship with his/her spouse relatives and friends, separating the fiscal affairs, in the study, the aspect of sexual relationship was omitted due to ethnic cultural sensitivity. Derived from Russell et al (1976) social loneliness (UCLA), in three aspects of familial, friendly, and neighborhood relationships were assessed in the form of Likert to measure the social loneliness. After respondents completed the questionnaire, data were analyzed using SPSS software at two levels of descriptive and inferential statistics. To measure the validity questionnaire, at first it was completed by subject, and then the validity coefficient was calculated by Cronbach's alpha to clarify items consistency.

**Table 1:** Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the variables and dimensions

Variable	number of items	statements Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Social isolation	18	0.88
Marital Conflict	37	0.79
Parental violence towards children	40	0.91

### 3. Research Findings

The findings show that the average and standard deviation for student age respectively are 16.01 and 0.98, for father's age variable are respectively, 46.63 and 7.44, mother's age variable, respectively, 40.21 and 5.98 as well for family size variable, they were respectively 5.56 and 1.67. Also, the findings suggest that in parents sample 38.5 % of subject were male and 61.5% of them were female. Also, in students

sample 34.1 percent of them were male and 65.9% of them were females.

### 1.3. Describing the variable of parents' violence toward children and different aspects of it

**Table 2:** Mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum scores for the variables of parental violence towards children and its dimensions are listed.

Variable	items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Parental violence	40	64.80	17.56	44	141
Emotional violence	12	20.15	8.03	12	53
Physical violence	6	8.01	3.78	6	25
Emotional neglect	12	28.19	6.54	17	56
Physical neglect	7	8.44	2.74	7	27

As seen in the table above, the average and standard deviation were for variable of parental violence towards children, respectively, 64.80 and 17.56, for the emotional violence variables, respectively 20.15 and 8.0, for the physical variable respectively 8.01 and 3.78, for emotional neglect variables respectively 28.19 and 6.54 and for physical neglect variable respectively, 8.44 and 2.74

### 2.3. Testing hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: there is a relationship between social isolation and parental violence toward children.

**Table 3:** Pearson correlation test results between social isolation and the extent of parental violence toward children

Independent variable	dependent variable		
	Number (n)	correlation coefficient (r)	significance level (p)
Social isolation	384	0.24	0.001
Relationships and socializing with relatives	384	0.29	0.001
Relationships and socializing with neighbors	384	0.24	0.001
Relationships and socializing with friends	384	0.26	0.001

As we can see in above table, the results of Pearson correlation test shows there is a positive significant correlation between parents' general social isolation and parental violence toward children ( $P=0.001$ ,  $r=0.24$ ). Also, there is a positive significant correlation between the dimension of socializing with family and parental violence toward children ( $r=0.29$  and  $p=0.001$ ). But there is a positive significant correlation between the dimension of socializing with neighbors and parental violence toward children ( $r=0.24$  and  $p=0.002$ ). There is a positive significant correlation between the dimension of socializing with friends and parental violence toward children ( $r=0.39$  and  $p=0.001$ ). Thus Hypothesis 1 is confirmed.

Hypothesis 2: there is a relationship between Marital Conflict and violence toward children.

**Table 4:** Pearson correlation test results between Marital Conflict and the extent of parental violence toward children

Independent variable	dependent variable		
	Number (n)	correlation coefficient (r)	significance level (p)
Marital Conflict	384	0.293	0.001
decreased Partnership	384	0.275	0.001
Increased emotional reactivity	384	0.274	0.001
Attracting child support	384	0.245	0.001
Personal relationship with their relatives	384	0.05	0.25
Relationships with family and friends wife	384	0.313	0.001
Separate Fiscal affairs	384	0.06	0.18
Decreased relations	384	0.177	0.001

As can be seen in the table above, the Pearson correlation test result shows that there is a significant positive correlation between the total marital conflict and parental violence toward children ( $r=0.293$  and  $p=0.001$ ). As well there is a significant positive correlation between the decreased cooperation and parental violence toward children ( $r=0.275$  and  $p=0.001$ ). Also, there is a significant positive correlation between emotional reaction and parental violence toward children ( $r=0.274$  and  $p=0.001$ ). There is a significant positive correlation between

attracting child support and parental violence toward children ( $r=0.245$  and  $p=0.001$ ). There is not a significant positive correlation between the personal relationship with their relatives and parental violence toward children ( $r=0.05$  and  $p=0.25$ ). There is a significant positive correlation between Relationships with family and friends wife and parental violence toward children ( $r=0.313$  and  $p=0.001$ ). There is not a significant positive correlation between separating fiscal affairs and parental violence toward children ( $r=0.18$  and  $p=0.06$ ). There is a significant positive correlation between decreased relationship and parental violence toward children ( $r=0.177$  and  $p=0.001$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 2 is confirmed.

#### 4. Discussions

\* According to gained results it is clarified that the maximum and minimum variables of parental violence toward children are respectively emotional neglect, emotional coarseness, physical neglect, and physical coarseness. Also results the research shows there is a positive significant correlation between the levels of parents' general social isolation and their violence toward children, namely more social isolation more violence against children, it is consist with Glass (1972), Blesski (1993), Moss (1986).

\* Also, the research indicates that there is a positive significant correlation between the levels of parents' general marital conflicts and their violence toward children, namely more marital conflicts more violence against children, But there is not a positive significant correlation between the personal relationship with their relatives and separating fiscal issues and parents violence toward children. These findings are consistent with research findings from Berger (2005), William J., et al (2006), (Davies and Cummings, 1994; Grich and Fincham, 1990). Based on the results from multi variable regression, marital conflict have more effect than the other variables on dependent variable.

\*The overall research findings, this study could have an important achievement for practitioners, social planners of country mental along with formulating preventive primary and secondary plans against domestic violence against children and may not well pave the way for policy makers to task rules to decrease violence against children.

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