

Parent–child relationship and Aggression among adolescents in Tehran, Iran.

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between parent-child relationship and the adolescent's aggression among Iranian high schools students in Tehran, Iran. There is a transformation in the parent-child relationship as child approaches adolescence due to biological, cognitive and emotional changes. The present study was carried out among Iranian students. Number of respondents in the present study includes 200 (50%) males and 200 (50%) females from 20 high schools in Tehran, Iran. Respondents were between the ages of 16 to 18 years. Pearson correlation between subscales of aggression and between parent-child relationship was done and according results the strength of correlation between mother-child relation and aggression is moderate but more than Father-child relation. This means that respondents of low Father and Mother Relation have higher aggressive tendencies. [Homauni Masoumeh, Mariani Bte Mansor, Siti Nor Yacob, Mansor Abu Talib. **Parent–child relationship and Aggression among Adolescents in Tehran-Iran.** *Life Sci J* 2014;11(9):766-770]. (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 116

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1. Introduction

Aggression has been defined as organized, premeditated behavior intended to achieve personal gain through attainment of status or desired objects (Hawley & Vaughn, 2003; Vitaro et al, 2006). It is goal oriented rather than fueled by hostility or anger (Little, Jones, Henrich, & Hawley, 2003). In contrast, reactive aggression is defined as an angry, defensive response to an immediate and often misperceived threat (Hawley & Vaughn, 2003; Little, Jones, et al., 2003). The goal of reactive aggression is to retaliate against someone who is perceived to have caused the aggressor harm (Little et al, 2003). Thus, the different forms of aggression (verbal, relational, physical) can serve different functions. The student who spreads malicious rumors about a peer in order to damage the peer's social standing (relational aggression) may be attempting to elevate her own status (instrumental aggression), or she may be attempting to exact revenge on the peer for a perceived slight (reactive aggression). In considering the various types of aggression it is important to note that all forms of aggression can be considered social strategies that have evolved to represent different means to harm others (Archer & Coyne, 2005).

Social aggression functions to inflict social harm on the victim. It can include non-verbal forms of social exclusion (i.e. facial expressions, gestures) as well as both overt and covert forms of relationship manipulation (Underwood, 2004; Cairns & Cairns, 2000). Galen and Underwood (1997) defined social aggression as follows: —Social aggression is directed toward damaging another's self esteem, social status, or both, and may take such direct forms as verbal rejection, negative facial expressions or body

movements, or more indirect forms such as slanderous rumors or social exclusion (p.589). Underwood (2003) noted the term —social aggression is intended to reflect the function of the behavior, to do social harm, as well as to allow for the inclusion of nonverbal exclusionary behaviors.

Adolescents who involve in aggression are typically at greater risk for criminal arrest, poor school performance, school failure and physical violence. These adolescents regularly undergo difficult experiences from internalizing complexities, such as depression anxiety, loneliness and thoughts of suicide (Masoumeh et al., 2014).

The parent-child relationship is one of the first relationship children encounters and it changes as children develop. There is a transformation in the parent-child relationship as child approaches adolescence due to biological, cognitive emotional changes. Many parents face difficulties with their children as they approach adolescence as this is the time when the urge for independence is strong (Post, 2003). It is an ideal situation of both parents and child if parents encourage and accept the child's need for more psychological independence. Even as the need for peer relationships grows with approaching adolescence, the parent-child relationship continues to be a very important factor in the child's psychological development, which would benefit most from authoritative parenting that combines warmth and firmness. Children from such a parenting background tend to exhibit greater academic achievements, better psychological development and have less behavioral problems (Kohn, 2005).

Substantial literature indicates that greater frequency and quality of general parent-child

relationship are negatively associated with adolescent problem behavior (Kafka & London, 1991; Stoker & Swadi, 1990). It is considered in this study to determine the relationship between parent-child relationship and aggression among adolescents in Tehran-Iran.

1. Materials and methods

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship Parent-child relationship and the adolescent's aggression among Iranian high schools students in Tehran, Iran. The schools were chosen based upon their location and programs of study. The population of research involved in this study consisted of all the Iranian students who enrolled in high schools of Tehran (400 students, academic year 2010-2011). Considering the questions and research hypotheses, the following statistical methods are used to analyze data: after normality test, correlation techniques enable researchers to describe the relationship between two sets of measures (Pierson r). Pierson's Correlation and Regression for describing the relation between variables were conducted for analyses of this research hypothesizes.

Buss-perry aggression questionnaire (BPAQ; Buss and Perry, 1992) was used to measure aggression among Iranian adolescents. The BPAQ has 29 items that separate into four subscales; Physical Aggression (e.g., If somebody hits me, I hit back.), Verbal Aggression (e.g., When people annoy me, I may tell them what I think of them.), Anger (e.g., Some of my friends think I am a hothead.), Hostility (e.g., At times I feel I have gotten a raw deal out of life), with a 5-point rating system (1 = *extremely uncharacteristic of me* to 5 = *extremely characteristic of me*). Internal consistency was evaluated by Cronbach's a coefficient for both the overall scale ($\alpha=0.87$) and each of the four subscales showed acceptable internal consistency. (Santisteban et al., 2009).

To examine parent-child relationships, the PCRS conceptualized by Fine and Schwebel. (1983) was used in the present study. The PCRS is a 24-item instrument and comes in two forms, one for assessing the child's relationship with the mother and one for assessing the child's relationship with the father. Both forms are identical except that the words —father| and —mother| are interchangeable. However, different factors emerged on the forms for father and mother.

The factors for the father's version are: positive affect (items 3, 14 and 18-24), father involvement (items 1, 2, 6, 9, 10 and 16), communication (items 7, 8 and 15-17), and anger (item 13). For the mother's version, the factors are; positive affect (items 1-3, 6, 7 and 15-23), resentment/role confusion (items 9 and

14), identification (items 13, 23 and 24), and communication (items 4,5,7,8 and 15-17). Responses score on a 7-point rating system (1 = *not at all* to 7 = *extremely or a great deal*). The PCRS has excellent internal consistency, with alphas for the father's subscales that range from 0.89 to 0.94 with an overall alpha of 0.96, and alphas for the mother's subscales that range from 0.61 (identification) to 0.94 with an overall alpha of 0.94 and also the PCRS has good known-groups and predictive validity) Fine & Schwebel., 1983. (The Reliability Coefficients Cronbach's Alpha of PCRS in the present study is 0.94.

The study populations in this research were high schools in Tehran city. Tehran has 19 educational districts and consists of 231298 high school students (SCI, 2011), 110757(49%) of population were male and 120539(51%) of population were female. Considering the questions and research hypotheses, the following statistical methods are us to analyze data: after normality test, correlation techniques enable researchers to describe the relationship between two sets of measures (Pierson r). Pierson's Correlation and Regression for describing the relation between parent-child relationship and aggression were conducted for analyses of this research hypothesizes. The multi regression analysis was used to predict the variables.

3. Result and discussion

The adolescent characteristics comprised age, gender, educational grade and grade point average (GPA). As presented in Table 4.1 the number of respondents in the present study includes 200 (50%) males and 200 (50%) females from 20 high schools in Tehran, Iran. The respondents' age ranged from 16 to 18 years old with the mean age of 16.91 (SD= 0.77). This is divided into three groups, that is: 31.5% (N=126), 16 years old; 47.5 % (N=190), 17 years old and 21% (N=84), 18 years old. Table 4.1 also revealed that the 38.75% (N=155) of the respondents were in 3rd year of high school and the majority of them 62.9% (N=254) have GPA between 14-18 and also the mean GPA is 15.76 (SD=1.99).

Table 2 presents a statistical summary of the parents' characteristics such as age, level of education and occupation. Results indicated that a vast majority of fathers (67.5%) were between the age of 41 - 50 years old and majorities (50.5%) of mothers were younger than 40 years old.

Regarding parent's occupation most of the fathers (48.8%) were government workers, while in term of occupation level most of mothers (74.5%) were homemakers. Regarding parents' level of education, the large proportion of mothers 57% (N=228) and fathers 61.2% (N=245) had diploma and

college degree. It indicates that both mothers and fathers of the respondents were moderately educated.

Table 1: Adolescent's Characteristics (N=400)

Variables	N	%
Adolescent's Age		
16 years old	126	31.5
17years old	190	47.5
18 years old (Mean=16.91, SD=0.77)	84	21
Adolescent's Gender		
Male	200	50
Female	200	50
Adolescent's Educational Grade		
High school second	153	38.25
High school third	155	38.75
Pre University	92	23
GPA (out of 20)		
10-12	37	9.2
12.1-14	65	16.9
14.1-16	119	29.7
16.1-18	135	33.2
18.1-20 (Mean=15.76 SD=1.99)	44	11

Table 2: Parents' Characteristics (N=400)

Variables	N	%
Mothers' Age		
40 years old and below	202	50.5
41-50 years old	167	41.7
51 years old and above (Min= 29, Max= 67, Mean=41.69)	31	7.8
Fathers' Age		
40 years old and below	48	12
41-50 years old	270	67.5
51 years old and above (Min= 32, Max=71, Mean= 47.1)	82	20.5
Father's Education		
Below Diploma	155	38.8
Diploma	95	23.7
Undergraduate	107	26.7
Postgraduate	43	10.8
Mother's Education		
Below Diploma	172	43
Diploma	132	33
Undergraduate	83	20.8
Postgraduate	13	3.2
Father's Job		
Government	195	48.8
Self - employee	170	42.5
Others(no stable job)	35	8.7
Mother's Job		
Government	88	22
Self - employee	14	3.5
Others (homemaker)	298	74.5

Descriptive analysis was conducted on the key variables of this study. Table 3 revealed the

distribution of respondents according to the subscales of aggression including; anger, physical aggression, hostility, verbal aggression and total aggression. As shown in Table 3, the obtained mean score for aggression was 62.88 (SD=7.99). The subscales of adolescent aggression follow a ranking with anger (Mean=15.47, SD=3.88), physical aggression (Mean=17.42, SD=4.37), hostility (Mean=18.17, SD=4.28), verbal aggression (Mean=11.81, SD=2.06).

The (PCRS) Scale was used to measure the parent-child relationship. This scale comes in two forms, one for assessing the adolescent's relationship with the mother and one for assessing the adolescent's relationship with the father. The mean score of the sample on the father-child relationship was (Mean=102.11, SD=29.95) and lastly about mother-child relationship mean score was (M=106.23, SD=35.80).

Table 3: Descriptive Information on Parent-Child Relationship and Aggression of Adolescent

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Total_Aggression	35.00	84.00	62.88	7.99
Anger	7.00	26.00	15.47	3.88
physical Aggression	9.00	26.00	17.42	4.37
Hostility	8.00	26.00	18.17	4.28
Verbal Aggression	5.00	18.00	11.81	2.06
Father-child Relationship	24.00	162.00	102.11	29.95
Mother-child Relationship	33.00	167.00	106.23	35.80

Pearson's correlation test was conducted to examine the relationship between Parent-child relationship and aggression. Table 4 shows that Father-child relation and aggression are significantly negative correlated ($r = -0.307$, $P < 0.01$), the strength of correlation between Father-child relation and aggression is moderate. This table shows that Mother-child relation and aggression are significantly negative correlated ($r = -0.467$, $P < 0.01$), the strength of correlation between mother-child relation and aggression is moderate but more than Father-child relation. This means that respondents of low Father and Mother Relation have higher aggressive tendencies.

The present finding supports the results of past studies (Roustit et al., 2010; Shelton & Harold, 2008) which demonstrated that disruption in parent adolescent relationship relates to adolescents' externalizing behavior problems. According to Deckovic (1999), Parent-child relationship are viewed as key determinants of children's emotional and social development, Consistent parental

involvement and engagement with their children promotes emotional connection, communicates feelings of caring, support, and love to the child, and affords children a solid foundation for the development of important emotional and behavioral skills (Barber, 1997).

Table 4: Relationships between Parent-Child Relationship and Aggression.

Variables	Aggression	
	r value	p
Father-child relation	-0.307**	0.001
Mother-child relation	-0.467**	0.001

4. Conclusion

Based on the result for this study, it is proved that there was a significant negative relationship between parent-child relationship and aggression. Adolescents who experience negative relationship with their parents are less likely to internalize their parental values and norms, but adolescents who experience warm and positive relationship with their parents are more likely to express their thoughts, feelings and their daily activities to their parents which decrease the opportunities for problem behavior. According to Klein and Forehand (2000), the quality of parent-child relationships has significant direct link to adolescent externalizing and internalizing problems. They believed that parents of children with high levels of externalizing problems are less supportive and low in warmth. Additionally, results from the present study highlight the significant role of both mother and father in the development of adolescent aggression.

Similar to past studies (Arbona & Power, 2003; Pittman & Chase-Lansdale, 2001), findings from this present study found that adolescents with poor relationship to mothers were more at risk of developing problem behavior compared to their peers with good relationship to mothers. Furthermore, the findings from this present study indicated that there exists a very small difference between the influence of mother and father relationship on adolescent aggression. Findings tend to suggest that fathers too play a significant role in adolescents' problem behavior. Thus, this study contributes to the growing literature on the salient role of fathers in adolescents' behavioral development.

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