

## **Assessment the Relationship between Parenting Styles, Parents Attachment Styles and Social Development among Pre-school Children**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the present research is to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and attachment styles with social development among pre-school children. The sample of preset study consisted of 225 mothers of preschool children (5.5- 7 years), selected via random multi stages sampling procedures from 15 kindergartens in Tehran/Iran. Data's were collected using three questionnaires including Vineland Social Development Scale (for mothers); Hazan and Shaver Adult Attachment and Baumrind Parenting Styles Questionnaire. To achieve the research hypothesis inferential statistical methods such as the Pearson correlation coefficient, regression analyses and f – test were employed. Result showed that the authoritative parenting style is the best predictor of treatment. In addition results confirmed the relationship between secure and insecure attachment styles of children and the conflict with parents and the relationship between social development with the authoritative parenting style and attachment.

**KEYWORDS:** Social development, Parenting style, Attachment style, Pre-school children

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Human beings are originally sociable, and the social aspect of child growth is the basic aspect of one's life. Parent's role is so essential; however, child learns the social relationship from parents. Children during socialization process usually places parents, especially mother, as patterns and establish their behavior based on imitation from others. Therefore recognizing the children needs and behavioral pattern have an important role in their social characters[1]. One of the most important features of humanity is socialization process [2]which parenting styles are known as main determinant of children socialization. Parenting style was referring to those behaviors and acts which assistance and helping parents express to their children. An effective parenting style have affect on growth and children mental health [3] as Richman and et al[4] indicated that influence of parenting style during early childhood has an important psychological effect which is continued even until adulthood. As findings among school students revealed that those with higher level of confidence and self esteem have higher level of mental well-being, self-recognizing health, avoid health threatening behaviors and improvement of disease and prolong life[5]. Other findings confirmed that those students with high level of self-regulation, high self-esteem and interpersonal confidence, problem solving method, self-control and appropriate social relationships reported higher level of social and psychological health and more importantly higher level of life satisfaction.

Caspi and Elder [6] indicated that those parents who provides a supportive and protective environment and appropriate parenting style have children with higher level of social development. Martin and Mckay [5, 7] showed that protective parenting style is contribute to anticipate the children's social adequacy, education progression and child mental health in future. However, lacking parents responding to children needs has negative outputs in future development and leads to resignation, aggressiveness and attention deficiency in child [8]. Mays and Rusell [9] believe that children relationship with parents is an important factor in improving social development and positive understanding especially in the field of social efficiency and sport efficiency and self-respect. Moreover the culture and social values may have an important affect on parenting style and attachment style as well. Parents consider cultural patterns and aspirations in socialization process of their children in many ways, which is resulted in different level of children's social development [10]. Present study is try to investigate the relationship between parenting styles, attachment styles with social development of preschool children and their social development through assessment parental training and attachment style. Since social development is an important social indicators particularly during childhood, this study has focus on identify the relationship between parenting styles and parental attachment styles and social development among pre-school children.

**Research Hypothesis:**

- 1- Children, who have safe attachment style with authoritative (logical) parenting style, have higher level of social development.
- 2- Children who have unsafe attachment style have less level of social development.
- 3- Children, who have (logical) authoritative parenting style, have higher level of social development.
- 4- Parenting style and attachment styles have significant effect on children social development.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Research Instruments and Measurements:**

To achieve the research objectives three research instruments were employed. Shaver and Hazen’s Adult Attachment Questionnaire with 0.78 reliability coefficients, the Baumrind’s Parenting Styles Questionnaire with 0.82 reliability coefficients and Vineland’s scale for Iranian social development is used. Baumrind’s Parenting Styles (1991) was included three subscales authoritative, despotic and easy-taking on a five point scale from totally agree to totally disagree, which after scoring the higher score shows that parent used common child-raising style.

The Adult Attachment Questionnaire of shaver and Hazen (1990) were included three subscales safe, unsafe, ambivalent (avoiding) models. The items were on a scale from 1 to 9 degree which parent select one of these degrees. After scoring, the respondents’ were categorize to three groups which the first is secure, the second is avoidant attachment (AN) and the third is ambivalent/anxiety attachment level (AM) [11]. The Vineland Social Maturity Scales (VSMS), published by Edgar Doll in 1935, were employed to measures social development or social in individuals from birth to adulthood. Doll classified eight categories of items using Stanford Binet year-scale format in the record for the scale. The scale was adapted and adopted to Iranian context by Okhovvat and Braheni (1979) and the reliability score was reported around 0.92.

**Research Sample:**

Participants were 225 parents of preschool children (5.5- 7 years age), selected via random multi-stages sampling procedures from 15 kindergartens in Tehran/Iran (out of 8625 children) in 2011.

**Data Analysis:**

The research findings were analyzed by SPSS soft ware Verf.13 using Pearson correlation coefficient, regression analyses, independent and one way variance analysis and Wilcoxon/Mann-Whitney (U) test.

**RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

Findings of data analysis were presented based on the research hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 1:** Children, who have safe attachment style with authoritative (logical) parenting style, have higher level of social development.

Analysis of variance test was employed to determine the differences between social development levels of children with different parenting styles

Table 1: statistical index of pre-school social development in safe attachment style

Attachment style	Parenting style	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Means differences in level 95%	
						The least	The most
safe	liberal	11	73.45	4.34	1.31	70.54	76.37
	despotic	28	69.14	3.78	0.71	67.68	70.61
	Authority(logical)	157	73.57	5.10	0.41	72.76	74.37
	Total	196	72.93	5.11	0.37	72.21	73.65

The results presented in Table 1, shows that the mean score of social development among children who have safe style and logical parenting style equals to 73.57 which is more than mean of children social development that have despotic or liberality style.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance test for social development in safe attachment style with parenting style

Attachment style	Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
safe	Inter groups	468.296	2	234.148	9.763	.000
	Intra groups	4628.704	193	23.983		
	total	5097.000	195			

The finding depicted in Table 2 indicated the difference between groups ( $F=9.763$ ;  $P<0.05$ ) is statistically significant. So for comparing the mean scores the Tukey's HSD Post Hoc- test was used and the following results are achieved which provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Tukey's HSD Post Hoc- test

Attachment style	Parenting style	Child raising style(J)	Means difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Means differences in level 95%	
						The least	The most
Safe	liberal	despotic	4.3117(*)	1.7	0.038	0.20	8.43
		Authority(logical)	-.1123	1.5	0.997	-3.72	3.50
	despotic	liberal	-4.3117(*)	1.7	0.038	-8.43	-0.20
		Authority(logical)	-4.4240(*)	1.0	0.000	-6.80	-2.05
Authority (logical)	liberal	.1123	1.5	0.997	-3.50	3.72	
	despotic	4.4240(*)	1.0	0.000	2.05	6.80	

Findings in Table 3 show difference in social development in logical authority style with despotic style is significant. Meanwhile the mean difference between liberality style and despotic is significant and the mean score of children social development with logical authority style is more than despotic and liberality styles. So the research hypothesis is approved.

**Hypothesis 2:** Children who have unsafe attachment style have less social development.

To identify the differences in social development in safe and unsafe attachment style independent t-test were employed and the findings were shown in Table 4. Findings indicated (Table 4) that the differences in mean score of social development between safe and unsafe style is statistically significant ( $t=2.59$ ;  $P<0.05$ ). Results indicated that social development among children with safe styles is higher than unsafe style.

Table 4: Mean comparison test of social development between safe and unsafe style

variable	changeable group	statistical index	mean	S.D	Std. Error	t	df	Sig.
social development	Safe (n=196)		72.93	5.11	0.37	2.597	223	0.010

Since there were differences in the sample size of respondents' with safe style ( $n=196$ ) and unsafe style ( $n=26$ ), which those with safe style were almost six times of unsafe Wilcoxon/Mann-Whitney (U) test was employed to confirm the findings of previous analysis (Table 5). Findings in Table 5 indicated that the mean score of social development among children with safe style ( $M=117.7$ ) is higher than the children with unsafe style ( $M=81.22$ ).

Table 5: Mean score of social development between safe and unsafe styles

Criteria	Dominant attachment style	Number	Mean	Total Mean
Social development	Safe	196	117.70	23069.50
	Unsafe	29	81.22	2355.50
	Total	225		

Considering the computed U and the significant level ( $U(225) = 1920.5$ ;  $P<0.05$ ) confirmed that the differences in social development between safe and unsafe style among pre-school children is statistically significant.

Table 6: Wilcoxon/Mann-Whitney (U) test of social development between safe and unsafe styles

Statistics	Social development score
Mann-Whitney U	1920.500
Wilcoxon	2355.500
Z	-2.826
P	0.005

**Hypothesis 3:** Children, who have (logical) authoritative parenting style, have higher level of social development

In order to determine the difference in social development of between pre-school children with logical parenting style and other styles (liberality and despotic), analysis of variance test was used.

Table 7: Pre-school children social development statistical index with parenting styles

Parenting style	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Means differences in level 95%	
					The least	The most
Liberal	15	72.40	4.76	1.23	69.76	75.04
Despotic	34	69.26	3.52	0.60	68.04	70.49
Authority(logical)	176	73.26	5.02	0.38	72.51	74.01
Total	225	72.60	5.00	0.33	71.94	73.26

The result of table 7 demonstrates that the mean score of social development among pre-school children with logical parenting style (M= 73.26) is higher than children with despotic (M= 69.26) and liberality (M= 72.40) parenting styles.

Table 8: Analysis of Variance test for social development with different parenting styles

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Inter groups	455.805	2	227.903	9.847	.000
Intra groups	5138.195	222	23.145		
Total	5594.000	224			

The result of table 4-21 shown that difference between groups, (F=9.847; P<0.05) is meaningful. So for comparing the means, the Tukey's HSD Post Hoc test is used that the following results are shown.

Table 9: Tukey's HSD Post Hoc- test for comparing social development with parenting styles

Attachment style	Child raising Style(I)	Child raising Style(J)	Means difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Means differences in level 95%	
						The least	The most
Safe	Liberal	despotic	3.14	1.49	0.09	-0.38	6.65
		Authority(logical)	-0.86	1.29	0.78	-3.91	2.19
	Despotic	liberal	-3.14	1.49	0.09	-6.65	0.38
		Authority(logical)	-3.9967(*)	0.90	0.00	-6.12	-1.87
	Authority(logical)	liberal	0.86	1.29	0.78	-2.19	3.91
		despotic	3.9967(*)	0.90	0.00	1.87	6.12

The result of Table 9 indicated that there is significant difference in social development level of children with different parenting styles. Assessment of results shows the social development level between logical authority style and despotic style is significantly different. So the hypothesis of research is approved.

**Hypothesis 4:** Parenting style and attachment styles have significant effect on children social development.

In order to determine the effect of parenting style and attachment style on social development level first a regression model of parenting style domains ere regressed on social development and second the attachment styles were regressed on social development. Results of Table 10 indicated that parenting styles predict social development among pre-school children.

Table 10: Regression Model of parenting style on social development

Index	SS	Df	Model			
			MS	P	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Regression	358.866	3	119.622	.002	.253	.064
Remainder	5235.134	221	23.688			4.86

Assessment of beta coefficients in Table 11 revealed that all factors have negative effect on social development however out of three styles of parenting style only tough style (beta= -.266, t= 3.45; p<0.05) has significant effect on social development of pre-school students, however the effect is negative which means those children treat with tough parenting style have lower level of social development. Findings indicated that 26.6 % of changes in social development of pre-school children was predict by social development.

Table 11: Summary of regression coefficients of parenting style on social development

Variable					
Parenting style	B	SEB	Beta	t	P-Value
Constant	76.764	3.873		19.822	.000
Easy- taking	-.038	.056	-.046	-.692	.490
Tough	-.163	.047	-.266	-3.458	.001
Authorized	-.037	.099	-.029	-.375	.708

In second model, attachment style was regressed on social development. Results depicted in Table 12 indicated that attachment style have significant effect on social development.

Table 12: Regression model of attachment style on social development

Model								
Index	SS	df	MS	F	P	R	R <sup>2</sup>	SE
Regression	287.287	3	95.762	3.988	.009	.227	.051	4.9
Remainder	5306.713	221	24.012					

Considering findings depicted in Table 13 indicated that safe style have positive effect while avoidant and ambivalent styles have negative effect on social development of pre-school children. Assessment of p value revealed that the effect of three attachment style on social development is not statistically significant. Therefore of two parenting style and attachment style the significant effect on parenting style on social development was approved.

Table 11: Summary of regression coefficients of parent attachment style on social development

Variable					
Parents attachment style	B	SEB	Beta	t	P
Constant	72.610	1.794		40.473	.000
safe	.182	.205	.064	.886	.376
avoidant	-.238	.182	-.098	-1.304	.194
ambivalent	-.266	.169	-.125	-1.572	.117

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Findings of present research confirmed the relationship between authoritative parenting styles and safe attachment style with social development among pre-school children. Findings indicated that while parents have safe attachment style and consider punishment and encouragements in right situation children have better level of social development as well. These findings are concur with Bayern [12] and Karsson[13] findings which indicated children who have open and positive relationship with their parents have higher level of self-confidence and more success in their education. In addition Huxley [14] found that parents with warm and authoritative parenting styles are more success in providing communication and support for their children. More importantly findings of Darling [15] indicated that logical parenting style and good planning [16] resulted in rising children with several abilities such as suitable behavior, accepting social responsibilities, self-regulatory and participating in social issues [17] while children in authoritative style rising are more independent, with good social behavior, have control on their own behavior and have a friendly behavior with their friends and highly respectable.

In addition findings of present research showed children, who have unsafe attachment have lower level of social development. The results are concur with Shaffer and Kipp [18]; Darling [15] and Joo [19] which indicated that easy-going parents with a warm relationship do not have a good control on their children and put their children under less pressure, also the children of easy-taking family have better self-confidence and better social skills and less depression and have more ability to provide a warm relationship with their parents. however Finni and Novler [20, 21] findings among Australian respondents showed that attachment style is related to gender however there were similarities in safe, permanent and avoiding style among male and female. Moreover findings of study revealed that the logical authoritative parenting styles increase the level of social development. These findings were similar with Wood [22] which found safe attachment style resulted in higher level of social development and flexibility. Finally results of study confirmed the significant effect of parenting style on social development among pre-school children which is similar to findings of Rubin et al [23] and Roopnarine [24]. Rubin et al (2002) expressed that parenting styles of parent has influence on children future behavior. Roopnarine (2006) found that father’s parenting style has more influence on children communication skills and social behavior than mother’s parenting style.

Moreover findings of Karavasilis, Doyle and Markiewicz [25] revealed positive and significant relationship between authoritative parenting styles and safe attachment. Although easy-taking parenting styles anticipates avoiding attachment which were similar to present study findings. In addition research findings of Amini [26] showed that teenagers, who have more dependency to family, have higher level of social and emotional development compare with teenagers who have lower level of dependency to family.

Findings of present study confirm the effect of parenting style and safe attachment on social development of pre-school children which confirmed that mother's parenting style have influence on children social and psychological development [27]. However unstable styles cause conflict and hesitation and dependency. Results of present study may appreciate by social-psychological policy maker and practitioners. Enhancing the awareness of family especially mothers by providing several opportunities for parents might be the main task of policy makers. since the present study focused on psychological aspect it recommended that future researches consider the effect of other factors such as family structure, family economic and social situation, number of children, and parents education as well.

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