

# Childrearing Styles and Family Communication Patterns among University Students

Pegah Farokhzad

**Abstract**—Family is a basic unit of the society and the main source of human development. The initial aim of the family is psychological and social support of its members and has special developmental stages. Researches show the families who have less cohesion, have more conflicts and maladjustments and the members of such families are not able to communicate effectively. Family is a system in which any inter communication is related to child rearing patterns and can affect it. Even the child rearing styles in childhood can determine the family communications in adulthood. Therefore, the aim of the present research was to examine the relationship between child-rearing styles including authoritative, authoritarian and permissive with dimensions of family communication patterns including the conversation and conformity. The research design was a correlational and the population consisted of the psychology students of Roudehen Islamic Azad University who were studying in academic year 2013-2014. A sample of 324 students was selected randomly from the population. The research tools were the Baumrind Child-rearing Questionnaires and Family Communication Patterns Inventory, The Revised Scale of Koerner and Fitzpatrick. The result was as below: (a) there was a positive and significant relationship between conversation orientation and authoritative style. (b) There was no significant relationship between conversation orientation and other child-rearing styles. (c) There was a negative significant relationship between conformity orientation and authoritative style. (d) There was a positive significant relationship between conformity orientation with authoritarian and permissive styles. (e) There was a significant relationship between 3 dimensions of child-rearing and communication patterns.

**Keywords**—Child-rearing Styles, Family Relationship Patterns.

## I. INTRODUCTION

FAMILY is the primary unit of society and the main center of human development. Family is more than a mere collective of people who share a physical and physiological environment. The major role of the family is psycho-social support of its members and has its own stages of growth and evolution. In psychological terms, in addition to sharing a physical and physiological environment, family members are each a member of a society that has rules, roles, hierarchy, behavioral pattern, duties, functions, and unique goals and the way of communication employed by the family members is also important. Many of the internal interactions between the members are invisible and recognizing them requires analysis of the family relations.

Research reveals that families with low cohesion experience more conflict and incompatibility and are less capable of having effective solidarity.

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Reference [1], by conceptualizing and critiquing the McLeod and Chaffee theory, has identified two fundamental aspects of family relation patterns viz. dialogue orientation and conformance orientation. In their view, dialogue orientation is the family's capability to create an environment in which all the members are encouraged to freely join in conversations about a wide spectrum of matters. In this theory, conformance orientation is the level of similarity of views, values, and ideas as emphasized by family.

Each pattern describes a certain type of family. Four patterns or types of family emerge from the conditions of excess and shortage on the continuum of the dialogue orientation and the conformance orientation which are: conforming families, divergent family, conservative family, and liberal family.

Conforming families score highly on both dialogue orientation and conformance orientation. Divergent families score high in dialogue orientation but low in conformance orientation. Conservative families score low in dialogue orientation but high in conformance orientation. Liberal families score low on both categories [1].

Specific patterns which parents employ to discipline their children is known as parenting styles. Based on the combination two key factors of freedom-control and coldness-warmth; four types of parenting emerge which are authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, indulgent parenting, and neglectful parenting [2]. Authoritative parents assign responsibilities to their children which are suited to their age and provide structures that allow their children to fully develop their individuality and independence. In authoritarian style, it is tried to shape, control, and evaluate the behaviors and beliefs of the children in accordance with specific standards. Indulgent parents are like patterns that can be followed at one's own discretion; however, they are not suitable examples to follow. And finally, neglectful parents manifest low acceptance and affection and exert simultaneously strict or low discipline, or uncoordinated supervision [3].

Recently, culture sensitive studies have shown that parenting styles may have different meanings in different cultures and possibly there are different definitions of parenting styles in different cultures [4]. Some evidences suggest that effects of parenting may vary based on the ethnicity and the race of the family [5].

In their research, [6]-[8] found that the psychological symptoms in authoritarian families are significantly higher than authoritative families; and there was no difference in psychological symptoms of authoritative and indulgent

families. Other studies also revealed that negative parenting styles is related to anxiety and depression [9]-[14], loneliness [15], drug use, educational failure and antisocial behaviors [8], [12], [16].

On the other hand, studies shown that authoritative parenting leads to adjustment, educational achievement, creativity in children and adolescents [17]-[20], self-esteem [20]-[22] and healthy personality [23]-[25].

Family is like a system in which any relation within the family is in some manner related to the styles of parenting and can influence on it. Parenting styles during childhood can even determine the future of the family relationships of children in their adulthood and vice versa, the present communication patterns can determine parenting styles in future generations. Due to the importance of this subject, these variables are to be examined in different societies and social classes so that more effective solutions can be provided for families.

Due to the necessity of maintaining the foundation of family in any society, it cannot be sufficed to foreign research and it is best if one rely on their own native studies and their own culture.

As all societies require happiness, prosperity, and psychological health of their family members; to reach this goal, factors that affect health, psychological health, and quality of life are to be determined. One of these factors can possibly be the family and how its members interact with one another.

With regard to the less researches done in the field of communication patterns and its relation to parenting styles, this research find it necessary and useful to investigate this relation. Therefore, it aims to examine the relation between these variables among college students who establish the future of their society and the families in a practical manner so that the results can be studied and used as a guide for future researches into resolving the problems of families.

The questions researcher tends to respond are as follow:

1. Is there any relation between family communication patterns and parenting styles?
2. Could the family communication patterns predicted on the basis of parenting styles?

## II. METHOD

### A. Statistical Population, Sample and Sampling Method

The statistical population of the present study consists of all the bachelor's students of psychology in academic year of 2010-2011 who were studying at Roudehen Islamic Azad University. There were 1751 psychology students out of them 589 were boys and 1162 were girls. Having population size and using Morgan table, sample size has been estimated to be 384 which has been selected through clustered sampling method from the population. Out of them, 64 participant (22 student and 42 their parents) did not complete or give the questionnaires back and dropped out of the study. So, the final sample size was 324.

### B. Tests and Tools

The following questionnaires were used in the study:

#### (a) *Bum-rind Parenting styles questionnaire*

This questionnaire is constructed by Diana Bum-rind from California University in 1973 on the basis of patterns of styles of parenting and is known by her name. It has 30 items; 10 for indulgent parenting, 10 for authoritative parenting, and 10 for authoritarian parenting. Scoring is done according to a 5 point scale from absolutely agree (4) to absolutely disagree (0). Sum of scores of each style gives a separate score for it. Researchers [16] have reported the reliability of the questionnaire on 2 groups of mothers by test-retest method, as: 0.81 for indulgent parenting, 0.86 for authoritarian parenting, and 0.78 for authoritative parenting styles. In fathers also the reliability was 0.77 for indulgent parenting, 0.85 for authoritarian parenting, and 0.92 for authoritative parenting styles. Using convergence differential validity, he observed that there was authoritarian parenting in mothers has negative relationship with indulgent parenting (-0.38) and authoritative parenting (-0.48). Also, authoritarian parenting in fathers has negative relationship with indulgent parenting (-0.050) and authoritative parenting (-0.52). In [16], which has studied the possibility of changing parenting style to behavioral disorder, it is found a proper content validity. To find out the reliability of the questionnaire by test-retest method on 12 mothers in one weak interval, he found 0.67 for indulgent, 0.77 for authoritarian, and 0.73 for authoritative parenting styles.

#### (b) *Revised version of Family communication patterns scale*

This questionnaire is a self-report scale and assesses the respondent degree of agreeableness or disagreeableness in a 5-point scale for 26 items regarding the family communications [26]. Absolutely agree has the score of 4 and absolutely disagree has the score of 0. This scale measures the dialogue orientation (the first 15 items) and conformance orientation (the next 11 items). So, the range of score in dialogue orientation will be 0-60 and in conformance orientation will be 0-44. This scale is provided in 2 form: first is parents' impressions and second is children impressions of family communicational behavior. This research has used the second form. According to [27], as this scale is covered all the behaviors of dialogue and conformance dimensions, has the content validity. Also, [27] shown that the dimensions of revised version of family communication pattern scale is correlated with the old version. It has also a powerful theoretical basis and therefore has sufficient evidence for construct validity of the test. In Iran, a research [13] studied the construct validity of the scale and used factor analysis and internal consistency method. Factor analysis has confirmed the 2 factors of communication patterns and the correlation coefficient of dialogue orientation and conformance correlation with total score was 0.75 and 0.44, respectively. In a study [24] also results of factor analysis has confirmed 2 dimensions of communication scale. The reliability of this scale has been studied in many researches as well. In five

studies, the Cronbach's alpha is found 0.89 for dialogue orientation and 0.79 for conformance orientation; and the reliability coefficient of test-retest is reported about 0.99 for dialogue orientation and 0.73 to 0.93 for conformance orientation [27].

### C. Procedure

With the permission of education section of the university and selection of the participants, the importance and aims of the study and the confidentiality of data were conveyed to them. Then, they were asked the first scale (family communication pattern scale) to be filled by themselves and the second scale (parenting styles questionnaire) by their parents (mothers) in which the direction to complete the items were explained completely. A week later the questionnaires were collected by the researcher and after scoring the data were analyzed by proper statistical method.

## III. RESULTS

The present research to determine the relations between dimensions of parenting styles and family communication patterns was a correlational study. Therefore, to analyses the data and to test the hypotheses, descriptive statistical methods (mean, standard deviations, etc.) and also multiple regression analysis and Pearson correlation coefficient were used.

TABLE I  
SUMMARY OF DESCRIPTIVE INDEXES OF PARENTING STYLES AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

Variable	Mean	SD	Kurtosis	Skew	p
Indulgent	18.66	4.88	0.35	0.22	0.174
Authoritarian	14.77	5.82	0.28	-0.33	0.111
Authoritative	25.52	6.10	-0.74	0.48	0.132
Dialogue	38.38	10.07	-0.41	0.28	0.123
Conformance	19.02	8.34	0.15	-0.30	0.495

As seen in Table I, and with regards to obtained amount of indexes and results of Kolmogorov – Smirnov and level of significance, it can be stated that scores distribution in parenting styles and family communication patterns tend to normal. So, to analyses of data and test the hypotheses, parametric tests (multiple regression analysis and Pearson coefficient correlation) could be used.

**First Hypothesis:** There is a significant relation between family communication patterns and parenting styles.

TABLE II  
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN PARENTING STYLES AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

Variables	Dialogue	Conformance
Authoritative	-0.186	0.256
p	0.001	0.000
Authoritarian	0.246	-0.057
p	0.000	0.306
Indulgent	0.109	0.066
p	0.049	0.236

According to Table II, there are a significant negative correlation between dialogue orientation and authoritative parenting style ( $r = -0.186$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ); a significant positive

correlation between dialogue orientation and indulgent parenting style ( $r = 0.109$ ,  $p = 0.049$ ); a significant positive correlation between conformance orientation and authoritative parenting style ( $r = 0.246$ ,  $p < 0.0005$ ); and a significant positive correlation between conformance orientation and authoritative parenting style ( $r = 0.256$ ,  $p < 0.0005$ ). On the other hand there were not found any significant correlation between conformance orientation and indulgent parenting style ( $r = 0.066$ ,  $p = 0.236$ ) and between conformance orientation and authoritarian parenting style ( $r = -0.057$ ,  $p = 0.306$ ).

**Second Hypothesis:** Any of the family communication patterns can be predicted by three styles of parenting viz. authoritative, authoritarian and indulgent.

TABLE III  
SUMMARY OF ANALYSES OF VARIANCE

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Regression	2196.50	3	732.17	7.67	0.0001
Residual	30551.06	320	95.47		
Total	32747.56	323			

TABLE IV  
MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES TO PREDICT THE DIALOGUE ORIENTATION ON THE BASIS OF PARENTING STYLES

Predictors	B	Estimated standard error	Standard B	t	p
Constant	24.83	3.70		6.70	0.000
Authoritative	0.42	0.09	0.25	4.49	0.000
Authoritarian	0.01	0.10	0.01	0.15	0.883
Indulgent	0.07	0.11	0.03	0.64	0.524

The amount of F in Table III is 7.67 which reveals a relationship between styles of parenting and dialogue orientation. Noting the obtained regression coefficient it can be concluded that authoritative parenting style has a positive effect on dialogue orientation and can predict it; but authoritarian and indulgent parenting styles have not any effect on dialogue orientation. Therefore, these two styles of parenting cannot predict the dialogue orientation.

TABLE V  
SUMMARY OF ANALYSES OF VARIANCE

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Regression	1982.05	3	660.69	10.32	0.0001
Residual	20487.83	320	64.02		
Total	22469.89	323			

TABLE VI  
MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES TO PREDICT THE CONFORMANCE ORIENTATION ON THE BASIS OF PARENTING STYLES

Predictor	B	Estimate standard error	Standard B	t	p
Constant	17.01	3.03		5.61	0.000
Authoritative	-0.20	0.08	-0.15	-2.62	0.009
Authoritarian	0.28	0.08	0.20	3.55	0.000
Indulgent	0.19	0.09	0.11	2.06	0.040

The amount of F in Table V is 10.32 which reveals a relationship between styles of parenting and conformance orientation. Noting the obtained regression coefficient it can be concluded that authoritative parenting style has a negative effect on conformance orientation and can predict it; also,

authoritarian and indulgent parenting styles have a positive effects on conformance orientation. Therefore, these two styles of parenting can predict the conformance orientation as well.

TABLE VII  
MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES TO PREDICT THE FAMILY  
COMMUNICATION PATTERNS ON THE BASIS OF PARENTING STYLES

Predictor	B	Estimate standard error	Standard B	t	p
Constant	40.18	4.12		9.75	0.000
Authoritative	0.23	0.10	0.15	2.66	0.008
Authoritarian	0.30	0.11	0.15	2.74	0.007
Indulgent	0.27	0.13	0.12	2.15	0.032

R= 0.171; Modified R<sup>2</sup>= 0.29; R<sup>2</sup>= 0.20; F= 6.299

According to Table VII, the amount of R<sup>2</sup> (0.29) reveals that 29 percent of variance changes in family communication patterns can be explained by styles of parenting. Also, observed R (0.171) shows that the linear regression model can be used for this prediction. In addition, calculated F (6.299) in confidence level of 95 percent is significant. So, it can be concluded that there are significant relationships between styles of parenting and family communication patterns and at least one of the regression coefficient is significant.

Table VII show that beta coefficient of 3 styles of parenting viz. authoritative parenting (0.15) with obtained t of 2.66 and significance level of 0.008, authoritarian parenting (0.15) with obtained t of 2.74 and significance level of 0.007, and indulgent parenting (0.12) with obtained t of 2.15 and significance level of 0.032, are significant ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that with regard to the sign of beta coefficient which is positive, there is a positive correlation between styles of parenting and family communication patterns. So, the regression formula will be:

$$\text{Family Communication Patterns} = 40.180 + 0.15 (\text{authoritarian style}) + 0.15 (\text{authoritative style}) + 0.12 (\text{indulgent style})$$

#### IV. DISCUSSION

As mentioned in above sections, this research aimed to study the relationship between parenting styles and family communication patterns. To gain this goal, some hypotheses were stated and data collected and analyzed.

**First Hypothesis:** There is a significant relation between family communication patterns and parenting styles.

Results show that dialogue orientation has a positive relation with authoritative style and conformance orientation has a significant negative relation with that. In explanation of this outcome, it can be said that families that have great deal of dialogue, spontaneously, repeatedly, and freely interact with one another. They discuss a wide spectrum of matters, their interactions consume a great deal of time, and the family members make their family decisions by consultation. In families with great deal of dialogue, a wide range of issues are discussed. Aspirations, thoughts, and emotions of the children are paid attention to. In such families, children feel like they are accepted by their parents and are understood by them.

Parents also speak more about their emotions and this helps the children in establishing a broader communication. All these can be a cause of reduced levels of stress in the family. Lower anxiety in such families has been documented in research [13], [20], [28], [29]. Other researches also support this finding [1], [12], [14].

Also, the results showed that the dialogue orientation has no relation with the indulgent parenting style and conformance orientation has a significant positive relation with this style. In its explanation it can be stated that in families with less dialogue, members interact less with each other and only discuss a few number of subjects; family members are less likely to share their thoughts, emotions, and private activities with one another. When a subject is being discussed, less attention is paid to details and there is no effort to engage all members in the process of decision-making. Families with less dialogue believe that repeated, open, and easy exchange of beliefs and values are fundamentally unnecessary for the family and particularly for parenting and social conditioning of children [1], [27], [30]-[32], [34].

Also, dialogue orientation has no relation with indulgent parenting style and conformance orientation has a significant positive relation with this style. In its explanation it can be said that the communication in such families is characterized by low levels of interaction and if there is any interaction, members are less likely to engage in it. In such families only a limited subjects will be discussed. Parents in such families believe that all members of the family must be capable of making decisions, they are not interested in the decision making of their children and do not value having dialogues with them. Most of the family members are emotionally separated. Children in such families learn that there is less value in family dialogue and when it comes to their private matters they must make their own decisions because they do not receive much support from their parents. They reach a point where they doubt their own decision making power. As the result, in the time of information processing and decision-making, they influence by peers, same age cohorts and other external factors [1], [27], [31].

**Second Hypothesis:** Any of the family communication patterns can be predicted by three styles of parenting viz. authoritative, authoritarian and indulgent.

The authoritative parenting style has a positive effect on dialogue orientation and can predict it. Also, this style has a negative effect on conformance orientation and can predict it; it means that when the parenting style used by parents is the authoritative style, it can be predicted that this family will score high in dialogue orientation and low in conformance orientation.

The indulgent parenting style has no effect on dialogue orientation, as therefore cannot predict it. This style has a positive effect on conformance orientation and can predict it; it means that when the parenting style used by parents is the indulgent style, it can be predicted that this family will score low on dialogue orientation and high in conformance orientation.

The authoritarian style has no effect on dialogue orientation and as the result, this method cannot predict it. The authoritarian parenting style has a positive effect on the conformance orientation and can predict it; it means that when the parenting style used by parents is the authoritarian, it can be predicted that this family will score insignificantly in dialogue orientation and high in conformance orientation. The other researches also support these results [15], [20], [32].

#### V. CONCLUSION

Reference [32] believes that families with high dialogue tend to educate children with high social, leadership, and problem solving skills and will not attain this goal unless they employ the authoritative parenting style.

Families with high dialogue usually tend to create an open relationship. They encourage disagreements and expression of emotions and these results in experiencing the pleasure of engaging in an open and broad communication with others, increase self-worth, altruism, sensitivity to other people's emotions, sense of responsibility, problem solving skill, communication skills, greater tolerance, and finally development of independence [32], [33].

As the result, in order to educate children with great social skills, having open and broad communication within the family and valuing the opinions and ideas of the children seem necessary.

Like any other researches in human science, this study had some limitations. Therefore, it is recommended that researches use larger sample size in different populations with regard to gender and cultural differences. Also, it is recommended to control the other factors which affect family communication patterns viz. socio-economic status, parental psychological status, perceived family environment, etc.

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