

## Authority Versus Power in Children's Educability

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Due to the importance of the parents' educational methods' impact on the teenagers' behavior, this study aims to investigate the relationship between the parents' educational method and their child's behavioral problems, the family's impressibility and the parents' reaction during this authority process. Parents' educational methods effect on the teenager's behavioral problems.

**Keywords:** educational method, behavioral problems, teenager, authority, power

### 1. Introduction:

Behaviorism experts have always emphasized on the effective role of the family in the social behaviors of the teenagers towards their peers (Katez&Gotman, 1993). During sociability process, influenced by the family, the child gains many of the established values, beliefs, and behavioral factors of the society. Then as he enters adolescence, youth and adulthood, this process would get completed influenced by the society (Masen1991). During the adolescence some teenagers tend to hazardous behaviors like smoking, using drugs and alcohol, having unhealthy

sexual affairs, escaping from school or home, and the other felonious behaviors which are harmful for their physical and psychological health (Townsend 2000). According to the studies, the children who have positive and open relationship with their parents, possess a sense of independence and freedom matched with their age, and encounter fewer behavioral problems (Birne, Haduk,& Poston 2002). The parents' educational methods include important consequences for the teenager's social compatibility. Based on the combination of the responding rate and the parents' expectations, these educational methods are divided into four types: authoritative, power-oriented, easygoing, and incompetent (Hettrington&Ryce, 1995). In the incompetent method, the parents' responding and

expectations rate is low (Gold Stein& Hiun2000). In the easygoing method, parents show high responding rate but low expectations. In the power-oriented method, the parents set strict rules for their children, but they aren't intimate and supportive (Chua2000). In the authoritative method, parents have high rate of both responding and expectations (Lotfabadi1997). A weak psychological health during adolescence can lead to harmful physical and psychological behaviors. The studies indicate that about 15% of teenagers are suffering psychological problems (Wlex&Townsend1998). Therefore it's very important to pay attention to the children's psychological health. There's a connection between the parents' educational methods and the range of the teenagers' behavioral problems. The more support and response from the parents, the less behavioral problems for the children.

## 2. Discussion

The studies show that teenagers, who see their parents as authoritative and supportive, are less likely to be influenced by their friends' antisocial behaviors. These children are usually independent, self ruling and curious (Wanderznden1993). Hence the child's most fundamental need for his growing is a safe and reliable family atmosphere (Lotfabadi1380).

Lamborn and his coworkers believe that teenagers whose parents give them excessive freedom and independence, or have no control over their behaviors, would show the highest range of behavioral problems. It's true about the studies of Awax, Jackson, and Henrickson as well.

The authoritative educational method which includes emotional acceptance, psychological independence, constant behavioral control, has got a negative connection with the behavioral problems (Onatso- Ariolumi, Normy&Anula 1998); and the teenagers are less likely to commit antisocial activities (Gary&Stinberg 1999). The studies illustrated that being grown up in such an environment will cause the positive indexes of psychological health such as positive evolution of moral,reluctancy to crime and drugs (Stenberg2000).Teenagers grown up in an authoritative environment show their obedience and submission apparently, but in fact they are full of excitement and anxiety. They show enmity toward their peers or younger children. They neither have enough growth, nor can participate in team works. They are often unstable and insecure and avoid taking responsibilities (Shariatmadari·2001). The authoritative educational method seems to be the best one because it has got the least connection with the behavioral problems, and leads to a better psycho-social adjustment (Noak, Kar&olah 1999).

In this study, the parents apply the above mentioned method therefore the results show a significant relationship between the parents' educational method and the child's behavioral problems. Adolescence is one of the most problematic periods in which the families face tensions. In this phase, the biological, cognitive and social maturity of the teenager includes new needs, expectations and interests, and can create imbalance in the family system. This unbalanced phase

would make some troubles for the family. Several studies have shown that the conflict between the parents and the children increase during this period, so there would be less unity and intimacy between them (Sasmanet all1987, Stenberg 1988). In this phase, it's necessary for the system to review the relationships and enter the family into a new phase which is different from the previous one; however the amount of time and effort spent on developing the balance is not the same for all the families. Stenberg believes that these differences are not related to the governing principles inside the family system. These principles are unwritten rules which determine not only the freedom of decision making but the expectation level of each family member.

The parents' belief system must be modified based on the child development, so that they become more compatible with their children; otherwise their beliefs would leave inappropriate impact on the child's behavior (McKwi 1980). In addition Kuper(1994) has indicated that the values governing the parent-child relationship and the parents' educational beliefs are highly influenced by the cultural beliefs.

Edwards (1992) showed that the parents-child agreement on outdoor activities is variable in different cultures. Some parents facilitate these activities while the others limit them. The parents' cultural attitude effects on their decisions and the way they treat their children.

But the results obtained from this study show that different beliefs in a single cultural group prevent having a balanced behavioral profile based on the cultural context; because many factors like the parents' educational level and their socio-economic class can affect their beliefs. Kohen's findings in 1979 show that the teenager's personality and his behavior pattern depend on the way he had been trained in his childhood. Encouraging, sensitive and receptive parents, who usually use verbal reasoning to transfer the principles and orders, would have children with high social abilities, organized behavior and socio-emotional security.

Based on this study, the children have more tendencies to spend their leisure at home with the family if they have an intimate relationship with their parents. Klis's findings (1998) also proved that the intimate relationship between parents and their children is the most important factor which can prevent children to spend their time outdoors. But if the parents neglect intimacy, it will lead to negative impact on the child's self-esteem, and will cause depression and desire to get away from the family (Rosenberg, shuler& Shunbakh1989).

### **Parents-Child Expectations**

Dekwi, Num, and Mas' findings (1997) show that the parents' different expectations are mostly related to the behavioral autonomy and interpersonal relationship. Parents expect their young children to pass the adolescence slowly, while the children are more interested to accelerate it. On the other hand, the findings show that the parents' expectations are influenced by the child's gender. Contrary to the parents' expectancy, the girls demand their friends' companionship and right to make independent decision, while the boys want more behavioral autonomy and self-ruling.

Based on what have been mentioned, the parental educational system- which is influenced by their cultural and educational beliefs- is one of the important factors that effects the development of expectations in the teenagers. Regarding the related researches, the main objective of this study is to identify the teenagers' attitude about their parents' educational methods. The obtained results show that the parents' cultural values, their socio-economic class, and their educational level, all play crucial roles in formation and development of their beliefs.

### 3. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the findings, the parents are generally kind, generous, and patient who respect their children's ideas. This profile of parental behavior indicates that they have an intimate and interactive relationship with their children. It seems that the parents can understand their children's expectations and try their best to reduce the gap between themselves and their children, through understanding their problems, not comparing them with the other children and being a good listener to their problems. Therefore this educational pattern enhances the child's interest in parents in a way that he'd like to spend his leisure with them. According to klis' findings (1998) in the cultures in which the family holds a special place, the teenagers tend to spend more time with their parents interestedly. This study's findings also have proved this matter. So it can be claimed that the way children spend their free time is greatly influenced by the cultural values ruling the family and the intimacy level between parents and their children. This study's results show that the teenagers believe their parents have a good relationship with their friends. Consistent with findings of Winter et al (1988), when the parents respect their children's friends and make a good relationship with them, the children refer to them more than their peers to solve their personal issues.

These results illustrate that the educational beliefs of the parents are not only influenced by their culture, but by some other variables like the parents' educational level and their career (Kohen1979, Ogaki, Stenberg 1993).

In general it can be said that the parents' understanding of their children's problem is derived from their cognitive, social, and biological changes which canbe effective in making an intimate and balanced relationship between them and their children in the family system.

Regarding this study's findings- especially the differences in the parents educational methods based on their socio-economic situation- it's recommended to research about the similar subcultures of Iranian society, so it would be possible to figure out the children's expectations in their relationship with their parents, and collaborate with the parents to make an appropriate relationship with their children

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