



## **MODERATING EFFECT OF INTROVERSION AND EXTROVERSION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTING STYLES AND EGO STRENGTH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Ego strength plays a determinant role in individual's psychological health. The aim of this study was to examine the potential effects of extroversion-introversion on the relationship between parenting styles and Ego strength. Therefore, 190 girls in third grade of high school completed Ego Strength Scale (ESS) and Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-revised (EPQ-RS). Also, one of the students parent were asked to complete the Baumrind Parenting Styles Questionnaire. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between authoritative parenting and Ego strength ( $R=0.29$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Extroversion demonstrated a significant positive association with ego strength ( $p<0.01$ ,  $R=0.21$ ). As substantial through data analyses, the relationship between authoritative parenting and Ego strength was moderated by extroversion. It can be concluded that the relationship between authoritative parenting and Ego strength is not simply linear and potentially influenced by extroversion.

**KEYWORDS:** Parenting style-ego strength-extroversion-introversion-moderated role

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to Freud's tripartite division of the human psyche, ego strength is one of the important characteristic factors<sup>23</sup>. Ego strength refers to ego ability for successfully manage forces contrasting instinctive demands, internal preventions and social needs<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, it includes individuals' ability to tolerate anxiety, moderating capacity and catalyzing instinctive stresses and super ego<sup>34</sup>. In daily life, individuals have a significant ability to regulate ego and overcome impulses encouraging them to overeating, recreational drug use, involvement in violence, annoying others, lavishing, involvement in indecent sexual deeds, and

procrastinating. This ability is very compatible to obtain intentionally restraining impulses and preventing immediate satisfaction of needs and desires. It gives individuals the ability of performing goal-focused behaviors which leads to desirable results<sup>23</sup>. Ego strength is a mixture of mental capabilities which is showed by individuals in their interactions with others and their social environment<sup>20</sup>. Appropriate support of children by parents and their warm authority is directly related with positive results in adolescence<sup>42</sup>. Family influences rational, emotional and social growth<sup>9</sup>, intellectual stimulation, emotional health, and self-esteem and self-concept growth of children<sup>29</sup>. Therefore, one of factors which strengthens children's ego is parents' interaction with them. In

spite of different opinions regarding different domains, psychologists agree on the important role of family in evolution process. It reflects the obvious effect of family on child's evolution process<sup>2</sup>. Experiencing safe and stable relations with parents and breeding in a peaceful and regular space is the necessity of mental well being and sociability of child<sup>41</sup>. Evolution is influenced by parents' attitudes and relation type<sup>33</sup>. Parenting styles is one of the basic components in breeding and growth and often, it is related with the most important achievements such as their cognitive and social abilities<sup>40</sup>. Darling and Steinberg (1993) define parenting as parents' attitude and method to breed children which is reflected in their behaviors during interaction with him/her. According to Barner (2005), the foundation of parenting style includes two basic components: 1) parents support which is related to emotional quality of child-parents relation and 2) parents' ordering which refers to parents' capability in ordering and organizing. Baumrind (1967) introduced parenting style as controlling function and based on two dimensions of kindness and control, he divided it into three styles of authoritative (which is characterized by high levels of kindness and participation, sensitivity and responsibility, argumentation and logic, control and limitation, encouraging and confirming, and self-following training in child), authoritarian (which entails high levels of limitation, punishment, rejection, control, obedience, strictness, and authoritarian behaviors) and permissive (which introduces high levels of responsibility, acceptance, child-orientation, excessive supporting, and low levels of participation, monitoring and control). With respect to different factors which can influence ego strength, in addition to investigating the effect of parenting styles on children's ego strength, the present study explores the effect of introversion-extroversion characteristic features on ego strength. Characteristic features refer to an organized set and a unit consisting of relative constant and stable features in individuals which altogether distinguish an individual from other individuals<sup>39</sup>. These features can affect ego strength of adolescents. Therefore, introversion and extroversion attributes are investigated as factors affecting ego strength of children along with parenting styles. Eysenck believes that extroversion attribute is dipole such that extroversion is at one pole and introversion is at the opposite pole. Extrovert people are mostly specified by sociable

and impulsivity traits; however, they are humorous, liveliness, and optimist. Introverts can be also introduced as calm, inactive, non social, cautious, reflective, pessimist, peace-seeking, conscious, and conditional<sup>17</sup>. Various studies explored the relation between different traits such as ego strength and ego resiliency and parenting styles and they confirmed this relation<sup>22-24</sup>. For example, according to the report of Eisenberg et al. (2003), high level of control in children indicates positive parenting styles of their parents. Authoritarian and permissive styles are related with lower self-efficacy<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, Keener (2010) revealed that there is a significant positive relation between positive control of parents and their information about adolescents issues. Shafiei (2013) concluded that all sub-components of family's desirable functioning have a significant positive relation with ego strength of children and its scales. Additionally, families who challenge their children and emphasize on kindness accelerate ego resiliency onset<sup>8</sup>. A review on the related literature revealed that there is a relation between various parenting styles and characteristic features such as introversion-extroversion<sup>10,35</sup>. On the other hand, regarding the relation between some characteristic traits and ego strength, Farkas and Orosz (2013) concluded that people with higher ego resiliency are more introvert and extrovert people obtain lower scores in ego resiliency. However, Scanlan and Schroeder (2004) found out that there is a positive relation between life satisfaction and ego resiliency and extroversion and a negative relation between life satisfaction and ego resiliency and neuroticism. Since studies conducted on the relation between authoritative parenting style and its effect revealed that this parenting style is related with adoptive traits such as high social communication skill, appropriate decision making ability, self-confidence, high self-efficacy, and mental health<sup>33</sup>, it seems that authoritative parenting style can predict ego strength of children. Further, it is predicted that permissive and authoritarian parenting styles which involves extremely controlling and giving independency to children do not breed high ego strength in their children. On the other hand, with respect to the importance of ego strength in mental health and its ability to prevent mental disorders as well as disregarding this concept in related studies in Iran, we tend to examine various parenting styles and ego strength of children. Notably, given to the related literature, it is assumed that extroversion-

introversion characteristic traits can moderate this relation. Accordingly, the main purpose of this work is to explore the moderating role of introversion-extroversion in relation with parenting styles and ego strength of children.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Population, Sample and Sampling Method*

The statistical population included third grade high school girl students in Tehran. To estimate the sample size in correlation and regression based researches, Klein<sup>30</sup> divided path analysis models into simple, almost complex and complex models. In simple model, sample size is 100; in almost complex model, the sample size is 100-200 and in complex models, the sample size is above 200. With respect to the number of investigated variables, the present study is simple; therefore, the sample size was estimated 200 which were decreased to 190 after implementation. After this stage, dividing the city into four regions of east, west, north, and west, two girls high schools were randomly selected from each region. Then, questionnaire was distributed among the third grade students and their parents. To conduct the study, we referred to the selected schools and talked to manager and consultant of the third grade. After justifying the officials regarding the procedure and time of completing questionnaire, the questionnaires were distributed in the school and completed by the students during 15 to 20 minutes.

## INSTRUMENTATION

**Baumrind Parenting Styles Questionnaire (1991):** this questionnaire has been adopted from parents' authority theory constructed based on Baumrind theory. The questionnaire entails 30 items (10 items related to absolute permissive styles; 10 items related to authoritative styles and 10 items related to authoritarian style). In the present study, the testees who were mothers or fathers of the studied sample should express their opinions on each item based on a five-point Likert Scale (0 to 4). Summing the scores, 3 separate scores for permissive, authoritarian and authoritative styles were obtained. Bouri (1944) reported the reliability of the questionnaire 0.81, 0.85 and 0.92 for permissive style, authoritarian style and authoritative style, respectively. He also evaluated

the validity of the questionnaire and indicated that mother's autocracy has a reverse relation with her permission (-0.38) and authority (-0.48) while fathers' autocracy has a reverse relation with his permission (-0.50) and authority (-0.52).

**Ego Strength Scale (ESS):** it is a self-reporting tool consisting of 25 items which measure ego capability level to restrain and manage difficult situations and conditions of life (Besharat, 2007). This scale, in fact, measures individual's reactions to difficult situations of life based on a five-point spectrum (1=very low to 5=very high). Psychometric features of ego strength scale have been investigated and confirmed by several researches during 2005-2011 in patient (n=372) and normal (n=1257) samples. In the present paper, Cronbach's alpha for total ego strength scale score was obtained 0.81-0.93. This internal consistency coefficient confirmed ego strength scale. The reliability of ego strength scale for patient samples (n=122) and normal samples (n=274) two times with 2-4 weeks interval was obtained 0.73 and 0.88. These coefficients are all significant at the level of 0.001; therefore, the reliability of the scale is confirmed (Besharat, 2007, 2013).

**Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised (EPQ-RS):** the short form of Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (1969) is a self-assessment test containing 48 items (yes/no). The items measure three characteristic dimensions of introversion against extroversion (E), neuroticism against emotional stability (N) and psychosis orientation against impulse control (P). Various studies have reported acceptable reliability coefficients for this questionnaire. Reliability and validity of this questionnaire were also evaluated by Bakhshipour and Bagherian (2007) on Iranian population. Their research results revealed that there is a good correlation between the Persian version of EPQ-RS sub-scales and long form of EPQ-R and their four-factor structure has the best structural fitness. The obtained reliability for P, E and N were 0.67, 0.89 and 0.90, respectively. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for E scale was also reported 0.77, 0.74 and 0.52, respectively<sup>4</sup>.

## FINDINGS

To analyze the obtained data, Pearson correlation coefficient and hierarchical regression were

employed. Pair correlation of the research variables are presented in Table 1. As the research findings show, ego strength of children has a significant positive relation with authoritative parenting style ( $R=0.92$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), permissive parenting style ( $R=0.18$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) and extroversion ( $R=0.21$ ,

$P<0.01$ ). Also, extroversion has a significant positive relation with authoritative style ( $R=0.25$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Moreover, there is a significant reverse relation between authoritative and authoritarian styles ( $R=0.40$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

**Table 1.**  
*Correlation matrix of the research variables*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1- Ego strength	1				
2- Authoritative parenting style	0.29**	1			
3- Authoritarian parenting style	-0.01	-0.40**	1		
4- Permissive parenting style	0.18**	0.17*	0.52	1	
5- Extroversion	0.21**	0.25**	-0.02	-0.03	1

Sample size= 190 \*  $P<0.05$  \*\*  $P<0.01$

According to Table 1, the computed correlation coefficient between authoritative parenting style and children's ego strength ( $r=0.29$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) is significant at the confidence level of 0.01. Therefore, it can be concluded that increasing authoritative parenting style causes to the increase of children's ego strength and decreasing authoritative parenting style causes to the decrease of children's ego strength. Further, there is a positive relation between permissive parenting style and children's ego strength ( $R=0.18$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) at the confidence level of 0.5. The positive relation between ego strength and introversion ( $R=0.21$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) also indicates people with higher level of extroversion have higher ego strength and people with higher introversion have lower ego strength. Additionally, ego strength has no significant relation between ego strength and authoritarian

parenting style. To investigate the moderating role of introversion-extroversion, hierarchical multi-regression analysis was used. With respect to the significant change in  $R^2$  at all three orders of regression as well as significant positive standard regression coefficient of the interaction between authoritative and extroversion ( $\pi=0.045$ ,  $\beta=-0.93$ ), it can be stated that extroversion can moderate the relation between authoritative parenting style and children's ego strength. In other words, the relation of authoritative parenting style with children's ego strength depends on extroversion level. With respect to the positive beta coefficient of interaction, it can be said that in people with higher levels of extroversion, authoritative parenting style more affects ego strength and in people with higher levels of introversion, authoritative parenting style has less effect on ego strength.

**Table 2**  
*The summary of hierarchical regression results for moderating effect of introversion-extroversion on authoritative parenting style*

Steps	Predictors	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	B	$\beta$	T
The first step	Authoritative style	0.28	0.07	16.22**	0.65	0.28	4.22**
The second step	Extroversion	0.35	0.12	9.90**	1.39	0.21	3.14**
The third step	Interactive effect of authoritative style and extroversion	0.38	0.14	4.06*	-0.51	-0.22	1.42*

\* $p<0.05$  \*\* $p<0.01$

On the other hand, with respect to entering the interactive effect of introversion and permissive parenting style at the third order of regression equation cannot significantly increase  $R^2$ ; therefore, it can be stated that extroversion cannot moderate

the relation between permissive parenting style and ego strength. In other words, the relation between permissive parenting style and ego strength does not depend on extroversion.

**Table 3.**

***The summary of hierarchical regression results for moderating effect of introversion-extroversion on permissive parenting style***

Steps	Predictors	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	B	$\beta$	T
The first step	Permissive style	0.14	0.02	3.96**	0.43	0.14	1.99**
The second step	Extroversion	0.26	0.07	7.10*	1.45	0.22	3.17*
The third step	Interactive effect of permissive style and extroversion	0.26	0.07	4.81	-0.04	-0.22	-0.53

\* $p < 0.05$  \*\* $p < 0.01$

Considering the obtained results, extroversion moderates only the relation between authoritative parenting style and children's ego strength.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

During the recent decades, family and its parenting styles have been highly advocated in psychology. This fact indicates the importance of family role in various aspects of human growth since appropriately supporting children by parents and their warm authority are directly related with positive results in adolescence<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, the experiences of adolescents with their parents during adolescents play an important role in their evolution<sup>2</sup>. one of important issues regarding family is that whether family and parenting styles can hinder mental disorders or whether family can influence growing and changing adoptive traits in children? Some adoptive traits have key importance in mental life of individuals and can prevent the incidence of mental contrasts and various diseases. As one of these important traits in mental health of individuals, it can be referred to ego strength. Ego strength refers to ego ability for successfully manage forces contrasting instinctive demands, internal preventions and social needs<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, it includes individuals' ability to tolerate anxiety, moderating capacity and catalyzing instinctive stresses and super ego<sup>34</sup>. With respect to the importance of ego strength growth during child's evolution and the role of family's parenting styles in creating and growing various traits in individuals, the present work compared various parenting styles and children's ego strength. As the research findings revealed, authoritative parenting style

predicts children's ego strength. This finding is consistent with the results reported by Shafeie (2013). In his study, Shafeie concluded that all sub-components of family's desirable functioning have a significant positive relation with ego strength of children and its sub-scales except problem solving with restraint. In the same line, Eysenbergn et al., (2003) and Keener (2010) revealed that positive parenting style and positive control of parents are correlated with high control of ego and its evolution. Some other studies indicate the relation of parenting styles and the interactions of parents with ego resiliency. For example, Harden (2004) revealed that positive family environment increases adolescents' ego resiliency when facing with challenging situations. In this regard, Flores et al. (2005) also reported that weak interactions between parent and child decrease adolescents' opportunities to grow ego resiliency. Considering the research findings and various studies results, it can be stated that parenting style is one of the most important factors on the growth and evolution of ego strength of children. In other words, parent-child's relation with high levels of kindness and participation, sensitivity and responsibility, argumentation and logic, control and limitation, encouraging and confirming, and self-following training in child leads to higher levels of ego strength in adolescent. It is due to the fact that parents with authority, in addition to creating clear behavioral rules for their children, encourage them to independency and allow them to make decision and independently

behave in a specific framework. Accordingly, children facing with mental and external contrast experience various ways of solving problems and managing challenges. Hence, in adolescence and youth, they can successfully solve challenges. Therefore, in adolescence when dependency is less to family, they can overcome their problems by themselves and react to problems more adoptively. Such an issue causes higher mental health in adolescents and youth and protects them to suffer from mental disorders. In addition to parenting styles, other variables can influence ego strength of individuals. A review of the related literature shows that characteristic features such as extroversion and introversion are related with ego strength-related components. Although there is no study on the significant relation between introversion-extroversion and ego strength, Letzringa et al. (2004) conducted a study on characteristic traits and ego resiliency. As they concluded, sub-scales of ego resiliency are related with various characteristic traits. According to the analyses, it was concluded that in addition to the fact that there is a significant positive introversion and ego resiliency, extroversion moderates the relation between ego strength and authoritative parenting style. In other words, in people with higher levels of extroversion, the relation between ego strength and authoritative parenting style is stronger. Scanlan and Schroeder (2004) found similar results. As they reported, life satisfaction and ego resiliency have a positive relation with extroversion and a negative relation with neuroticism. However, Farkas and Orosz (2013) obtained inconsistent results. As they found,

people with higher ego resiliency are more introvert and extroverts obtained lower scores in ego resiliency. Of course, ego strength is a mixture of mental capabilities which people show in their interactions with others and social environment<sup>21</sup>. On the other hand, weak ego indicates defect in internal equipments of individuals which leads to abnormal exchange with social environment<sup>23</sup>. It can be concluded that there are more evidence on the positive relation between introversion and ego strength. Given to the aforementioned, it seems that introverts have more social dominance and self expression<sup>15</sup> and they are characterized with some specifications such as sensitivity to desirable and positive cues in environment. They also have willingness to experience positive affection<sup>31</sup> and have stronger ego strength. In other words, it seems that extroverts can more successfully overcome life challenges and problems; more easily confront with mental contrasts, and are more social and able to manage group. To sum up, the research findings revealed that adoptive traits such as ego resiliency grow in families who follow authoritative parenting styles components. Moreover, extroversion predicts ego strength in individuals. Therefore, training families in the form of in-school or in-community workshops and through mass media in the form of lecture, film, and serials regarding parenting styles can be effective in mental health of society from childhood. Additionally, with respect to the importance of ego strength in the growth and evolution of children and disregarding this variable in Iranian studies, it is suggested to take other effective factors into consideration.

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