

# Investigating the simple and multiple relationships of girls' suicide with the personality characteristics and mothers' parenting styles

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## ABSTRACT

Suicide is one of the regretful phenomena which has some known and recognized psychological, social, cultural, and biological dimensions and also results in economical and human consequences, and etc. this is very important not only for its global and widespread incidence, but also due to the conditions which prepare the background for this break out. Suicide and its causes and motivations are counted as social problems. This unusual phenomenon has been existed in all of the societies, from the most advanced societies to the most retarded ones. Therefore, the aim of the present research was to investigate both the simple and the multiple relationships of the girls' suicide with personality traits and the mothers' parenting methods in Ilam. The method of the research is correlation descriptive. The statistical universe of the research includes the mothers of the daughters who have attempted suicide and at the time the research was being conducted inhabited in Ilam. 120mothers were selected through accessibility sampling as the sample of the research. The instruments for collecting data were the NEO Inventory of Personality aspects and Bamrind's Parenting Methods Inventory. The data gathered was analyzed through Pearson correlation method and multiple regressions. The results revealed that authoritative parenting method had the highest and the despotic parenting method had the lowest mean among parenting methods. The results of correlation showed that personality traits and parenting methods have a significant relationship and the results of step by step regression method illustrated that the personality traits of psychoneurosis and extroversion predict permissive parenting method; the personality traits of psychoneurosis, conscientiousness, flexibility, and favorability predict despotic parenting method; and the personality traits of psychoneurosis, favorability, and conscientiousness predict authoritative parenting style. Therefore, it can be claimed that personality traits are predictors of parenting style in mothers whose daughters have attempted suicide.

**KEYWORDS:** suicide, personality characteristics, parenting styles, girls

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## INTRODUCTION

Suicide is defined as a both volitional and deliberate attempt of a person to put an end to his/her own life. Unfortunately the evidences show that this phenomenon is rapidly spreading in the world today (Rezaeian, 2009). The women are more subject to suicide than men (Carli et al, 2013). According to the studies done, the amount of suicide in Ilam province has increased from 10.2 cases per 100,000 populations in 2001 to 13.7 in 2004 (Rajie & Yasami, 2005). According to vulnerability – stress model in psychological pathology, a great deal of researches have investigated the roles of familial factors as the background factor of the individuals' vulnerability.

One of the hazardous factors, which have not been duly investigated yet, is the parents' personality dimensions. This is a factor which seems to have a role in emerging both psychic traumas and the children's suicide (Gunty, 2008). Parenting styles is an effective determining factor which has an important role in physic traumas and the children's growth (Rajaie & Yasami, 2005). This point which says that the parents can be very effective on their children's personality growth is an evident point. It seems that the various parenting styles can have different influences on social – psychological growth of the children.

In investigating whether the child-rearing practices can predict suicide or not, Donath and colleagues (2014) concluded that the child-rearing practices are effective factors in committing suicide. Authoritative practice is the appropriate practice, while the permissive practice is the risky practice to commit suicide.

Smith & Moore (2013) showed that authoritative practice of child-rearing is accompanied with psychological and behavioral adjustment, so that the adolescents who consider their parents as authoritarian have been reported to have depression, anger, suicide thoughts, and behavioral problems.

According to Maimon and colleagues (2010), family supported and attachment is effective on suicide. They have emphasized the role of the indirect control and parent-child attachment on reducing the possibility of suicide attempts. The adolescents having a better and positive attachment with their parents are less likely to be exposed to suicide conditions. The results of sociological and psychological researchers have revealed that both of the contextual factors (such as the family's social integrity, family support shortage, and weak relationships with the peers, and personal predictors, such as depression, emotionality, and impulsiveness) are related to suicide,

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suicide attempts, and suicide thinking (Perez, et al, 2002; Brezo et al, 2006). Chen and Chan (2006) found, in a study on Hong Kong adolescents, that in social environments, stressful events can increase the tendency toward suicide, while the friends' and family's support can decrease this tendency.

Flieschmann and colleagues (2005) in a research, studied suicide and the psychiatric diagnoses in individuals lower than 30 and found that, of the subjects studied, 88% had at least one psychoneurotic disorder and the most frequent disorder was that related to temperamental disorders with 42.1 percent. Moreover, Goodwin and colleagues (2004) in their study concluded that the parents' suicide thoughts or their records of attempting suicide were a strong predictor of their children's attempt of suicide in the future. The results of other studies has shown that feeling lack of security within the family (Myhr and colleagues, 2004), and the lack of attachment and adjustment within the family are related to depression, suicide thinking and attempting suicide among the children (Payne, 1997).

Therefore, the present study has been performed with the aim of determining the simple and multiple relationships of both personality characteristics and the mothers' parenting styles with the girls' suicide in Ilam.

## METHOD

The method of the research is correlation – descriptive. The statistical universe of the research includes the mothers of the girls who have attempted suicide and dwell in Ilam. 120 mothers were selected through availability sampling method. The instruments through which the data was collected were personality five – factor inventory and the Bamerind's parenting inventory.

The NEOPRI-R test is the filled and completed form of NEO test for personality specification. NEO test was invented by Costa and McCrea in 1985 which included 240 questions and used for surveying and evaluating five personality factors Extroversion, Adaptability, Conscientiousness, Neurotic and Obedience. For each question there were five choices 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4; fully acceptable, acceptable, neutral, rejected, fully rejected orderly (Rooiantan 2006). Garoosi (2001) in his research reported that validity coefficient gained for five factors A, O, E, N and C were orderly 0.83, 0.75, 0.80, 0.79 and 0.79. Rooeintan reported that in his research the validity coefficient for his research on five-factor questionnaire were N = 0.80, E = 0.64, C = 0.64, O = 0.56 and A = 0.74. In this research, Kronbach Alpha and Division into halves were used for calculating the validity coefficient of NEO 240-question scale where the coefficients were 0.75 and 0.40 orderly for total scales which means they are acceptable.

### **Diana Baumrind's Inventory of Child-rearing Practices:**

This instrument has been developed according to Baumrind's theory of the behavioral models of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, which has been built to investigate the models of influence and the practices of child-rearing. This inventory includes 30 items, of which 10 items measure the authoritative, 10 items measure authoritarian and the remaining 10 items measure the permissive child-rearing practices. In this instrument, the subjects (either fathers or mothers), through reading each of the items, declare their view on a 5-degree scale. Bouri (1991), through re-testing, reported the reliability of this instrument for the mothers and the fathers exercising permissive practice to be 0.81 and 0.77, authoritarian practice to be 0.86 and 0.85, and the authoritative practice to be 0.78 and 0.88, respectively. Bouri reported the diagnostic validity of this instrument as credible. Based on these, the authoritarian practice by the father has an inverse relationship with his permissiveness (-0.38) and his authoritative practice (-0.48), and the mother's despotism, too, has an inverse relationship with her permissiveness (-0.50) and her authority (-0.52). This inventory has previously been used by Esfandyari (1995), Reza'i (1996), and Bigham (2000). These researchers have reported this inventory to be acceptably valid and reliable. In the research conducted by Rsfandyari, the results showed that the inventory had the face validity. The reliability of the inventory was 0.69 for permissive practice, 0.77 for despotic practice, and 0.73 for authoritative practice (Gholami Jaliseh, 2007).

### **Personality Questionnaire (NEO)**

The NEOPRI-R test is the filled and completed form of NEO test for personality specification. NEO test was invented by Costa and McCrea in 1985 which included 240 questions and used for surveying and evaluating five personality factors Extroversion, Adaptability, Conscientiousness, Neurotic and Obedience. For each question there were five choices 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4; fully acceptable, acceptable, neutral, rejected, fully rejected orderly (Rooiantan 2006). Garoosi (2001) in his research reported that validity coefficient gained for five factors A, O, E, N and C were orderly 0.83, 0.75, 0.80, 0.79 and 0.79. Rooeintan reported that in his research the validity coefficient for his research on five-factor questionnaire were N = 0.80, E = 0.64, C = 0.64, O = 0.56 and A = 0.74. In this research, Kronbach Alpha and Division into halves were used for calculating the validity coefficient of NEO 240-question scale where the coefficients were 0.75 and 0.40 orderly for total scales which means they are acceptable.

**Findings:** The results of mean of parenting styles showed that the means of permissive, despotic, and the authoritative styles are 17.91, 23.80, and 13.36, and the standard deviations of these parenting style has the lowest and the despotic parenting style has the highest mean among the parenting styles. The correlation results of table 1 show that personality characteristics of the parents have a significant relationship with parenting styles ( $P \leq 0.001$ ).

Table 1: The matrix of correlation between personality characters and parenting styles

variables	permissive	despotic	authoritative
psychoneurosis	0.46	0.57	-0.61
extroversion	-0.44	-0.49	0.50
flexibility	-0.29	-0.58	0.53
agreeableness	-0.40	-0.55	0.56
Conscientiousness	-0.34	-0.50	0.53

In table 2, the results of regression analysis show that from among personality characteristics with permissive parenting styles, psychoneurosis and extroversion, respectively, predict this style of parenting. Flexibility, agreeableness, psychoneurosis, and conscientiousness respectively predict authoritative style.

Table 2: The results of multi –variation regression analysis of personality characteristics with parenting styles through stepwise method

Criterion variables	Prediction variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	B	β	t	P
permissive	Psychoneurosis	0.46	0.21	0.15	0.33	0.83	0.001
	extroversion	0.54	0.29	-0.16	-0.30	-3.51	0.001
despotic	Flexibility	0.59	0.35	-0.11	-0.24	-2.93	0.004
	Agreeableness	0.67	0.45	-0.11	-0.26	-3.32	0.001
	Psychoneurosis	0.71	0.50	0.08	0.22	2.68	0.008
	Conscientiousness	0.72	0.52	0.08	-0.18	-2.20	0.02
authoritative	Psychoneurosis	0.61	0.37	-0.13	0.36	-4.42	0.001
	Agreeableness	0.68	0.46	0.12	0.28	3.53	0.001
	Conscientiousness	0.70	0.49	0.10	0.21	2.64	0.009

## DISCUSSION

The present research was done with the objective of determining the simple and the multiple relationships of the daughters' suicide with the mothers' personality traits and their child-rearing practices. The correlation showed that child-rearing practice is related to personality traits.

Findings show that the authoritative parenting style had the lowest and the despotic parenting style had the highest means among parenting styles, that is to say, the mothers whose daughters have attempted suicide have used a despotic parenting style for rearing their children. In addition, parenting styles and personality features have a significant relationship and the results showed that the personality features of psychoneurosis and extroversion predict permissive parenting style, psychoneurosis, consciousness, flexibility, and agreeableness predict despotic parenting style, and the features of psychoneurosis, agreeableness and consciousness predict authoritative parenting style.

According to the results obtained from the research, it can be said that the majority of the mothers whose daughters have committed suicide, have practiced an authoritarian style for the rearing of their children, and the mothers, having high psychoneurotic traits and low extroversion traits, display permissive child-rearing practice. The mothers having high psychoneurotic traits, flexibility, low acceptability, and conscientious traits display an authoritarian practice. In general, through the mothers' personality traits, it is possible to predict their child-rearing practices.

Shahami et al (2013) in their research concluded that authoritative parenting style has a negative effect on self – esteem and hope, and a positive effect on psychoticism; the authoritative parenting style has a positive effect on hope and self – esteem and a negative effect on psychoticism. Moreover, Donat and colleagues (2014) in investigating if parenting styles could predict attempting suicide found that parenting styles is an important factor in attempting suicide, the authoritative parenting style is the appropriate style, and the permissive style is the hazardous style for attempting suicide. Smith and Moore (2013) have reported that the authoritative parenting style is accompanied by psychological and behavioral adjustment reduction, so that, the Young who see their parents as despotic have been reported to be depressed, indignant, have suicide thoughts and behavioral of the parents are related to suicide thoughts.

What which has been shown in the research is that the more the expectation of the parents from the children, the weak the performance of their children will be. But something should be taken into account which is that sometimes the more the expectations of the parents, the better the performance of the children will be. The parents' too high expectations can sometimes be damaging for the children. Anyway, the permissive parents do

not monitor their children's growth and development as they should do and do not consider the important aspects of their children's growth (Faramarzi and colleagues, 2013). The family has always been a support and the first school of mental health. Therefore, the timely recognition of the family's emotional and mental problems can lead to the reduction of suicide attempts (Meshkati and Meshkati, 2002). King and colleagues (2001) state that the weak environment of the family and the low control by the parents are related to suicide thoughts.

It is an evident point that the parents can be very influential on their children's personality growth, and it seems that the different practices of parenting, too, have different effects on the children's mental-social growth and direct them in the course of their future life. Moreover, the parents' personality aspects can create challenges for the child-rearing process which results in the increase of the children's behavioral disorders (Kochanska, 1997).

It is evident that the results of this research, in addition to making clearer the position of suicide attempts in Ilam Province, can be used as a guide for formulating an all-inclusive program for preventing form suicide attempts in this Province. Furthermore, this research can be of benefit for the families whose children have attempted suicide and those suffering from psychological disorders.

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