

Research Article

Predicting Sexual Performance Based on Parenting Styles and Sexual Education Styles with the Mediating Role of Anxiety in Married Women

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Abstract

Objective: Family dynamics play a significant role in establishing emotional relationships among its members and fostering psychological well-being, which extends to individual and collective members' peace of mind. This study aimed to investigate the impact of parenting styles and sexual education styles of parents, with anxiety as a mediating variable, on the sexual performance of married women.

Method: The study population consisted of married women who presented with sexual dysfunction at psychiatric and women's clinics in Tehran. Since the minimum number of samples in structural equation modeling is 200 individuals, 200 individuals were selected through convenience sampling. The research instruments included Baumrind's Parenting Styles Scale (1972), Parental Sexual Education Styles Scale (2010), Beck Anxiety Scale (1990), and Rosen et al.'s Sexual Performance Scale (2000). Structural equation modeling was employed to analyze the data.

Results: The findings of the present study showed that anxiety does not have a mediating effect on the effect of parents' strict sexual education style on the sexual performance of married women, but it has a complete mediating effect on the sexual performance of married women in the authoritative sexual education style of parents. Also, anxiety has a partial mediating effect on the impact of parents' authoritarian parenting style on married women's sexual performance, and it does not have a mediating effect on the parents' authoritarian parenting style on married women's sexual performance ($p > 0.05$).

Conclusion: The study concludes that the sexual performance of married women is significantly influenced by the styles of parenting and sexual education they received, with anxiety playing varied mediating roles. An authoritative approach to sexual education, coupled with parenting styles that manage to reduce anxiety, tends to enhance sexual performance in women.

Keywords: Anxiety, Health, Parental Sexual Education Styles, Parenting Styles, Sexual Function.

How to Cite

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Extended Abstract

Introduction and Objective

A stable and satisfying marital relationship is essential for the psychological and emotional well-being of individuals, and sexual performance is a core component of marital satisfaction. Sexual function includes desire, arousal, orgasm, and satisfaction, and its impairment is a common issue among women, regardless of cultural or socioeconomic background (Blais & Livingston, 2021; Kargar et al., 2023). Female sexual health plays a significant role in overall well-being and quality of life (Panahi et al., 2021).

Psychological factors such as anxiety can greatly affect sexual performance. Anxiety may reduce sexual motivation, increase fear and self-consciousness during sexual activity, and interfere with arousal and orgasm (Mohammadi et al., 2021; Silvain et al., 2018). It is often experienced before new situations and can undermine confidence and self-regulation (Kazemi et al., 2023).

Another important factor influencing adult sexual behavior is parental influence, particularly parenting style and sex education style. Parenting styles are typically categorized as authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive, each affecting children's emotional development and long-term behaviors differently (Lee, 2023; Lepe et al., 2021). Additionally, parents' approaches to sex education—whether strict, permissive, or authoritative—play a key role in shaping a child's sexual attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors (Nesfchi et al., 2022).

Despite evidence linking parental styles to many areas of adult functioning, few studies have investigated their combined impact on married women's sexual performance. Moreover, the mediating role of anxiety in this relationship remains understudied.

The present study aims to examine the impact of parenting styles and parental sex education styles on the sexual performance of married women, considering the mediating role of anxiety. By exploring these relationships, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological and social roots of female sexual health.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a quantitative, correlational design using structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships between parenting styles, parental sex education styles, anxiety, and sexual performance in married women. The statistical population consisted of married women experiencing sexual dysfunction who were referred to psychiatric and women's clinics in Tehran. A total of 200 participants were selected through convenience sampling, based on the recommended minimum sample size for SEM (Hooman, 2016). Inclusion criteria required participants to be married, aged 20–50 years, and engaged in regular marital sexual activity (defined as sexual intercourse at least once per month over the past six months). Individuals with physical or psychological conditions known to affect sexual performance, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hormonal imbalances, depression, or anxiety, were excluded.

Participants' mean age was 35.8 years ($SD = 7.4$), with ages ranging from 21 to 57 years. The majority held a bachelor's degree (68%), followed by 22% with a high school diploma, and 10% with a master's degree or higher.

Data were collected using four validated instruments: (1) Baumrind's Parenting Styles Scale, which assesses permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting styles; (2) Abdulzadeh and Ki Khosravi's Parents' Sex Education Styles Scale, which measures strict, liberal, and moderate sex education styles; (3) Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), which evaluates the severity of anxiety symptoms; and (4) the Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) adapted by Mohammadi et al., which assesses six domains of sexual functioning.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Payame Noor University ethics committee (Code: IR.PNU.REC.1402.221), and

informed consent was secured from all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

Results

The structural equation modeling revealed that authoritarian parenting and strict sexual education styles negatively affect women's sexual function, both directly and through increased anxiety. In contrast, authoritative parenting and sexual education styles positively influence sexual performance and reduce anxiety. Permissive sexual education had no significant effect. Anxiety was a significant negative predictor of sexual performance and mediated the effects of authoritarian styles. These findings underscore the crucial role of parenting and sexual education in shaping emotional well-being and sexual function in married women, emphasizing the need for supportive, balanced, and emotionally attuned parental approaches to foster healthy adult sexual relationships.

Discussion

This study examined the influence of parenting styles and parental sexual socialization styles on the sexual performance of married women, with anxiety as a mediating variable. The findings revealed that authoritative parenting and sexual socialization styles are positively associated with sexual performance, while authoritarian styles are negatively associated, and permissive styles show no significant effect. These results align with prior research, highlighting the role of early family dynamics in adult sexual well-being.

Authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, structure, and responsiveness, appears to foster emotional security and autonomy, which contribute to healthier sexual function. In contrast, authoritarian parenting, marked by high control and low emotional support, was linked to increased anxiety, which in turn negatively impacted sexual performance. Permissive parenting, which lacks structure and involvement, was not directly linked to sexual performance but may contribute to emotional neglect and anxiety through other mechanisms.

Anxiety emerged as a significant mediator in the relationship between parenting styles and sexual performance. Specifically, anxiety partially mediated the negative effects of authoritarian parenting and fully mediated the effect of authoritarian sexual socialization. These findings support cognitive-behavioral and attachment theories, which suggest that anxiety related to sexual performance can lead to avoidance behaviors and psychological distress, disrupting intimate relationships.

Conclusion

Moreover, the study emphasized the growing need for appropriate sexual education, especially in an era of rapid information dissemination through social media. Inadequate or overly strict sexual education may contribute to confusion, guilt, and anxiety, affecting sexual satisfaction and functioning in adulthood.

The study's limitations include its exclusive focus on married women in Tehran, limiting generalizability. Future research should include diverse populations, both genders, and cultural contexts to deepen understanding. Incorporating additional psychological variables, such as self-esteem and coping strategies, is also recommended to better explain the pathways between upbringing and adult sexual function.

Introduction

The family unit is established through the marriage of two individuals. If the couple's needs are not met and a positive resolution isn't reached, it can lead to failure, stress, anger, frustration, and eventually boredom (Vafaeenejad et al., 2019). Sexual function encompasses various elements such as sexual desire, arousal,

orgasm, and satisfaction (Blais & Livingston, 2021). Sexual dysfunction in women is highly prevalent, occurring across diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds (Karger et al., 2023). In women, sexual function is linked to their ability to achieve sexual arousal, orgasm, and satisfaction, contributing to overall health and quality of life (Panahi et al., 2021). Healthy sexual functioning involves a desire for sexual activity, physiological arousal, orgasm, and resolution (Blais & Livingston, 2021). Psychological factors like anxiety, depression, and perfectionism can impact sexual function (Tavoli et al., 2021; Hosseini et al., 2022).

Research indicates that parenting styles can significantly impact various aspects of individuals' lives, including sexual performance (Pious, 2023; Wang et al., 2022). These styles, categorized into authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive styles, have distinct impacts on children's behavior and development. Authoritarian parenting, characterized by high control and low emotional support, often leads to negative behaviors such as aggression and emotional issues (Lee, 2023). Conversely, the authoritative style, which combines emotional support with high control and independence, tends to result in positive outcomes like self-reliance and better academic performance (Lepe et al., 2021). Lastly, the permissive style, marked by a lack of control and responsiveness to children's wishes, can lead to delinquency and aggressiveness in children (Faraji et al., 2021).

Parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's understanding of sex education, and parental involvement in sex education is vital (Roy et al., 2022). Parents' sex education styles can influence a child's sexual development by informing and guiding parents on how to deal with this sensitive issue with different attitudes and behaviors (Nesfchi et al., 2022). Parents' sex education styles significantly influence children's understanding of sexuality and reproductive health. Research by Jin (2021) underscores the importance of parents having accurate sexual knowledge and a positive attitude toward sex education to educate their children. Nesfchi et al. (2022) categorize parents' sex education styles into three dimensions: strict, permissive, and authoritative, impacting how parents communicate with their children about sexual education. Research indicates that this approach is associated with positive outcomes such as delayed sexual initiation, increased contraceptive use, and reduced risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies (Droeger, 2023).

On the other hand, the authoritarian sex education style involves restrictive communication about sex, emphasizing abstinence, and avoiding open discussions about sexuality. This approach can lead to children feeling ashamed or guilty about their sexuality, hindering their ability to seek accurate information and make informed decisions about their sexual health, potentially resulting in lower contraceptive use and higher risks of STIs and unintended pregnancies (Chen, 2024). In contrast, the permissive sex education style lacks clear guidance and boundaries regarding sexual behavior, leaving children feeling unprepared and lacking the necessary knowledge to navigate their sexual development responsibly. Research indicates that this approach may not be as effective as authoritative approaches in promoting healthy sexual behaviors (Zhu, 2022).

One factor that can affect the relationship between parenting style, sexual education style, and sexual performance is anxiety. Anxiety is a mental state characterized by extreme excitement, featuring fear, doubt, and excessive worry. Anxiety can cause disturbances in the functioning of the digestive system through central control mechanisms or as a result of humoral effects, such as the release of catecholamines (Black & Ford, 2020). Anxiety often occurs before new experiences and may be a threat to control individual actions and self-confidence (Kazemi et al., 2023). Anxiety significantly impacts sexual performance, leading to decreased motivation and heightened fear during sexual activity (Mohammadi et al., 2021). In sexual activity, women

are often less motivated than men and may experience higher levels of fear (Brassard et al., 2015). The effect of anxiety on sexual desire in women has been confirmed, playing a role in almost all of their sexual disorders (Sadock, 2015). Sex should be a pleasurable experience, but when there is anxiety about sexual performance, it can be difficult to feel attractive or intimate with one's partner (Silvain et al., 2018). The fear and worry associated with sexual performance anxiety can hinder a person's ability to focus on the physical aspects of sex, leading to difficulties in arousal and reaching orgasm (Mohammadi et al., 2021).

Overall, sexual performance is a vital aspect of a healthy and fulfilling marriage, influenced by a complex array of biological, psychological, and social factors. One often overlooked yet crucial factor is the role of parental influence, particularly parenting styles and sexual education styles, on an individual's sexual performance. Research indicates that the way parents communicate with their children about sexuality and relationships can have a lasting impact on their sexual attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Moreover, anxiety has been identified as a key mediator in the relationship between parental influence and sexual performance, significantly affecting an individual's ability to engage in healthy and enjoyable sexual experiences. Despite the recognized influence of parenting styles and sexual education on various aspects of well-being, limited research has explored their combined impact on the sexual performance of married women. The lack of research in this area leaves a significant gap in our understanding of how parental influence shapes married women's sexual experiences and how anxiety affects this relationship. The present study was conducted to investigate the effect of parenting styles and sexual education styles of parents, with the mediating effect of anxiety, on the sexual performance of married women.

Method

The study population consisted of married women who presented with sexual dysfunction at psychiatric and women's clinics in Tehran. Since the minimum number of samples in structural equation modeling is 200 individuals, 200 individuals were selected through convenience sampling (Hooman, 2016). Some of the inclusion criteria included being married, engaging in regular sexual activity, defined as engaging in marital sexual relations at least once a month within the past six months, absence of medically related issues, specifically excluding participants with conditions directly impairing sexual function, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, hormonal disorders, depression, and anxiety, and being within the age range of 20-50 years old, to account for age-related effects on sexual function. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to analyze the data and examine the relationships between parenting styles, sexual education styles, anxiety, and sexual performance.

Participant Section

The sample consisted of 200 married women residing in Tehran, Iran, who were seeking treatment for sexual dysfunction at psychiatric and women's clinics. The participants' ages ranged from 21 to 57 years ($M = 35.8$, $SD = 7.4$). The majority of the participants (68%) had a bachelor's degree, followed by 22% with a high school diploma and 10% with a master's degree or higher.

Ethical Statements

This study was conducted by the ethical principles outlined by the Research Ethics Committees of Payame

Noor University and received ethical approval with the code IR.PNU.REC.1402.221. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study.

Measures

In the present study, the following instruments were utilized to measure the research variables:

1. ***Baumrind's Parenting Styles Scale (1970)***: This scale, based on Baumrind's parental authority theory, assesses three parenting patterns: permissiveness, authoritarianism, and authoritative parenting. The questionnaire consists of 30 items, with 10 items each for permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative parenting methods. Translated by Hosseinpour (2008), responses are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from completely agree to completely disagree. Reliability and validity were assessed by Borai (1991), with reliability coefficients ranging from 0.75 to 0.86 using retest and Cronbach's alpha methods. Also, the test-retest method was used to calculate the reliability, and the reliability rate was 0.81 for the permissive style, 0.86 for the authoritarian style, and 0.78 for the authoritative style.
2. ***Parents' Sex Education Styles Scale (2010)***: Developed by Abdulzadeh and Ki Khosravi (2010), this 33-item questionnaire targets parents of children aged 4 to 12 years, focusing on sexual education and development. Through factor analysis, three styles emerged: strict, liberal, and authoritarian/moderate sex education styles. Responses are scored on a Likert scale from 0 (completely disagree) to 4 (completely agree). Cronbach's alpha was 0.751 for the entire questionnaire, and correlations were observed with parenting styles and practices.
3. ***Beck Anxiety Scale (1990)***: This 21-item scale measures the intensity of restlessness and anxiety, with scores ranging from 1 to 63. Scores below 9 indicate no anxiety, while scores above 31 indicate severe anxiety (Beck, 1990). Validity and reliability were established by Kaviani and Mousavi in Iran, with high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.92$).
4. ***Sexual Functioning Scale (2000)***: Utilized by Mohammadi et al. (2007): This questionnaire is based on Rosen et al.'s (2000) Women's Sexual Performance Questionnaire, translated and validated into Persian. It assesses sexual performance across six domains: desire, psychological stimulation, moisture, orgasm, satisfaction, and sexual pain. Scores for each domain are calculated based on the sum of scores for questions within the domain, with reliability coefficients of 0.70 or higher.

Results

The analysis of outliers was performed using box plots, and outliers were replaced with the mean of the variables. Before conducting the path analysis, assumptions, including normality of distribution, independence of errors, and multicollinearity, were examined. To assess the normality of the research variables' distributions, skewness and kurtosis of the score distributions were used, indicating that the distributions of the scores were normal (with a range of distribution between -1 and +1). To examine the independence of errors, the Durbin-Watson test was employed, yielding a value of 1.62, which indicates no correlation between errors since the acceptable range is between 1.5 and 2.5. To assess multicollinearity

among predictor variables, both the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance were used, showing no multicollinearity among variables since the VIF range was less than 5 and the tolerance was higher than 0.1. The normality of error distribution was further examined using a Q-Q plot, and the results of the plot indicated the normality of the errors.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficients between research variables

variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
sexual function	24.24	3.75	-							
Permissive parenting style	22.36	6.72	0.201	-						
Authoritarian parenting style	16.33	6.63	-0.562	-0.23	-					
Dominant parenting style	22.55	6.25	0.425	0.086	-0.625	-				
Strict sexual education style	20.51	7	-0.462	-0.008	0.693	-0.596	-			
Permissive sexual education style	27.49	8.03	0.081	-0.053	0.049	-0.024	0.003	-		
Dominant sexual education style	24.59	5.62	0.219	0.104	-0.049	0.07	0.03	0.201	-	
anxiety	23.72	13.24	-0.617	-0.228	0.407	-0.237	0.218	0.218	0.327	-

Pearson's correlation test was used to check the relationship between variables. The null hypothesis in this test is the zero-correlation coefficient (absence of relationship). The results of Pearson's correlation test showed that there is a significant positive relationship between permissive parenting style, authoritative parenting style, and authoritative sexual education style with the sexual performance of married women. There is a significant inverse relationship between authoritarian parenting style, strict sexual education style, and anxiety with the sexual performance of married women. There is no significant relationship between the permissive sexual education style and the sexual performance of married women.

Table 2: Estimated coefficients of the structural model

independent variable Standard	The dependent variable	Estimated coefficient	Standard error of estimation	Critical ratio	The significance level estimation	Standard estimation coefficient
Permissive parenting style	sexual performance	0.022	0.027	0.804	0.421	0.43
Authoritarian parenting style	sexual performance	-0.097	0.031	-3.155	0.002	-0.189
Dominant parenting style	sexual performance	0.06	0.029	2.051	0.04	0.11
Strict sexual education style	sexual function	-0.1	0.026	-3.805	0.001	-0.205
Permissive sexual education style	sexual performance	-0.01	0.023	-0.413	0.679	-0.023
Dominant sexual education style	sexual function	0.05	0.034	1.462	0.144	0.082
Permissive parenting style	anxiety	-0.223	0.116	-1.925	0.054	-0.114
Authoritarian parenting style	anxiety	0.821	0.118	6.983	0.001	0.414
Dominant parenting style	anxiety	-0.095	0.125	-0.761	0.446	-0.045
Strict sexual education style	anxiety	-0.166	0.111	-1.495	0.135	-0.089
Permissive sexual education style	anxiety	-0.319	0.097	-3.285	0.001	-0.195
Dominant sexual education style	anxiety	-0.604	0.139	-4.355	0.001	-0.258
anxiety	sexual function	-0.128	0.017	-7.726	0.001	-0.494

According to the results, authoritarian parenting style has a significant negative effect on married women's sexual performance ($p = 0.002$, $\beta = -0.189$) and a strong positive impact on anxiety ($p < 0.001$, $\beta = 0.414$). Strict sexual education style exhibits a significant indirect effect on married women's sexual

function ($p = 0.001$, $\beta = -0.205$). Furthermore, the permissive sexual education style and dominant sexual education style both demonstrate significant indirect effects on anxiety ($p < 0.001$, $\beta = -0.195$ and $\beta = -0.258$, respectively). Notably, anxiety itself has a strong negative impact on sexual function ($p < 0.001$, $\beta = -0.494$). These findings underscore the critical importance of adopting healthy parenting styles and sexual education approaches to promote positive sexual well-being and mitigate anxiety in married women.

Table 3: Indirect effects

Direction	Estimated coefficient	Standard error of estimation	significance level	Standard direct effect
Indirect effect of permissive parenting style on sexual performance	0.029	0.032	0.092	0.056
Indirect effect of authoritarian parenting style on sexual performance	-0.105	0.047	0.005	-0.205
Indirect effect of dominant parenting style on sexual performance	0.012	0.036	0.475	0.022
Indirect effect of a strict sexual education style on sexual performance	0.021	0.042	0.186	0.044
Indirect effect of permissive sexual education style on sexual performance	0.041	0.039	0.013	0.096
The indirect effect of authoritarian sexual education style on sexual performance	0.078	0.036	0.008	0.128

Without the intervention of the mediator variable of anxiety, both authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles of parents have a significant effect on the sexual performance of married women ($p < 0.05$). However, the permissive parenting style of parents does not have a significant impact on the sexual performance of married women ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, mediation analysis can be conducted for the authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles. Anxiety has a partial mediating effect on the influence of parents' authoritarian parenting style on the sexual performance of married women, but it does not mediate the effect of parents' authoritative parenting style.

Similarly, without considering the mediator variable of anxiety, both strict and authoritative sexual education styles of parents significantly affect the sexual performance of married women ($p < 0.05$). However, the permissive sexual education style of parents does not have a significant effect on the sexual performance of married women ($p < 0.05$). Table 3 indicates that anxiety fully mediates the effect of parents' authoritarian sexual education style on married women's sexual performance, whereas anxiety does not mediate the impact of parents' strict sexual education style on married women's sexual performance.

Chart 1: The structural model of the influence of parenting styles and parents' sex education styles on sexual performance with the mediation of anxiety

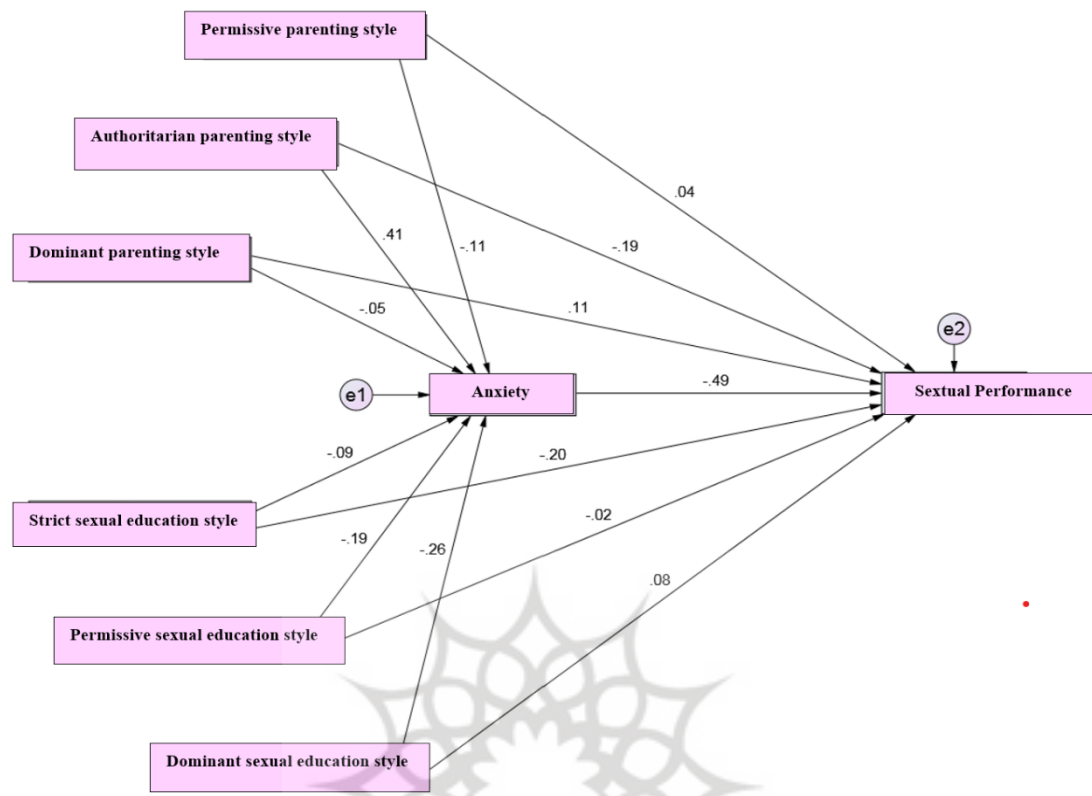


Chart 1 depicts a causal pathway model illustrating the impact of different parenting and sexual education styles on anxiety and sexual function. The model presents various parenting and sexual education styles as independent variables, highlighting their direct and indirect effects on both anxiety and sexual functioning.

Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of the current research was to examine the impact of parenting styles and parental sexual socialization styles, mediated by anxiety, on the sexual performance of married women. The results demonstrated that the influence of parenting styles and parental sexual socialization styles, mediated by anxiety, has a relationship with sexual performance. These findings align with the results of other researchers such as Kashkouli and Saqqi (2021), Silverman et al. (2021), Marvasti et al. (2022), Kamran et al. (2019), Borjalai et al. (2018), and Gholi et al. (2019).

The results indicate that the authoritative parenting style of parents has a significant positive impact on the sexual performance of married women. Conversely, the authoritarian parenting style of parents has a significant indirect effect on the sexual performance of married women. The permissive parenting style of parents does not have a significant impact on the sexual performance of married women. The research findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by Moravasti et al. (2021), Kamran et al. (2020), Borjalai et al. (2018), and Goli and Mohammadi Ahmadabad (2019).

According to Baumrind's theory of parenting styles, authoritative parents balance demand and responsiveness,

providing structure while encouraging autonomy, which leads to better psychological outcomes, including sexual performance. Conversely, authoritarian parenting, which is high in demand but low in responsiveness, may result in anxiety and low self-esteem, negatively affecting sexual performance (Pane, 2024). The study found that permissive and authoritative sexual socialization styles inversely impact anxiety, whereas a strict style increases anxiety. This aligns with attachment theory, which posits that children raised in supportive and understanding environments develop secure attachments, leading to lower anxiety. Conversely, a strict sexual socialization style can be seen as an extension of authoritarian parenting, leading to higher levels of anxiety due to fear of punishment or rejection (Wang, 2024).

Sexual issues can be detrimental and lead to abnormalities that are incompatible with the philosophy of upbringing and growth. Sexual upbringing depends on the upbringing in all dimensions of human existence and development. The results of this study showed that the authoritarian parenting style had a significant positive effect on the anxiety of married women. The permissive parenting style and the authoritative parenting style had no significant impact on the anxiety of married women. These results are consistent with the findings of Alavimansh and Bakhtiarpoor (2015). In explaining the results, we can say that family experiences affect all aspects of adolescent life, such as behavioral tendencies or delinquency. Adler believes that parents who reject their children lack love and security, leading to feelings of worthlessness, anger, and low self-esteem in them. Hornai and Fromm have also conducted extensive studies on the lack of intimacy and love from parents and their effects on child security. Authoritarian and controlling parents have children who are more unstable, rebellious, aggressive, and contentious. Additionally, adolescents with authoritarian parents are more depressed than adolescents with democratic (permissive) parents.

The results of this study showed that the permissive sexual socialization style and the authoritative sexual socialization style of parents have a significant inverse effect on the anxiety of married women. In explaining the results, sexual socialization is defined as a precise and reality-based program tailored to the individual's age, providing education on sexuality, relationships, and reproductive health according to the individual's needs. Today, with the expansion of social media, the way information is accessed has rapidly changed, and these media have quickly replaced traditional communications, providing information to everyone in the shortest possible time.

The results of this study showed that anxiety has a significant inverse effect on the sexual performance of married women. The findings of this research are consistent with the results of studies by Amanollahi and Emery (2015) and Khanaghaei et al. (2019). Explaining the findings revealed that anxiety in the sexual performance of married women can lead to numerous problems in the relationship between spouses. Many individuals suffer from sexual performance anxiety. Individuals with severe anxiety experience fear and anxiety during sexual performance, which arises when engaging in a sexual act.

The results of this study showed that without the mediation of anxiety, the authoritarian parenting style and the authoritative parenting style significantly influence the sexual performance of married women. However, the permissive parenting style has no significant effect on the sexual performance of married women. Therefore, mediation analysis is applied to the authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles. Explaining the results indicated that due to the vulnerability of women, their childhood is likely a critical period for parents in raising children. Women who have parents with an authoritative parenting style have warmer and more emotional relationships with their parents and can better communicate their feelings and issues with them. It

is likely to contribute to the emotional, social, and normative behaviors of these women and will be reflected in their married life, where they will have expected sexual performance. According to cognitive-behavioral theories, anxiety, especially related to sexual performance, can trigger a cycle of fear and avoidance, leading to difficulties in sexual relationships. High levels of anxiety can cause physical and psychological stress, impairing sexual function (Huntington et al., 2020).

On the other hand, permissive parents avoid punishing and criticizing their children and pay minimal attention to them, resulting in less destruction in their emotional relationships with their children. Permissive parents have no control over their children, leading these children to have lower levels of self-esteem, curiosity, and self-control and higher levels of anxiety due to parental neglect. In the authoritative style, parents establish clear rules and expectations for their children and negotiate with them about these rules. They understand the child's perspective and use logic and power to enforce their standards (Kadoglou, 2023).

The results confirm that anxiety has a significant negative effect on sexual performance. According to cognitive-behavioral theories, anxiety, especially related to sexual performance, can trigger a cycle of fear and avoidance, leading to difficulties in sexual relationships. High levels of anxiety can cause physical and psychological stress, impairing sexual function (Silverman et al., 2021).

The findings indicate that anxiety mediates the relationship between both authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles and sexual performance. In the absence of anxiety, the authoritarian style negatively and the authoritative style positively influence sexual performance. It supports the transactional model of stress and coping, which suggests that how individuals perceive and manage stress (in this case, anxiety) significantly affects their outcomes. Parenting styles shape how individuals develop coping mechanisms, which in turn influence their sexual performance (Afonso et al., 2022).

This research encountered several limitations. First, the study's focus was limited to married women in Tehran, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or populations. Cultural and social differences among participants also posed limitations, as these factors could influence both parenting styles and sexual performance in ways not fully captured by the study.

To address these limitations, future research should explore similar questions in diverse communities and geographical regions, including both genders, to enhance the generalizability and explanatory power of the findings. Moreover, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how parenting styles and sexual socialization practices influence sexual performance over time, considering the role of cultural and social factors. Lastly, incorporating a broader range of psychological factors, such as self-esteem and coping strategies, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

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