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## The Relationship between Perceived Parenting Styles and Fear of Being Single: The Mediating Role of Dependency and Undeveloped Self Schemas

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### Extended Abstract

#### Aim

Selecting a spouse stands as one of life's pivotal decisions for every individual (Rao, 2017). Recent societal shifts have led to a rise in the number of single individuals (Haden, Agnew, & Tan, 2018), potentially triggering the phenomenon known as "fear of being single" (Darba, Shahmoradi, Naqsh, & Madani, 2019). Thus, this study aims to explore the correlation between perceived parenting styles and the fear of celibacy, mediated by dependency schemas and an underdeveloped self.

#### Methodology

This research employs a descriptive correlational design, utilizing path analysis within an applied research framework. The statistical population comprises all students enrolled at Tehran University during the 2019-2020 academic year, totaling 50,000 individuals (2970 women and 2030 men). A sample of 334 participants (242 women and 92 men) was selected using an available sampling method. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including standard deviation, mean, and correlation coefficients, were employed for data analysis. Cronbach's alpha was utilized to assess tool reliability and validity, while skewness and kurtosis were examined for data normality. The proposed model was evaluated using path analysis, with data analyzed using SPSS version 26 and AMOS software version 23.

The Perception of Parents Questionnaire (POPS) (Grolink, Ryan, & Desi, 1991) comprising 42 items was utilized to measure parental perception. The Fear of Being Single Scale (FOBSS) (Spielman et al., 2013) assessed the fear of being single, while the Young Schema Short Form (YSQ-SF) (Young, 1999) measured primary maladaptive schemas.

#### Findings

The results revealed a significant negative correlation between perceived mother's parenting style and dependency schema ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $r = -0.22$ ); as well as an inverse significant relationship with the underdeveloped self-schema ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $r = -0.13$ ). Similarly, the perception of father's parenting style exhibited a negative significant correlation with dependency schema ( $r = -0.26$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and underdeveloped self-schema ( $r = -0.27$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). A positive significant correlation was observed between dependency schemas, underdeveloped self, and the fear of being single ( $r = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The underdeveloped self-schema ( $\beta = 0.15$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) exerted a direct positive influence on the fear of being single, while mother's parenting style ( $\beta = -0.14$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) demonstrated a direct negative impact on the fear of being single. father's parenting style exhibited a direct negative effect on both dependency schema ( $\beta = -0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and underdeveloped self ( $\beta = -0.27$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, father's parenting style ( $\beta = -0.07$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) exerted a significant negative indirect influence on the fear of celibacy. However, the indirect effect of mother's parenting style on the fear of being single

was not significant. Model testing confirmed that dependency schemas and underdeveloped self play mediating roles in the relationship between paternal parenting style and the fear of being single.

### **Conclusion**

The study underscores a significant negative association between perceived parental styles and dependency schemas as well as an underdeveloped self. Additionally, a positive significant correlation exists between dependency schema, underdeveloped self, and the fear of being single. Notably, the perception of father's parenting style indirectly relates to the fear of celibacy through dependency schemas and underdeveloped self, while mother's parenting style exhibits a direct negative correlation with the fear of being single. These findings emphasize the importance of adopting appropriate parenting approaches to influence children's life decisions and mental well-being positively. Moreover, interventions based on these findings can aid single individuals in fostering committed and successful relationships, enhancing interpersonal skills, and making informed marital choices. Lastly, recognizing the pivotal role of fathers in shaping schemas and influencing the fear of being single, families can cultivate a more conducive environment for children's education and growth by placing greater emphasis on paternal involvement in family dynamics.

**Keywords:** Dependence, Fear of Being Single, Parenting, Schema, Undeveloped Self.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The present study adhered to ethical standards, including confidentiality of information, voluntary participation of participants, obtaining consent from participants, the principle of confidentiality, and non-harm to participants. This research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences at the University of Tehran with the code IR.UT.PSYEDU.REC.1401.050.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

There is no conflict of interest among the authors of this article.

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