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## MODERNIZATION IN ISRAELI ARAB SOCIETY - PARENT INTERVENTION PROG

ABSTRACT. Abu Ghanem Sundus, *Modernization in Israeli Arab Society – Parent Intervention Prog* [Zmiany w izraelskiej społeczności arabskiej – aspekt interwencji rodzinnej]. *Studia Edukacyjne* nr 54, 2019, Poznań 2019, pp. 335-343. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 1233-6688. DOI: 10.14746/se.2019.54.20

The main objective of this article is to review the advantages and effectiveness of the parental intervention program based on the conceptual model, in which the parents are agents of change in the raising of the awareness and the increase of the knowledge about the developmental changes during adolescence and the reinforcement of the authoritative parenting style, and to examine whether the proposed parental intervention will lead to the promotion of health behaviors, including the improvement of sleep patterns, the limitation of the exposure to media, and the improvement of the quality of life among Arab adolescents.

**Keywords:** Modernization, Arab Society in Israel, Parenting Style, Intervention Program, sleep patterns, adolescents

### Introduction

The Arab family in Israel is considered a part of patriarchal society, which situates the woman in a low place in the family hierarchy and raises the status of older and young men.<sup>1</sup> The changes that have occurred in Arab society, like the decline of agriculture and the rise in unemployment, caused quantitative changes at different levels in the woman's status and have forced her to enter the work force<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Alhiadari, *Patriarchy and Issue of Gender among Arabs*, Beirut 2003 (Arabic); M. Haj Yahia, *The Arab Family in Israel: Its Cultural Values and Their Connection to Social Work, Society and Welfare*, 1994, 14, p. 249-264 (Hebrew).

<sup>2</sup> G. Absoy, *Relations between Parents of Adolescents as a Function of Culture and Values*, M.A. Thesis, Haifa University 1999 (Hebrew).

The extended family was the basic social unit in Arab society and served both as an economic unit and as a unit of property and unit of residence, when at the head of the family there was the father, who completely ruled his family. In the shared household there was his wife (or his wives), his unmarried daughters, his unmarried sons, and his married sons, with their wives and children. The nuclear family was assimilated in the extended family, and this influenced the woman's status, the patterns of consumption, and the planning of the family. The woman's status steadily strengthened as she advanced in the family lifecycle, and especially with the division of the typical extended family and the establishment of a new family unit, which later became an extended family, in which the mother acquired a strong status in the different decisions in family issues, in the sons' marriages, and in the control over their wives. In contrast, the young bride suffered from a low status and needed to adjust herself to a large number of family members.<sup>3</sup>

The couple relationship was not perceived as equal in the family relations. The role of the father is to punish, to control, and to impose discipline, while the role of the mother is to support, to education, and to raise. The role of the child is to obey and to submit to the parents. Arab society prefers harmony with the environment and preserves the family relations and collectivist behavior over individual orientations and behaviors. Family problems develop when the family or the individuals do not maintain harmony between them and the environment and the outside world. Emotional difficulties and personal and interpersonal conflicts derive from the disobedience of the instructions and the ignoring of society's expectations.<sup>4</sup>

### Parenting Style in Arab Society

The parenting style is closely related to the cultural background.<sup>5</sup> The research findings of Dwairy (2006)<sup>6</sup> show that the typology of Baumrind is not totally commensurate with the parenting styles in Arab countries, which

<sup>3</sup> M. Al-Haj, *Family Life Styles in an Arab City in Israel*, Doctoral Dissertation, Jerusalem 1983 (Hebrew); M. Al-Haj, *Social Change and Family Processes: Arab Communities in Shefar-am*, Westview 1987; H. Rosenfeld, *Change, Barriers to Change, and Contradictions in the Rural Family*, [In:] *The Arabs in Israel - Continuity and Change*, Ed. A. Laish, Jerusalem 1981, p. 76-104 (Hebrew).

<sup>4</sup> M. Haj Yahia, *The Arab Family in Israel: Its Cultural Values and Their Connection to Social Work, Society and Welfare*, 1994, 14, p. 249-264 (Hebrew).

<sup>5</sup> R.M. Smith, I.C. Eastman, *Shift Work: Health, Performance and Safety Problems, Traditional Countermeasures, and Innovative Management Strategies to Reduce Circadian Misalignment*, *Nature and Science of Sleep*, 2012, 33, p. 23-54.

<sup>6</sup> M. Dwairy, K.E. Menshar, *Parenting Style, Individuation, and Mental Health Of Egyptian Adolescents*, *Journal of Adolescence*, 2006, 29, p. 103-117.

are characterized as countries with a traditional, authoritarian regime. In the Arab countries, the authoritarian style appears accepted and even normal when it is exerted by the parents and the teachers towards the children.<sup>7</sup> It was found that the authoritarian style does not negatively influence the mental health of the Arab youth.<sup>8</sup> Some research studies show that Arab children and youths are satisfied with this style and do not complain about violent or abusive behavior on the part of their parents.<sup>9</sup>

Regarding the Palestinian Arabs in the Occupied Territories, it was found that they tend to reject the parenting styles accepted in the West, because of their opposition to the West in general. In addition, they cannot afford to be parents with an authoritative or permissive parenting style since they live under occupation and therefore they are characterized more and tend more to use the authoritarian parenting style.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, the Israeli Arabs conduct a complex lifestyle: on the one hand, they identify with the traditional collective Palestinian people and culture and on the other hand, as Israeli citizens they are influenced by and adopt values from the Israeli Western culture. This complexity causes an inconsistent style in parenting and sometimes even contradicting styles.

A research study among Israeli Arab adolescents showed that the authoritative parenting style is associated with better self-image and self-esteem and with less anxiety, depression, behavior disorders, and identity confusion. Conversely, as previously noted, negative influences of the authoritative parenting style on the mental health of Israeli Arab adolescents were not found.<sup>11</sup>

Innovative research studies on the topic indicate a trend of change in attitudes towards parent-child relations. Haj Yahia (2006)<sup>12</sup> found significant differences between women from three generations (grandmother, mother, and granddaughter), so that as the generation is younger, it is less characterized by traditionalism and presented a more positive attitude towards an authoritative parenting style. Other research studies performed in recent years among groups of adolescents support the argument that the characteristics of Arab society change gradually and that Arab society in Israel is found in a period of transition and is influenced by what is happening around it. It is

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<sup>7</sup> M. Dwairy, *Addressing the Repressed Needs of the Arabic Client*, Cultural Diversity and Mental Health, 1997, 3(1), p. 1-12.

<sup>8</sup> M. Dwairy, *Parenting Styles and Psychological Adjustment of Arab Adolescents*, Transcultural Psychiatry, 2004, 41(2), p. 233-252; M. Dwairy, K.E. Menshar, *Parenting Style, Individuation*, p. 103-117.

<sup>9</sup> M. Dwairy, *Cross-Cultural Counseling: The Arab-Palestinian Case*, New York 1998.

<sup>10</sup> M. Dwairy, *Parenting Styles and Psychological Adjustment*, p. 233-252.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> M. Haj Yahia, *Couples and Parents in the Arab Family in Israel: Processes of Change and Preservation in Three Generations*, Ph.D. dissertation, Haifa University 2006 (Hebrew).

exposed to Western values and norms following its encounter with Jewish society, satellite television, Internet, and many other factors, thus leading to the adoption of a more authoritative parenting style than the authoritarian or permissive parenting styles.<sup>13</sup> In addition, society is influenced by the expectations accepted in Western society, according to which good parenting means clear and firm guidance for children moderated by warmth, flexibility, and verbal negotiations.<sup>14</sup>

Research studies performed in the field of parent-child relationships in Arab society indicate a difference in the reporting of adolescent girls and the reporting of adolescent boys. The girls reported a more positive relationship with their parents and a more authoritative parenting style in comparison to the boys. In parallel, the boys reported a more authoritarian parenting style.<sup>15</sup> This finding is not commensurate with the expectations accepted in traditional society, according to which good parenting is to display especially strong firmness towards girls.<sup>16</sup> In addition, there is lack of accord with another research study in which parents of Arab children reported strict discipline towards the social behavior of girls more than towards that of boys and stricter educational approaches towards girls.<sup>17</sup> It is possible that the explanation of this discrepancy is that in the period of tradition that the society is experiencing parents are behaving differently with their children. It appears that the parents' way of coping with girls regarding the way of education and rules of behavior and family laws is different from the perception of traditional education, which addresses girls more strictly. Parents hold negotiations with girls and adopt with them logical ways of speaking and persuasion alongside support and encouragement so as to keep them safe.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, it appears that while Arab society is exposed to new and different values and life style, which often contradict existing traditional values and are not yet accepted by the parents, the parents are more worried about and supervise the boys and are strict with them, since the boys are more exposed to permissiveness that characterizes Jewish adolescents and that is expressed in modern leisure time activities that may be accompanied by many dangers. This exposure derives from the considerable freedom and few re-

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<sup>13</sup> N. Anabusi, *Relations between Communication Style and Parenting Style and Communication and Style of Conflict Resolution in the Family among Arab Adolescents*, M.A. Thesis, Haifa University 2007 (Hebrew); R. Sharabany, Y. Eshel, C. Hakem, *Boyfriend, Girlfriend in Traditional Society: Parenting Styles and Development of Intimate Friendships among Arabs In School*, *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 2006, 32(1), p. 66-75.

<sup>14</sup> M. Dwairy, *Parenting Styles and Psychological Adjustment*, p. 233-252.

<sup>15</sup> M. Dwairy, K.E. Menshar, *Parenting Style, Individuation*, p. 103-117.

<sup>16</sup> M. Dwairy, *Addressing the Repressed Needs*, p. 1-12; M. Dwairy, *Cross-Cultural Counseling*.

<sup>17</sup> M. Dwairy, *Addressing the Repressed Needs*, p. 1-12.

<sup>18</sup> M. Dwairy, *Parenting Styles and Psychological Adjustment*, p. 233-252.

strictions imposed on them relative to girls according to traditional education. Therefore, during adolescence, when the adolescent seeks greater autonomy and independence and concurrently is more exposed, especially the son, will suffer from more supervision and punishment.<sup>19</sup>

One explanation of the phenomenon arises in the research studies of the characteristics of modern society, which are still not accepted in a society that is fundamentally traditional. Among adolescents in a traditional society, girls are less daring than boys and more avoid the display of rebelliousness against their parents.<sup>20</sup> Another explanation of the discrepancy between the expectations accepted in traditional society for the reports found in these research studies is that it is possible that in this situation of lack of fit between the expectation for freedom among boys and supervision of parents boys experience the parents' disciplinary efforts as more severe and stricter than do girls, who from the beginning do not have such expectations.<sup>21</sup>

### **Intervention for the Change of Sleep Patterns among Adolescents**

Few research studies have examined the influence of the parents' intervention on their adolescent children's sleep patterns. In most of the research studies, the agents of change were the adolescents themselves. In this subchapter, we review the researches in the field.

In an intervention research performed in a school in Australia,<sup>22</sup> which had the goal of evaluating and developing the motivation to improve sleep problems among adolescents, the average age was sixteen years. A total of 104 adolescents participated in the research, and they were the agents of change. The adolescents participated in four workshops, when the workshops provided information on the importance of sleep and the factors that influence the amount and quality of sleep and tips to help the students improve their sleep patterns. The research found an improvement in the students' knowledge about the importance of sleep in the experimental group but did not find changes in most of the measures of sleep in actuality. The motivation of the students in the experimental group to get up every morning at the same time rose during the program. The researchers concluded that the change in the

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<sup>19</sup> G. Absoy, *Relations between Parents*.

<sup>20</sup> M., Dwairy, *Addressing the Repressed Needs*, p. 1-12; M. Dwairy, *Cross-Cultural Counseling*.

<sup>21</sup> P. Perach, *Parent-Child Relation and Emotional Social Functioning of Arab Adolescents*, M.A. Thesis, Haifa University 2002 (Hebrew).

<sup>22</sup> N. Cain, M. Gradisar, L. Moseley, *A Motivational School-Based Intervention for Adolescents Sleep Problems*, *Sleep Medicine*, 2011, 12, p. 246-251.

knowledge does not lead to change in behavior and that it is necessary to help the students overcome obstacles on the way to change, including to provide knowledge to the students' parents as well.

A total of 61 girls, aged thirteen to fifteen, participated in an intervention research conducted in a private school for girls in Melbourne Australia. The girls participated in six sessions that addressed sleep hygiene, sleep times, sleep practices, and tools for coping with concerns when going to sleep and building a correct approach towards sleep. The researchers measured changes in the sleep practices and measure of anxiety. The girls filled out questionnaires and wore an actigraph for seven days before the intervention and after the intervention. The respondents showed significant positive changes in subjective measures of sleep, such as latency time, sleep effectiveness, and sleep duration. In addition, the respondents showed significant positive changes in an objective measure (actigraph), such as earlier sleep time and smaller differences in the time of going to sleep over the week. Changes were not found in indices of anxiety.<sup>23</sup>

To the best of my knowledge, research studies were not performed on the parental intervention and its influence on the adolescents' sleep patterns. The sole research work performed in Israel focused only on Jewish adolescents. The research was performed in Israel,<sup>24</sup> and 70 dyads of parents (primarily mothers) and adolescents participated in it. The mean age was 10.7 years, and 35 were in the control group and 35 in the experimental group. The data were collected before the intervention, after the intervention, and in a follow up of three months. The parents and the adolescents reported the improvement in the sleep patterns after the intervention program (earlier going to sleep time and increased sleep percentages, which refer to the net time of sleep of the time spent in bed).

### **Intervention for the Reduction of the Consumption of Electronic Media among Adolescents**

Few research studies have addressed the intervention for the reduction of the uncontrolled exposure to media. A qualitative research study performed in the United States intended to examine how parents and children imple-

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<sup>23</sup> B. Bei et al., *Pilot Study of a Mindfulness-Based, Multi-Component, In-School Group Sleep Intervention in Adolescent Girls*, *Early Intervention in Psychiatry*, 2012, p. 1-8.

<sup>24</sup> O. Flint-Bretler, *The Influence of Parental Intervention on the Exposure to Media and Sleep Patterns among Adolescents*, Doctoral Dissertation, Haifa University, Authority for Advanced Studies, 2013 (Hebrew).

ment the recommendations for the intelligent use of the media and evaluated the obstacles before the parents when they go to change the home environment.<sup>25</sup> The researchers concluded that there is confusion among the parents regarding the ways of implementation and that it is necessary to provide exact instructions in a gradual manner. On the basis of the trans-theoretical model for the change in stages,<sup>26</sup> the researchers proposed a number of strategies that will help the parents.

(1) The parents must note the amount of media consumption of their children.

(2) The parents must remove televisions and computers from the children's bedrooms.

(3) The television must be turned off when people are not watching it.

(4) Watching must be restricted on school days.

(5) Other joint activities, aside from watching television, should be found and physical activity should be encouraged.

(6) The television should be removed from the dining room and there should be no eating in front of the television and computer screens.<sup>27</sup>

To summarize, few research studies have been performed for the improvement of sleep patterns and the reduction of media consumption among adolescents. No research studies have been performed on the influence of the media on the sleep patterns of adolescents in the Arab sector in Israel.

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<sup>25</sup> A.B. Jordan et al., *Reducing Children Television-Viewing Time: A Qualitative Study of Parents and Their Children*, *Pediatrics*, 2006, 118(5), p. 1303-1310.

<sup>26</sup> J.O. Prochaska, C.C. DiClemente, *Transtheoretical Therapy toward a More Integrative Model of Change*, *Psychotherapy: Theory Researches and Practice*, 1982, 19, p. 276-288.

<sup>27</sup> A.B. Jordan et al., *Reducing Children Television-Viewing Time*, p. 1303-1310.

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