

**The Relationship between Parenting Practices and  
Oppositional Defiant Behavior in School Children**  
العلاقة بين ممارسات الابوة والأمومة وسلوك التحدي المعارض لدى أطفال  
المدرسة

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## The Relationship between Parenting Practices and Oppositional Defiant Behavior in School Children

العلاقة بين ممارسات الأبوة والأمومة وسلوك التحدي المعارض لدى أطفال المدرسة

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### المستخلص

**الأهداف:** هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى التعرف على العلاقة بين ممارسات الأبوة والأمومة وسلوك التحدي المعارض لدى أطفال المدارس.

**المنهجية:** ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة استخدم الباحث التصميم الارتباطي الوصفي. اختيرت عينة عشوائية منهجية مكونة من (380) تلميذاً وتلميذة من تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية (تلاميذ الصفين الخامس والسادس الابتدائي) في المدارس الابتدائية الحكومية وأولياء أمورهم في مدينة الديوانية في الفترة من 15 سبتمبر 2023 إلى 20 مايو 2024. تم استخدام مقياس التربية الوالدية ومقياس تقييم اضطرابات السلوك، نسخة الوالدين (DBRS-PV) لقياس متغيرات الدراسة. وتم تحليل البيانات من خلال تطبيق أسلوب تحليل البيانات الإحصائي الوصفي وتحليل البيانات الإحصائي الاستدلالي.

**النتائج:** أظهرت نتائج الدراسة عن وجود ارتباط ذو دلالة إحصائية بين ممارسات الأبوة والأمومة واضطراب التحدي المعارض، عند قيمة احتمالية قدرها 0.024. وكانت هناك علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين حالات اضطراب التحدي المعارض والدخل الشهري المتصور عند قيم احتمالية = 0.041.

**الاستنتاج:** استنتج الباحثون أن اضطراب التحدي المعارض كان مرتبطاً بالممارسات الوالدية التي يقوم بها الآباء لتنشئة وتربية أطفالهم، كما أن هناك علاقة بين اضطراب التحدي المعارض والخصائص الاجتماعية والديموغرافية (الدخل الشهري). ينبغي تطوير البرامج التعليمية لمساعدة الآباء على تبني ممارسات مقبولة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** ممارسات الأبوة والأمومة، السلوك المتحدي المعارض، الأطفال، المدارس الابتدائية.

### Abstract

**Objectives:** The current study aimed to identify the relationship between parenting practices and oppositional defiant behavior in school children

**Method:** To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher used a descriptive correlational design. A systematic random sample of (380) male

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and female primary school students (fifth and sixth grade students) in governmental primary schools and their parents in AL-Diwaniyah city was selected in the period from September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The Parenting Scale and The Disruptive Behavior Disorders Rating Scale, Parent Version (DBRS-PV) were used to measure the study variables. The data were analyzed by applying the descriptive statistical data analysis method and inferential statistical data analysis.

**Results:** The results of the study revealed a statistically significant correlation between parenting practices and ODD, at a p-value of .024 and there was significant relationship among incidences of oppositional defiant disorder and perceived monthly income at p-values=.041, respectively.

**Conclusions:** The researchers concluded that oppositional defiant disorder was associated to the practices that parents undertake to rearing their children, and there was association between oppositional defiant disorder and socio-demographic characteristics (monthly income). Educational programs should be developed to help parents adopt acceptable practices.

**Key-wards:** Parenting Practices, Oppositional Defiant Behavior, Children, Primary Schools.

**Introduction** The health and illnesses of children have a significant impact on the overall well-being of society and the well-being of future generations. Therefore, taking care of the psychological well-being of youngsters improves their growth and ability to reproduce when they become adults. Insufficient attention to early developmental issues will worsen the circumstances of mental disorders <sup>(1)</sup>. Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) is a disruptive behaviour disorder involving an ongoing pattern of angry/irritable mood, argumentative/defiant behavior and vindictiveness. The onset of Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) often occurs prior to the age of 8, however it can be diagnosed in individuals of all ages, including both children and adults. This condition is linked to significant social and economic consequences, and childhood ODD is one of the most prevalent antecedents of various mental health problems that can occur throughout a person's lifetime <sup>(2)</sup>. A global meta-analysis of 25 research estimated that the prevalence of Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is around 3.3% between 5 and 18 years of age <sup>(3)</sup>. Similarly, a meta-analysis of ten studies conducted in eight countries found that the prevalence of the disorder was estimated to be 3.9% among children aged 1 to 7 years <sup>(4)</sup>. Children diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) exhibit difficulties in managing their emotions, lack effective self-control, and display behavioral problems. Additionally, they have more hostile interactions

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with their peers and display anger and aggression <sup>(5)</sup>. Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) pervasively impairs functioning over the life span, resulting in challenges in interactions with others, social functioning, academic and occupational functioning, and in familial relationships <sup>(6)</sup>.

Parenting practices refer to the explicit behaviors that parents employ to socialize their children, which are directly observable. A parenting style encompasses the attitude, goals, and emotional atmosphere that parents use to rear and educate their children, which tend to remain consistent across many circumstances <sup>(7)</sup>. Parental styles refer to the strategies employed by parents in raising their children. Every parent has a unique method of handling their children <sup>(8)</sup>. Parenting styles encompass holistic patterns of child-rearing practices, values, and behaviors. The upbringing of children by parents can have significant effects on their personality development and their behaviors in social and interpersonal relationships <sup>(9)</sup>. Parental warmth and strictness are recognized as the fundamental autonomous elements of parenting style. Four distinct parenting styles were categorized based on specific traits: authoritative parenting, characterized by a combination of high levels of warmth and strictness; authoritarian parenting, characterized by a low levels of warmth and high levels of strictness; permissive parenting, characterized by a high level of warmth and a low levels of strictness; and neglectful parenting, characterized by a low levels of warmth and strictness. <sup>(10)</sup>. Within the framework of various parenting styles, practices such as harsh punishment with frequent beatings or inconsistent discipline predict behavior issues both in children and adolescents <sup>(11)</sup>. According to the findings of one study that investigated the connection between positive and negative parenting styles and the development of psychopathology in children, punitive discipline was common across disorders, However, low levels of parental warmth and participation were shown to be specifically associated with ODD. <sup>(12)</sup>. There is a lack studies in Iraq that particularly investigates the association between parenting practices and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) in children, despite the fact that ODD can have adverse impacts on both the affected children and individuals in their immediate environment. This study aims to assess the relationship between parenting practices and the susceptibility to Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) in children to ODD in order to gather further insights into parenting approaches for children with ODD The goal is to gain a deeper understanding of effective parenting strategies for children with ODD, with the ultimate aim of minimizing the likelihood of developing ODD in children.

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## Methods

### Study Design

A quantitative research study with a descriptive correlational methodology was conducted from September 15th, 2023 to May 20th, 2024. The study focused on fifth and sixth grade pupils in government primary schools and their parents in AL-Diwaniyah city.

### Study Setting and Sample

The current study was carried out in AL-Diwaniyah City, namely in the governmental primary schools under the education directorate. All schools provided educational services to their students. The study includes a total of eleven schools. Exemplification of the research A probability systematic random sample of 380 pupils from the 5th and 6th grades was selected for the study, based on information provided by their parents. A total of 11 schools, consisting of six schools for boys and five schools for girls, were chosen from a pool of 153 schools in Al- Diwaniyah City. Furthermore, these schools were also selected through simple random sampling. The sample size was calculate under the following presumptions: a statistical power of 90%, a level of confidence of 95%, the sample size was estimated using a double population proportion formula.

### Study Instrument

This questionnaire consists of three parts include the followings:

Part I: Include Demographic variables for child's age, gender, child's order, grade, parent's age, parent's educational level, parent's occupation, monthly income, children number, marital status.

Part II: The Parenting scale <sup>(13)</sup> consists of 30 items and uses a score system ranging from 1 to 7 to evaluate parents' parenting practices. On this scale, a score of 7 indicated the lowest level of effectiveness for each item, allowing for a nuanced evaluation of parenting practices.

Part III: The Disruptive Behavior Disorders Rating Scale, Parent Version (DBRS-PV) <sup>(14)</sup> was used to evaluate the symptoms of children with DBDs. The DBRS-PV is a commonly employed assessment tool consisting of 45 items. It requires parents to evaluate symptoms outlined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) using a 4-point Likert scale, a score of 0 indicates the absence of the symptom, while a score of 3 indicates an elevated degree of the condition.

### Ethical Consideration

A voluntary written assent was obtained from the participants subsequent to providing them with a comprehensive explanation of the present study and its objectives. Additionally, respect has been shown for the privacy of information gathered from parents. Furthermore, in order to ensure the confidentiality and

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anonymity of participants, ethical approval was obtained from the research ethics committee of the College of Nursing at the University of Baghdad.

### Data Collection

Following approval from Al-Qadisiyah Education Directorate, the researcher distributed the questionnaire himself to the primary school students (fifth and sixth grade) to give it to their parents, so they can fill it out and then return it to the researcher. The data were collected through the use of self-report. the data collection is from 8.30 am to 12.30 pm, every day visit through five days a week.

### Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed and interpreted through use of the application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26.0. Numbers and percentages were employed to rank the variables, while mean and standard deviation were utilized to statistically describe the continuous variables. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient to determine the relationship among the study's variables.

### Results

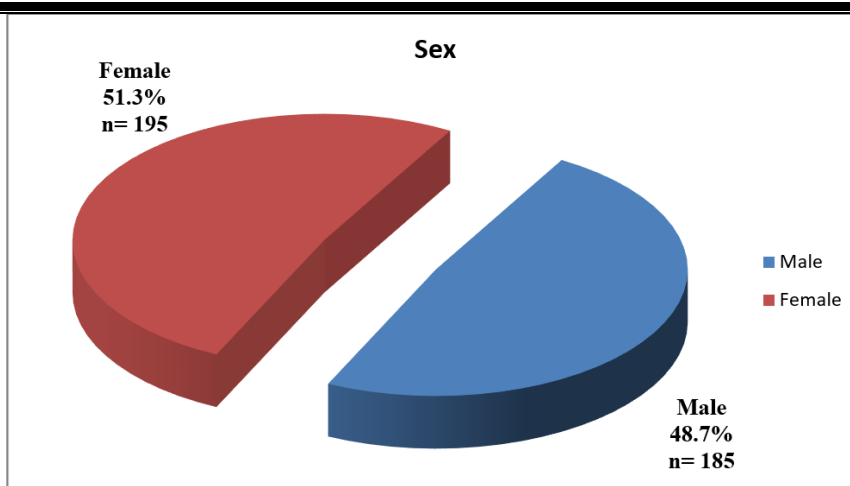
**Table (1): Distribution of Pupils according to their Age**

Age	f	%	M±SD
10 years	36	9.5	11.5 ± 0.8
11 year	156	41	
12 year	166	43.7	
13 year	22	5.8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	

f: Frequency, %: Percentage, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation

The table (1) shows that average for pupils is  $11.5 \pm 0.8$  years, in which 43.7% of them are seen with age of 12 years and 41% seen with age of 11 year.

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**Figure (1): Distribution of Pupils according to their Sex (N=380)**

This figure shows that 51.3% of pupils are females while 48.7% of them are males.

**Table (2): Distribution of Pupils according to their Birth Order**

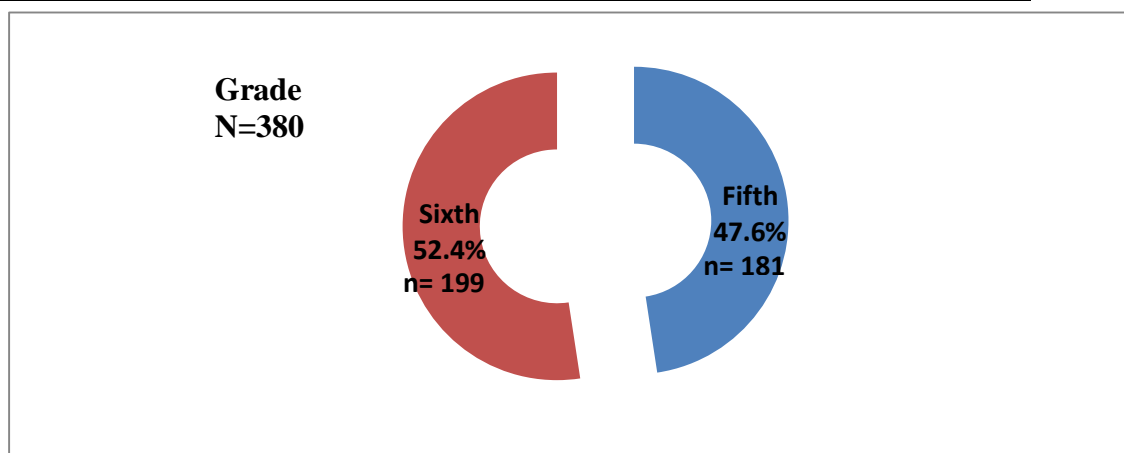
f: Frequency, %: Percentage

Birth order	F	%
A lonely child	24	6.3
First	107	28.2
Second	105	27.6
Third	119	31.3
Fourth	16	4.2
Fifth	5	1.3
Sixth	4	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

The table (2) reveals that 31.3% of pupils are third borne among their siblings, 28.2% are first borne, while 27.6% are second borne.



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**Figure (2): Distribution of Pupils according to their School Grade (N=380)**

This figure reveals that 52.4% of pupils are from sixth grade and 47.6% of them are from fifth grade.

**Table (3): Distribution of Pupils according to their Parents' Age**

Age group (year)	Father		Mother	
	f	%	f	%
Less than 30	2	.5	26	6.8
30 – less than 40	143	37.6	219	57.6
40 – less than 50	176	46.4	122	32.2
50 – less than 60	51	13.4	13	3.4
60 and more	8	2.1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>M±SD</b>	<b>42 ± 7</b>		<b>37.6 ± 6</b>	

f: Frequency, %: Percentage, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation

The table (3) shows that average age for pupils' fathers is  $42 \pm 7$  years and for mothers is  $37.6 \pm 6$  years, 46.4% of fathers are seen with age group of 40-less than 50 year while 57.6% of mothers are seen with age group of 30-less than 40 year.

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**Table (4): Distribution of Pupils according to their Parents' Level of Education**

Level of education	Father		Mother	
	f	%	f	%
Doesn't read & write	7	1.6	11	2.9
Read & write	10	2.6	15	3.9
Primary school	53	13.9	66	17.5
Intermediate school	79	20.8	81	21.3
Secondary school	58	15.3	58	15.3
Diploma / Bachelor	134	35.3	130	34.2
Postgraduate	39	10.4	19	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

f: Frequency, %: Percentage

The table (4) shows that the highest percentage of educational level among pupils' fathers and mothers refers to diploma or bachelor among 35.3% of fathers and 34.2% of mothers.

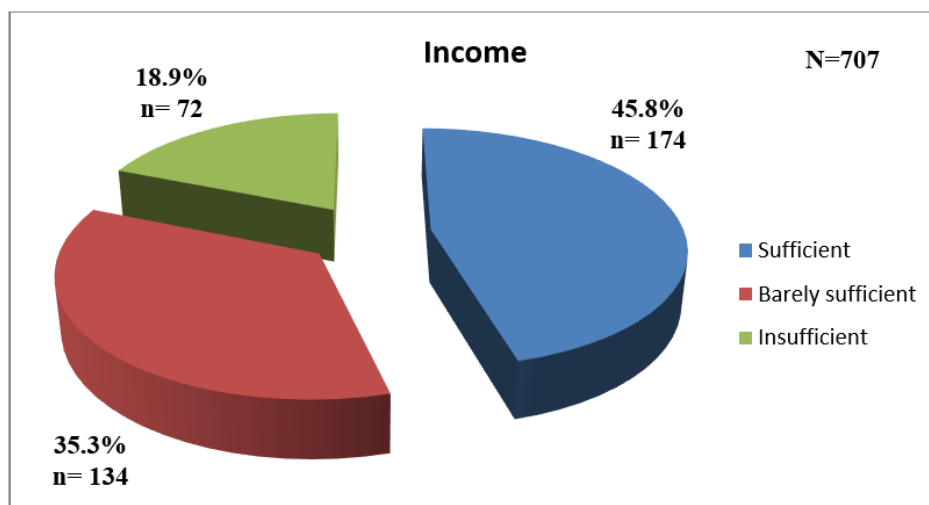
**Table (5): Distribution of Pupils according to their Parents' Occupation**

Occupation	Father		Mother	
	f	%	f	%
Student	0	0	7	1.8
Governmental employee	226	59.5	126	33.2
Retired	8	2.1	3	.8
Free workers	143	37.6	3	.8
Jobless / Housewives	3	.8	241	63.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

f: Frequency, %: Percentage

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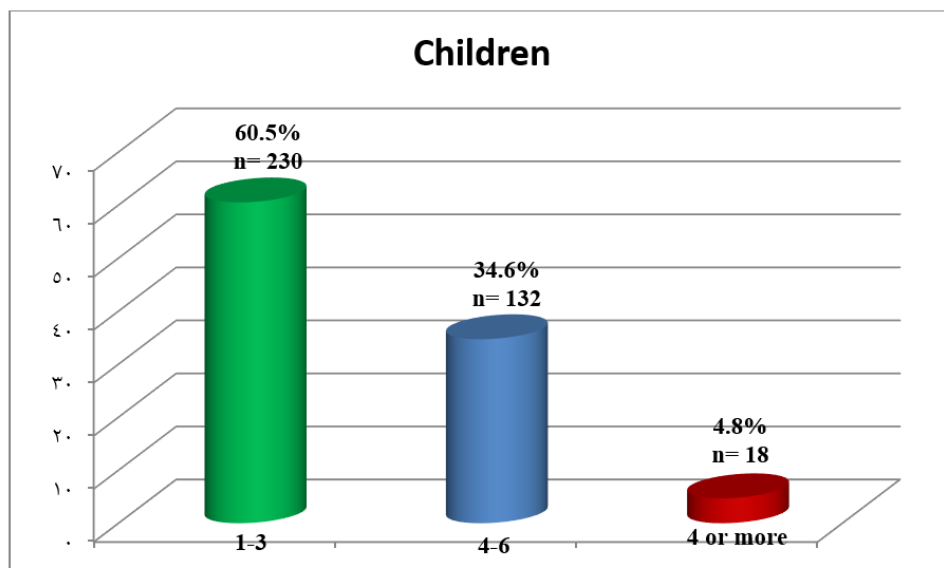
The table (5) reveals that 59.5% of pupils' fathers are governmental employees while 63.4% of mothers are housewives and 33.2% of them are governmental employees.



**Figure (3): Distribution of Pupils according to Monthly Income**

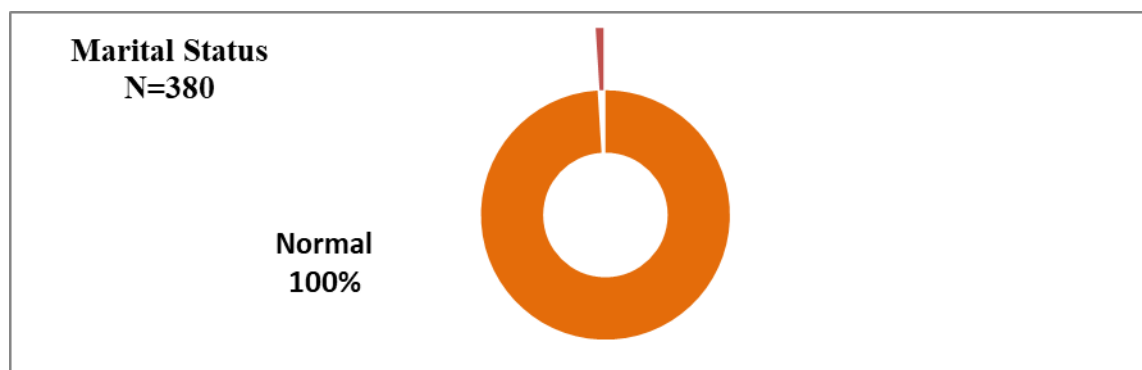
This figure indicates that 45.8% of parents perceive sufficient monthly income while 35.3% perceive barely sufficient monthly income.

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**Figure (4): Distribution of Pupils according Number of Children**

This figure reveals that pupils live in families with 1-3 children as reported among 60.5% of them.



**Figure (5): Distribution of Parents according to their Marital Status (N=380)**

This figure reveals that all parents are living in normal marital status as responding (100%)

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**Table (6): Overall Assessment of Parenting Practices among Pupils**

Parenting practices	F	%	M	SD	Ass.
Good	245	64.5	109.48	24.954	Good
Dysfunctional	135	35.5			
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>			

f: Frequency, %: Percentage

M: Mean for total score, SD: Standard Deviation for total score, Ass: Assessment  
Good = 30 – 120, Dysfunctional = 121 – 210

This table manifests that parents of pupils show good parenting practices toward their children as reported by 64.5% ( $M \pm SD = 109.48 \pm 24.954$ ), 35.5% of parents show dysfunctional parenting practices.

**Table (7): Assessment of Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) among Pupil Children**

ODD	F	%	M	SD	Ass.
Not clinical	274	72.1	4.78	3.375	Not clinical
Mild	94	24.7			
Moderate	12	3.2			
Severe	0	0			
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>			

f: Frequency, %: Percentage

M: Mean for total score, SD: Standard Deviation for total score, Ass: Assessment

Not clinical= 0 – 6, Mild= 6.1 – 12, Moderate= 12.1– 18, Severe= 18.1– 24

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This table indicates that 72.1% of pupil children are associated with not clinical oppositional defiant disorder ( $M \pm SD = 4.78 \pm 3.375$ ), but 24.7% of them have mild oppositional defiant disorder.

**Table (8): Correlation between Parenting Practices and Oppositional Defiant Behavior (N=380)**

Parenting practices ODD	<i>r</i>	P-value	Significance
Pearson Correlation (2-tailed)	.116*	.024	S

Note: level of significance is set at 0.05 level (2-tailed). *r*=Pearson product- moment correlation coefficient

This table indicates that there is positive relationship among parenting practices and oppositional defiant disorder at  $p\text{-values} = .024$ .

**Table (9): Significant Relationship among Oppositional Defiant Disorder among Children and their Socio-demographic Variables (N=380)**

Variables		Relationship		
		Correlation	P-value	Sig
Age	11 year	$r^s = .065$	.205	N.S
	12 year			
	13 year			
	<b>Total</b>			
Father's age	Less than 30	$r^s = .053$	.305	N.S
	30 – less than 40			
	40 – less than 50			
	50 – less than 60			
	60 and more			
	<b>Total</b>			
Mother's age	Less than 30	$r^s = .048$	.353	N.S
	30 – less than 40			
	40 – less than 50			

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	50 – less than 60			
	<b>Total</b>			
<b>Father's occupation</b>	Student	$r^s = .057$	<b>.264</b>	<b>N.S</b>
	Governmental employee			
	Retired			
	Free workers			
	Jobless			
	<b>Total</b>			
<b>Mother's occupation</b>	Student	$r^s = .084$	<b>.102</b>	<b>N.S</b>
	Governmental employee			
	Retired			
	Free workers			
	Housewives			
	<b>Total</b>			
<b>Monthly income</b>	Sufficient	$r^s = .105$	<b>.041</b>	<b>S</b>
	Barely sufficient			
	Insufficient			
	<b>Total</b>			
<b>Number of children</b>	1 – 3	$r^s = .014$	<b>.781</b>	<b>N.S</b>
	4 – 6			
	7 or more			
	<b>Total</b>			

$r^s$ : Spearman Correlation coefficient, P: Probability, Sig: Significance, N.S: Not Significant, S: Significant, H.S: High Significant

This table indicates that there is significant relationship between incidences of oppositional defiant disorder and perceived monthly income at p-value= .041 while there is no significant association reported with remaining variables.

### Discussion

The percentage of females was (51.3%) higher than males, according to the figure (1), (48.7%) male. this is Because females were more responsive and willing to participate in the study, when some males refused to participate. Distribution of the sample according to age showed that the largest

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percentage was for the age (12), where it was (43.7%) and decreased by (41%) for the age (11). The age (12) in primary schools was more a result of repeated repetition among the numbers of sixth-grade students, and for this reason, their percentage was high. The table (2) shows the order of children between their siblings is: 28.2% in the first rank, 27.6% in the second rank, 31.3% in the third order among their siblings. The data in Table (4) indicates that the largest proportion of academic achievement among fathers and mothers of pupils is a diploma or bachelor's degree, with 35.3% of fathers and 34.2% of mothers falling into this category. Based on the preceding discoveries, the researcher deduces that the environment in the city of Al-Diwaniya offers advantageous circumstances for the sample population to pursue their education. However, the extent to which individuals can take advantage of these opportunities varies based on their abilities and circumstances. There are substantial differences between males and females. Contemporary society frequently sees women placing a higher importance on household duties, which hinders their ability to pursue higher education, while males have more opportunities in this domain.

The table (5) illustrates that the majority of fathers, specifically 59.5%, are employed in the government sector. Furthermore, a significant proportion of fathers, including 37.6%, are engaged in self-employment. This implies that they have consistent work and are able to come back home at the end of the day, allowing them to allocate the remaining time to their family. According to the researcher, when either one or both parents are gainfully employed, they possess the means to support their family's financial needs, hence affording them the ability to purchase technical devices. 45.8% of families' income was sufficient, 35.3% was considered barely sufficient, and 18.9% was seen insufficient. The findings of the current study indicate that the majority of pupils come from families with 1-3 children, as reported by 60.5% of the participants. All parents have a normal marital status, and the response rate is 100%. All of the participants in the study living with both of their biological parents, according to the findings of the present study. The table (6) indicates that 64.5% of parents exhibit a good parenting practice towards their children, with a mean score of  $109.48 \pm 24.954$ . On the other hand, 35.5% of parents display dysfunctional parenting practices. According to the study, a good parent-child relationship and effective parenting skills contribute to the improvement of physical, mental, and social development in children. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood of depression, anxiety, and stress, ultimately benefiting the child's overall health and well-being. The current study's findings indicate that 24.7% of pupils children demonstrate mild oppositional defiant disorder. According to the researcher's perspective, children who living with their parents experience advantages in terms of supervision and guidance, resulting in a decrease in the intensity and severity of difficulties they



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encounter. The father has an educational level of 35.4% at the diploma/bachelor level, while the mother has an educational level of 34.2% at the diploma/bachelor level. This exerts a substantial impact on both the family unit and the children, therefore decreasing the severity of the problems.

The table (8) indicates that there is positive relationship among parenting practices and oppositional defiant disorder at  $p$ -values= 0.24. This outcome is consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Iqbal and Loona, which demonstrated a significant positive association between parental practices and disruptive behaviour disorder.<sup>(15)</sup> Christensen & Barker oppose the findings of the current study by presenting evidence of a negative relationship between negative/controlling parenting and externalising behaviour problems. This finding is somewhat unexpected, as one would anticipate a higher occurrence of externalising behaviour problems in response to increased levels of negative/controlling parenting<sup>(16)</sup>. The findings of Belsky et al. indicate a relationship between inappropriate parenting styles and the manifestation of anger and aggression in children<sup>(17)</sup>. The  $p$ -value of .041 in the table (9) suggests that there is a statistically significant relationship between the incidences of Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and perceived monthly income. High family income helps parents of children to reduce the level of parental pressures related to financial expenses, as high income helps parents to meet the needs of children in terms of food, clothing, housing, treatment, and develop the skills of these children. However, it should be mentioned that no significant relationships were found with the other variables. What this implies is that the study may not have found a statistically significant relationship between ODD and characteristics like parental education or other demographic variables.

### Conclusion

According to the results, oppositional defiant disorder is associated with parenting practices that is imply by the parents to discipline their children. Furthermore, socio-demographic variables (monthly income) are associated with oppositional defiant disorder. The study's specific constructs may assist in the prevention, early detection, and intervention in the management of oppositional defiant disorder.

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