

# The Relationship between Girls' Anxiety and their Parental Parenting Styles Mediated by the Traits of Extroversion and Introversion

Alireza Sangani<sup>1</sup> (PhD), Paria Jangi<sup>2</sup> (PhD)

1. Department of Psychology, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz, Iran  
2. Department of Psychology, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

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**Corresponding Author:**

Alireza Sangani,  
Department of Psychology,  
Ahvaz Branch,  
Islamic Azad University,  
Ahvaz,  
Iran  
E-mail: sangany.psycho@gmail.com

## Abstract

**Introduction:** Anxiety disorders can affect all attitudes, behaviors and even individuals' state, and these effects in adolescent girls is considered to be far broader than adults. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the girls' anxiety with their parental parenting styles mediated by the traits of extroversion and introversion.

**Method:** The research method was descriptive-correlational. The statistical population of the study included all the 15,872 adolescent girls in Qom city in 2017-2018. The sample size according to the Cochran Formula consisted of 375 girls who were selected by multistage cluster sampling method. The data collection tool was the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, Baumrind Parenting Questionnaire, and Spielberg Anxiety Inventory.

**Results:** The results showed that the traits of extroversion, introversion and parental parenting styles have a direct and significant effect on the anxiety in girls at the level of 0.05. In an indirect way, traits of extroversion and introversion in junior girls show a mediating role in the relationship between parental parenting styles and anxiety, and in general, the conceptual model was approved. Also, 27% of girls' anxiety variance was explained by the variables of extroversion, introversion and parental parenting styles.

**Conclusion:** These findings are based on the family systematic theory on psychological intercourse of adolescent girls with the parents' behavior patterns in the family environment and on expressing the effects of personality traits on promoting parent-child relationship health and the girl's anxiety.

**Keywords:** Extroversion, Introversion, Parenting, Anxiety

## Introduction

Adolescence is the phase of life stretching between childhood and adulthood, and its definition has long posed a conundrum. Adolescence encompasses elements of biological growth and major social role transitions, both of which have been changed in the past century [1]. Earlier puberty has accelerated the onset of adolescence in nearly all populations, while understanding of continued growth has lifted its endpoint age well into the 20s. In parallel, delayed timing of role transitions, including completion of education, marriage, and parenthood, continues to shift the popular perceptions of the time when the adulthood begins [2]. Arguably, the transition period from childhood to adulthood now occupies a greater portion of the life course than ever before at the time when unprecedented social forces, including marketing and digital media, are affecting health and wellbeing across these years. An expanded and more inclusive definition of adolescence is essential for developmentally appropriate framing of laws, social policies, and service systems. Rather than the age 10–19 years, a definition of 10–24 years corresponds more closely to adolescent growth and popular understandings of this life phase and would facilitate extended investments across a broader range of settings [3]. One of the influential factors in puberty is anxiety that is due to psychological and physical changes [4]. According to some systematically conducted studies, all types of anxiety outbreak over the 1990 to 2010 period has been reported to witness around 0.9 increase on average in all over the world, and these studies that have been reported over the years about the outbreak revealed that the

increase in the anxiety traits and characteristics was due to communication topics, sanitary, health, psychological, social and some other patterns [5, 6]. Anxiety is one of the most common psychiatric disorders that is included among the mental disorders range and is associated with cognitive and behavioral problems in different interpersonal, educational, and even occupational ranges in a way that if anxiety persistency is seen, it often becomes chronic and the treatment will become difficult [7]. This resistance to change includes a reaction involving undesirable feelings that is consciously and even unconsciously perceived and associated with arousal of the nervous system, which causes changes in the hormones secretion and the activation of sympathetic system, and in a sustained mood, not only it causes the suffering of the other psychological disorders, but also leads to diseases such as hypertension and heart disease [8]. In this regard, considering the extent of the anxiety area, there are two types of anxiety; the state and the anxiety of the trait have been defined conceptually: state and attribute anxiety. State anxiety is the temporary emotional reaction, which varies in the intensity and frequency, but the trait anxiety is a stable feature, which provides a person's readiness to react heavily in different situations [9]. In addition to the role of cognitive and situational variables in the emergence of anxiety, it seems that the communicational and parenting patterns play the major role in the formation of anxiety in their girls in the family environment and between adolescents [10], and specifically, the patterns used by parents to communicate with their girl and to teach her the values and norms of the society are called child-rearing [11]. The selected parenting style by parents is a model that incorporates a set of attitudes towards the values, communication, freely decision-making, practice, and education, which leads to the creation of an emotional atmosphere in which we could see the girls and parental behaviors [12]. These behaviors include specific bilateral actions in which parents act based on their parent's duties, such as creating mental security and responding to their girl's needs, and also the behaviors that are not related to the parent's purpose as the expression of non-intentional excitement are included in this section, too [13].

According to the theory of parental authority, there are three fundamental principles; permissive, authoritarian and rational authoritative [14, 15]. Permissive parenting is a type of parenting style characterized by low demands with high responsiveness. Permissive parents tend to be very lovely, and still provide few guidelines and rules [16]. Such parents do not expect mature behavior from their children and mostly seem like a friend instead of a parental figure [17]. Authoritarian parenting is a parenting style characterized by high demands and low responsiveness. Parents with an authoritarian style have very high expectations from their children, and still provide very little in the manner of feedback and nurturance [18]. Mistakes tend to be punished harshly. When feedback does occur, it is often negative. Yelling and corporal punishment are also commonly seen in the authoritarian style [19]. Authoritative parenting is

characterized by reasonable demands and high responsiveness. While authoritative parents might have high expectations from their children, they also provide their kids with resources and support they need to succeed. Parents, who exhibit such a style, listen to their kids and provide love and warmth in addition to limits and fair discipline [20]. Those taking care of children have a pivotal role in social development and the formation of the child's personality dimensions during the childhood period [21]. Some studies have shown that inappropriate parental parenting styles, which are associated with behaviors such as punishing or controlling, cause psychological problems such as anxiety in children [22]. In a study, parenting was related to the children's extroversion behaviors [23]. Also, Parents' warmth and responses are positive predictors of the child's internalization and exteriorization behavior, and the poor and ineffective interaction of the mother against her child is a negative predictor of the child's internalization and exteriorization behaviors [24]. In this regard, studies have shown that personality traits such as introversion – extroversion, as the main components of personality in the interpersonal interactions and social development, can affect the anxiety caused by the psychological hypertension position and the extent of the defense mechanisms is used in dealing with stressful and full-of-tension situations [25]. Personality traits are an organized set of relatively stable characteristics of individuals. On one hand these traits differentiate the person from others and on the other hand, they could also measure the level of behavioral and emotional actions and reactions against anxiety [26]. The three personality dimensions that provide a central space with the personality are: a) extroversion; a state in which the forces of a person are directed away from himself/herself and into his/her surroundings; b) introversion; the state in which a person's energy with no interest to the outside world with a little interest to his/her inner is focused on himself/herself, and c) neuroticism [27]. Introspective people have a slower, but more precise, tendency towards isolation, rather than extroversion people. Based on studies, introspective people feel a lot of deficiency and develop anxiety, depression, obsession, and other disorders more than others [28]. Danesh, et al. [29] showed that the personality traits of extroversion, introspection and mental neurosis of mothers affect their behavioral patterns and their relationship with their children and also increase or decrease the severity of the disorder in children with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder. Esmailpour and Jamil [30] showed that there is a significant relationship between the perception of parental parenting styles and the amount of child anxiety. Whenever parents have less controlling and authoritarian behaviors, children will experience lower anxiety [31]. Those with high levels of abnormalities and neuroticism are more likely to be at increased risk of developing depression, fluctuations in sleep, and educational and occupational problems [32]. On the other hand, interactive methods and parental personality features interaction with perceived control could affect the extent of the anxiety experienced by the

children [33], and the use of appropriate parental parenting styles along with free will by parents can be an important decisive item for the anxiety and depression symptoms in adolescents [34]. The parental parenting styles and interest can be a key determinant for the experienced children's anxiety [35]. Parental parenting styles and parental personality characteristics are related to child anxiety [36], and it can be said that parental parenting styles affect the functional experience and identification in children by the mediation of the psychological needs' role [37]. The personality factors can affect the externalization and behavioral intrusion of adolescents, due to environmental interactions [38]. In addition, the extroversion can be the main factor in the social behaviors direction between the youth [39]. With regard to the history of the research and the new implications for research variables, it can be seen that most studies about the factors affecting anxiety point to the simple interaction of two or more variables. In total, there is few research about the effects of parental parenting styles [10, 13, 30] on anxiety and the personality traits [23, 29] of introversion and extroversion as a mediator variable. In fact, this study attempts to associate these variables as much as possible, focusing on anxiety as the main predictor variable. This is because the basis of the person's transformation in various aspects of the psychological, emotional and social aspects begins in the family as the first society that we live in and the parental parenting styles are in, and these items affect the formation and development of personality. In general, considering the fact that the quality of the parenting relationships with children has a great influence on the behavior of adolescents at this age, the research background in assessing the effects of parental parenting styles and personality traits on the development of adolescent's anxiety in a single model has not been emphasized. Therefore, the main issue of this study is whether the extroversion and introversion traits in adolescent girls affect the relationship between anxiety and parental parenting styles or not.

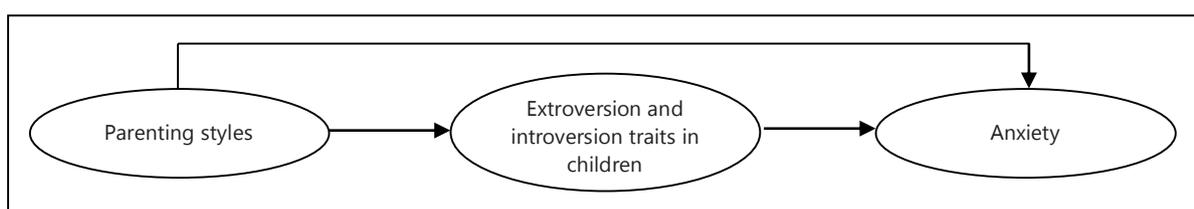
## Method

The research method was descriptive-correlational modeling of structural equations. The statistical population of the study included all the 15,872 high school adolescent girl students studying in Qom city in 2015-16. According to Cochran's formula, at the level of 0.05, 375 students were selected. Sampling method in this study was a multi-stage clustering in which three districts were selected randomly from the education districts of Qom city, and in the second step, the list of all the 21 high schools for the girls in the districts was prepared and the

samples were selected from the high schools of each region randomly and then, two high schools were selected randomly in each district. In the next step, from among the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth levels, one class was randomly selected from each high school, and finally, at the last step, the proper number was selected among all the female students of the mentioned levels.

In the method of this research, the criteria for entering the research included: gender (female), age range (15 to 17 years old), being a resident of Qom city, senior level at high school, non-physical illness or psychological disorder, and willingness to participate in the research and collaboration which was required to respond to the questionnaires. Lack of sufficient accuracy in completing the questionnaires was considered to be the exclusion criteria for participating in the research. In the functional field, after referring to the schools in January to December 2011, they were selected according to the students' sampling method. At first, the purpose of the study, the research method and the privacy and confidentiality of the results were explained to the students. The informed consent was obtained from the student's parents (students were under legal age). Eysenck Personality Questionnaire and Spielberger Anxiety Questionnaire were handed out. Parental parenting styles questionnaire was completed by parents. Finally, the Structural Equation Modeling Test, in particular, structural regression equations (a combination of path analysis and factor analysis) was used to find the mediator role using SPSS24 and Aoms23 software.

**Eysenck Personality Questionnaire [EPQ]:** This is an Eysenck Personality Questionnaire's shorter version that is used to measure personality among adults. This questionnaire is used for people aging 15-70 [38]. It has four levels of extroversion, introversion, psychosis, and neuroticism, each scale having 12 substances and totally, it contains 48 substances. The response to the questions is by yes or no [two options]. The reliability for men and women, neuroticism, extroversion and psychotics were reported to be at 0.84 and 0.80, 0.88 and 0.84, 0.61 and 0.62, and 0.77 and 0.73, respectively. Bakhshiypour and Baqarian [38] reported the test reliability for psychosis and neurosis as 0.89 and 0.90, respectively. The internal consistency was calculated to be 0.52 and 0.77, respectively. Also, in order to calculate the criterion validity of the questionnaire, a short form of NEO questionnaire was used. The correlation of the extroversion scale in both tests was 0.70, and the neuroticism scale of both tests was 0.72. In Addition, according to the Alpha Cronbach's method the reliability for the introversion and extroversion traits in the present study were 0.735 and 0.714, respectively.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual model of girls' anxiety and their parental parenting styles via extroversion and introversion

**Parenting Style Questionnaire:** This questionnaire is based on Bamerind's theory consisting of three patterns; free choices, tyranny, and parenting's logical authority to examine the patterns of the influence and parenting practices of Buri [15]. The questionnaire contains 30 items. In the questionnaire, 10 items are in the form of liberalization, 10 items are despotic, and 10 other items are presented in the form of rational authority in the parenting field. In this test, the parents have specified their opinion in terms of a 5-degree scale that is scored from zero to four. The reliability of this questionnaire was reported by the manufacturers by the retest method to be 0.81, 0.85, and 0.92 for the free choices, tyranny, and logical authority, respectively. Esfandiari [40] has translated the questionnaire into Persian and verified its content validity by referring to ten psychology and psychiatry professors, and validated it by using Alpha Cronbach's coefficient and reported 0.55, 0.44, and 0.61 for logical authority, tyranny, and free choices, respectively. In this study, the reliability has been obtained by Alpha Cronbach's 0.659, 0.701, and 0.663 for free choices, tyranny, and logical, respectively.

**Spielberger's Anxiety Questionnaire:** This tool was developed by Spielberger et al. [41] in the United States to measure the children's anxiety with high academic credibility and has been used as a standard test in various researches. Spielberger's Anxiety Trait Questionnaire includes 40 questions; 1-20 questions are about the anxiety state and 21-40 questions relate to anxiety trait. The questions about the state anxiety in the Likert scale are graded into four levels: not at all, sometimes, generally, very much. Trait anxiety questions are also graded in the same way as almost never, sometimes, more often and almost always. Spielberger et al. [41] reported the Alpha Cronbach's coefficient for the state anxiety and trait anxiety subscales as 0.92 0.90, respectively. Also, the test-retest coefficient for the state anxiety and anxiety trait subscales were 0.62 and 0.68, respectively. In a study, 219 patients suffering from pervasive anxiety disorder, major depression, and a group of normal individuals participated; the concurrent and structure validity was confirmed, and Alpha Cronbach's coefficient for the state anxiety and trait anxiety scales were reported to be 0.92

and 0.90, respectively [42]. In another study in Mashhad city participated by 600 individuals, the reliability of this questionnaire was obtained by Alpha the Cronbach for the state anxiety and trait anxiety subscales were reported to be 0.91 and 0.90 respectively, and it was also reported to be 0.94 for the total scale [43]. In this research, according to the Alpha Cronbach the reliability was reported to be 0.682.

## Results

Initially, by examining the scale, which is an interval type, and the statistical assumptions by using kurtosis and skewness, box, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, the outlier data were detected, then by using the Mahalanobis test, the data were corrected and after correction, the sample was reduced to 356 cases. In order to create latent variables, it is necessary to have multiple markers of each of the variables. The sub-scales of the measurements are usually used as separate indicators that introduce the structure, but in some cases, there are no multiple sub-scales representing the specific structure. In this case, the item packets described by Russell et al. [44] were used. Actually, this method was used to analyze the parental parenting styles, extroversion, and introversion in this study. Initially, the narrative form was confirmed [measurement model] and then, the initial and final models were examined.

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the sample group in different indices including; age, parental occupational, and educational status.

Table 2 shows the values obtained from the mean and standard deviations related to the extroversion, introversion, parental parenting styles, and anxiety variables. Also, there are positive correlation coefficients of the introspection personality trait and the authoritarian parenting style with anxiety, and negative correlation of the extroversion personality trait, the free choice, and the logical styles with anxiety.

According to table 3, the values obtained from the determination coefficient, the effect values, the critical values, and the significant levels between the personality trait of introversion and extroversion, and the parental parenting styles with anxiety in the girls are shown.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of the studied sample group

Variables	Population Factors	Sample Size	Percent
Age	16	123	34.55
	17	112	31.46
	18	121	33.98
Father's educational status	under diploma	77	21.62
	diploma	166	46.62
	bachelor	82	23.03
	masters	31	8.70
Mother's educational status	under diploma	93	26.12
	diploma	189	53.08
	bachelor	65	18.25
	masters	9	2.52
Father's job status	Self-employed	231	64.18
	Employee	125	35.11
Mother's job status	Employee	74	20.78
	Self-employed	93	26.12
	Housekeeper	189	53.08

According to table 4, there are indirect relations of parental parenting styles on anxiety related to extroversion and introversion.

According to table 5, the RMSEA value is 0.059. Therefore, this value is less than 0.1, which indicates that the average square error of the model is appropriate and the model is acceptable. Also, the chi-square of the two

degrees of freedom (2/524) is between 1 and 3, and the rate of GFI (adjusted adjustment index), CFI (adaptive fit index), and NFI (the softened fit index) indices are approximately equal to and greater than 0.9, which indicates that the model is appropriate for measuring the variables of the research. As shown below, the model hypotheses is presented using a structural model.

**Table 2.** Mean and standard deviation of the scores obtained in research variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Extroversion	7.87	0.851	1					
introversion	6.33	1.54	**-.36	1				
Free choice style	28.19	5.25	**19.	**-.23	1			
Tyranny style	32.20	4.81	**-.21	**-.16	**-.31	1		
Logical authority style	28.55	5.08	** .24	**-.29	** .44	**-.34	1	
Anxiety	118/24	13	**-.28	** .24	**-.31	** .27	**-.29	1

\*\* Significance level =0.01. N =356

**Table 3.** Direct estimation of the model by exponential maximization

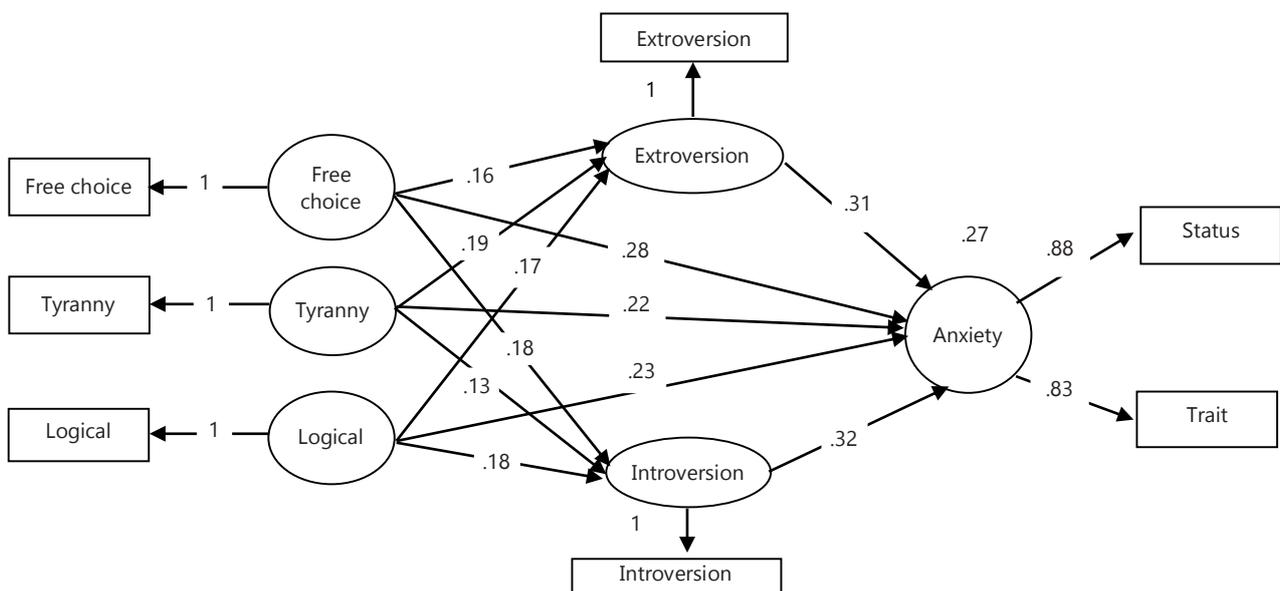
Variables	Determination Coefficient (R2)	Beta Value (β)	Critical Values (t)	Significant (P)
Extroversion to anxiety	.241	.269	9.642	.0001
introversion to anxiety	.174	.176	6.208	.0001
Free choice to anxiety	.282	.287	11.309	.0001
Tyranny to anxiety	.028	.082	3.341	.006
Logical to anxiety	.193	.206	7.377	.0001

**Table 4.** Indirect estimation of the model by using bootstrap

Variable	B	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Significance
The free choice style related to the extroversion to the anxiety	.196	.096	.214	.002
The free choice style related to the introversion to the anxiety	.214	.053	.267	.000
The tyranny style related to the extroversion to the anxiety	.153	.031	.184	.011
The tyranny style related to the introversion to the anxiety	.224	.011	.290	.0001
The logical style related to the extroversion to the anxiety	.287	.061	.212	.0001
The logical style related to the introversion to the anxiety	.149	.026	.184	.021

**Table 5.** Fit indicators derived from data and variables' analysis

Test type	Explanation	Acceptable Values	Obtained Values
X <sup>2</sup> /df	Relative chi-square	<3	2.524
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	<0.1	.049
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index	>0.9	.967
NFI	Normed Fit Index	>0.9	.958
CFI	Comparative Fit Index	>0.9	.939
DF	58		



**Figure 2.** The amount of factor load associated with the conceptual model of the research

According to the above model, in general, parenting styles, extroversion, and introversion could predict ( $R^2 = 0.27$ ) the anxiety variable, 27% of which could be explained by the endogenous variable by these variables, and 73% is explained by other non-research variables.

## Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between the girls' anxiety with their parental parenting styles mediated by traits of extroversion and introversion. Actually, 27% of girls' anxiety variance was explained by the variables of extroversion and introversion and parental parenting styles. In general, the research model was confirmed, and this finding is consistent with the results of other studies [45, 46]. More reactions were observed to the positive manners [not negative] in the extroversion compared to the introversion [47].

When parents judge their parenting style, they may not notice some of their unconscious behavioral features and their effects on children, or highlight some of the features, which indicate that several factors could exacerbate or moderate the destructive effects on parent-child relationships over time [48]. Researchers have shown that what hurts the child is not a factor, but a gradual accumulation of anxiety, while protective factors about the gradual accumulation and persistence of environmental supporter factors in the family, school, and peer groups could cause an appropriate behavioral choice and adaptive responses to anxiety [48, 49].

Parents who pay more attention to their children and are kinder to them, provide more opportunities for the growth of their children's talent and social development along with the adaptive responses of the children. This relationship is mutual and based on the family-therapeutic approach, all the positive and negative actions of the family members affect each other. According to a study, children with anxiety disorders see more rejections on behalf of their mothers than the healthy children do [50]. Actually, by going through various research it is more than obvious that parental control or tyranny behaviors are considered as controls and limitations on the children's behavior. It seems that more control and intervention by parents reduces the autonomy of the children, which would be the cause of more anxiety in children [51]. If parents have less control and tyranny behaviors, the children will show lower anxiety. Parents' control is effective on a lot of behavioral disorder types in children and if any contradiction is seen, it may be because of the data resource types that researchers have used as the information provider [45].

Findings showed that extroversion strengthens the relationship between rational parenting style and anxiety. Based on the research findings, logical parenting style is associated with positive developmental consequences such as better relationships with peers and due to these factors, improvement in observational learning based on the socio-cultural theories, will be seen. Also, the trial and error process for the individual in different situations and reactions shows an improvement [12]. The children of

logical parents learn that the conflict is best avoided when the views of the others are considered in a friendly negotiation, and this set of skills will solve the problem jointly and effectively, and it causes good relationships with peers and finally, it results in a good network of social support [10]. This will eventually lead to positive excitement and reduction of anxiety. In general, children's behavioral problems seem to be the result of a defective relationship among the family members and are related to parents' improper parenting methods and their interactions with children.

The effect of Eysenck's personality dimensions on emotionality over time and in different situations is stable [47]. Also, some studies have shown that the personality factor of extroversion could be an important mediator between interpersonal relationships and the rate of anxiety and depression [52]. Other studies have shown that the personality factor of extroversion and introversion in the relationships between parental parenting styles and maintaining stronger ego have a mediating role in interpersonal interactions [53]. Also, people with anxious situations and extravagant personality traits who have logical and free choice parental parenting styles, are less likely to be affected by negative stimulations that are due to repetitive situations and adaptive behavioral responses, and so there is a negative effect on anxiety between these people [18]. On the other hand, when people with the introversion trait experience the same parental parenting styles, because the personality traits are the basic mental changing patterns of each person's lifetime, their traits cannot be easily changed [2] and they still seem to be affected by inefficient anxiety which is based on the mentioned backgrounds from this point of view. On the other hand, based on Eysenck's [49] theory about the differences in personality arousal, introvert people are mostly showing arousal moods and tend to search for low levels of arousal. This is while people with extroversion trait are less excited and search for high levels of excitement moods. Extroversion describes a field in which individuals are actively involved in the world, as opposed to avoiding social experiments. They also struggle with family members and their peers [56]. It seems that one of the reasons that individuals are at risk of psychological disorders is the use of undesirable emotion regulation strategies, and for supporting this idea, some studies have shown that the ability to successfully manage the emotions is related to a number of consequences of physical, social and physiological health circumstances [54, 55]. On the contrary, it is assumed that insufficiency in the regulation of emotion is the underlying mechanism of anxiety disorder [56].

One of the limitations of this research is not considering the type of anxiety disorder in the target population, which is recommended to the other researchers. If possible, other researches can focus on clinical communities or people suffering from a specific type of anxiety disorder. The other limitation of this research is the lack of controlling the socioeconomic status of the families associated with the target community, which

appears to be effective in the interpersonal-communication areas and is suggested to the other future scholars to control this item if possible.

## Conclusion

According to the main objective of this study, it is shown that the characteristics of extroversion and introversion play a vital role in the relationship between anxiety in girls and their parental parenting styles. Also, the logical parenting style is a little deterrent and decrement factor for anxiety experienced by the girls in conjunction with the role of personality trait of extroversion as a mediator. In another way, a tyranny style and partly free choice style in association with the introversion personality trait could increase the level of experienced anxiety. In general, considering the role of extroversion in reducing the anxiety of female students, it is suggested that in the country's educational system, and specifically in schools, referring to the parenting role and their behaviors' levels be considered. Also, by organizing knowledge-based courses and family-based management techniques based on a systematic approach related to these behavioral consequences, the reduction of childhood disorders during a sequence could be resulted.

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