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## ARTICLE TITLE

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# PARENTAL TREATMENT STYLES AS PERCEIVED BY ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TAMANRASSET

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between parental treatment styles—as perceived by adolescents—and psychological security among secondary school students in Tamanrasset. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, with a randomly selected sample of 40 male and female students. The researchers utilized two validated instruments: the Parental Treatment Styles Scale (Yaghshi, 2015) and the Psychological Security Scale (Shaqir, 2005). Data were analyzed using SPSS software. The findings revealed: (1) a weak but statistically significant correlation between perceived parental treatment styles and psychological security; (2) a moderate level of psychological security among the participants; and (3) no statistically significant gender differences in adolescents' perceptions of parental treatment styles. The results were discussed in light of prior literature and the socio-cultural context of the studied sample.

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## KEYWORDS

Parental Treatment Styles as Perceived by Adolescents, Psychological Security

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## Introduction

If childhood lays the foundational pillars of personality, adolescence is the critical phase during which an individual's identity crystallizes. This transitional stage—situated between childhood and full maturity—profoundly shapes a person's character, attitudes, and future trajectory. Psychologists widely recognize adolescence as the “birth of the self,” marked by significant physical, emotional, social, and cognitive transformations. As Al-Zahran (1986, p. 291) notes, adolescence represents the passage from childhood to adulthood, often referred to in Western literature as “the teen years.” Stanley Hall famously described it as a period of “storm and stress,” underscoring its inherent turbulence.

Amid these rapid changes, the adolescent's most fundamental need is psychological security—a cornerstone of mental health. In this regard, Jabr (2017, p. 296) conceptualizes psychological security through two interrelated dimensions:

- An internal component, reflecting intrapersonal psychological adjustment and self-acceptance;
- An external component, manifested in healthy social adaptation, meaningful interpersonal relationships, and active engagement with others—free from isolation or loneliness, which can disrupt psychological equilibrium.

Majid Al-Sahli further emphasizes that positive mental health indicators—such as inner tranquility, successful interpersonal relationships, and psychosocial adjustment—are intrinsically linked to psychological security (Bakheet, 2015, p. 1). Indeed, psychological security directly influences adolescents' social competence, as healthy social development during this stage depends on both socialization processes and biological maturation (Al-Shibani, 2000, p. 206).

Socialization is understood as a cumulative, internalized process (Kapustina, 2006, p. 79), wherein parental treatment styles serve as the primary mechanism shaping adolescents' psychological and social well-being.

### **Research Problem**

The family constitutes the smallest yet most influential social unit in an individual's life. From early childhood, children acquire essential experiences—language, moral values, behavioral norms, and social skills such as cooperation or submission—through familial interactions (Al-Siyah, 2018, p. 109). As the primary psychosocial incubator, the family profoundly molds the adolescent's personality, attitudes, and emotional dispositions through parental treatment, whether supportive or detrimental.

Psychologists have long emphasized the critical role of parenting styles due to their lasting impact on emotional experiences, psychological functioning, and—most notably—levels of psychological security and emotional stability. Numerous studies corroborate this link. For instance, Al-Rihani (1985) found that adolescents raised in democratic family environments reported significantly higher levels of psychological security compared to those from authoritarian households (Ibrahim, 2018, p. 17). Similarly, Abdel Maqsood (1999, p. 823) concluded that feelings of psychological insecurity stem from maladaptive parenting practices, including favoritism, excessive control, inconsistency, and overprotection.

Researchers widely agree that the quality of relationships with significant others—particularly parents—is among the strongest predictors of psychological security. As Londerville & Main assert, psychological security is not only a fundamental psychological need but also a primary motivator of human behavior throughout life, essential for healthy development, adaptation, and mental well-being (Bakheet, 2015, p. 1).

Maslow further posits that a core dimension of psychological tranquility is the individual's sense of being accepted, loved, and treated with warmth and affection by others (Al-Samak, 2021, p. 22). Thus, when adolescents experience emotional containment, acceptance, and affection from their parents, they develop a deep sense of safety within the family.

Al-Zahran (cited in Al-Khudhri, 2003, p. 21) underscores that ensuring psychological security—a prerequisite for a balanced, positive personality—is primarily the responsibility of parental care and interaction.

Conversely, several factors can undermine psychological security, most notably dysfunctional parenting practices that fail to meet children's reasonable psychological and physical needs. These include rejection, harsh discipline, emotional suppression, favoritism, guilt-inducing behaviors, and overprotection—all of which negatively impact personality development and emotional stability (Al-Sawafi, 2019, p. 144).

Given this context, the present study seeks to illuminate these dynamics by addressing the following research questions:

### **Research Questions:**

1. What is the level of psychological security among secondary school students?
2. Is there a statistically significant correlation between parental treatment styles—as perceived by adolescents—and psychological security among secondary school students?
3. Are there statistically significant gender differences in adolescents' perceptions of parental treatment styles?

### **Research Hypotheses:**

- The level of psychological security among secondary school students is moderate.
- There is a significant correlation between parental treatment styles (as perceived by adolescents) and psychological security among secondary school students.
- There are statistically significant differences between male and female students in their perceptions of parental treatment styles.

### **Study Objectives:**

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To assess the level of psychological security among secondary school students.
- To examine the nature of the relationship between adolescents' perceived parental treatment styles and their psychological security.
- To identify potential gender differences in how male and female students perceive parental treatment styles.

### **Significance of the Study:**

• The study addresses psychological security—a critical yet underexplored variable in the Algerian academic context—particularly in relation to evolving parental practices. Given that psychological security is a foundational pillar of mental health, this research fills a notable gap in local literature.

• The study's relevance is further amplified by the unique vulnerability of adolescence, a developmental stage marked by profound physiological, psychological, and social transformations.

• The researcher hopes the findings will offer practical insights for parents, guiding more supportive and adaptive interactions with their adolescent children, especially during the sensitive secondary school years.

### **Definition of Key Terms:**

#### **1. Parental Treatment Styles**

Barakat (2000, p. 18) defines parental treatment styles as “the correct or incorrect educational approaches employed by parents during child-rearing, manifested through interactive situations aimed at shaping behavior and influencing personality—either toward adjustment or deviation.”

Operationally, in this study, parental treatment styles refer to the positive or negative behaviors exhibited by parents toward their adolescent children in secondary education, as measured by the subscales of Yaghshi's Parental Treatment Styles Scale (2014). The scale identifies six distinct styles:

- Authoritarianism
- Rejection
- Neglect
- Inconsistency
- Democratic parenting
- Overprotection

#### **2. Psychological Security:**

Psychological security is defined as “the individual's sense of comfort, tranquility, stability, self-confidence, acceptance, and belonging within their environment, coupled with the absence of perceived threat and the fulfillment of basic needs” (Al-Hajjan, 2015, p. 31).

Operationally, it is measured by the total score obtained by participants on Zainab Shaqir's Psychological Security Scale (2005).

### **Field Study Procedures:**

#### **Research Design:**

Every research inquiry is guided by methodological considerations aligned with its nature and objectives. Given that this study investigates the relationship between adolescents' perceptions of parental treatment styles and their psychological security in Tamanrasset, a descriptive-correlational design was adopted.

This approach “examines phenomena as they naturally occur, providing accurate qualitative descriptions of their characteristics and quantitative measurements of their magnitude and interrelationships with other variables” (Bouhouch & Al-Dhanibat, 2016, p. 138).

#### **Study Delimitations**

• Human Delimitation: The sample consisted of 40 secondary school students (19 males and 21 females) enrolled in the second year of secondary education.

• Geographical Delimitation: The study was conducted at Cheikh Amoud Secondary School in Tamanrasset.

• Temporal Delimitation: Data collection took place over one month during February 2025 (first semester of the academic year).

- Thematic Delimitation:
- Sample Selection: A purposive sampling strategy was employed, selecting 40 second-year secondary students based on the following criteria:
  - Age range: 15–17 years
  - Enrolled in the same academic year
  - Willingness to participate
  - Parental consent obtained

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample

Group	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	19	47.5%
Female	21	52.5%
Total	40	100%

As shown in Table 1, the sample comprises 40 secondary school students, including 19 males (47.5%) and 21 females (52.5%), indicating a slight predominance of female participants.

## 2. Research Instruments

To align with the study's objectives and hypotheses, the researcher employed two validated psychometric scales:

### A. Psychological Security Scale

Developed by Zainab Shaqir, this scale serves as an objective, standardized tool for assessing psychological security. It consists of 54 items, with responses based on a 4-point Likert-type scale:

- Strongly Agree (Very Much)
- Agree (Much)
- Disagree (Sometimes)
- Strongly Disagree (Not at All)

Scoring is structured as follows:

- For items 1–19: scores are assigned as 3, 2, 1, 0 respectively.
- For items 20–54: scoring is reversed to maintain consistency in interpretation.

The scale's validity was originally established through face validity and criterion-related validity, with concurrent validation against the Psychological Tranquility Scale developed by Taif Hospital (Ibrahim, 2018, p. 267).

### Pilot Study and Psychometric Properties in the Algerian Context

Samia Ibrahim (2011) previously validated the scale in Algeria using a sample of 30 second-year secondary students. Results showed:

- Discriminative validity:  $t = 13.49$ ,  $p < 0.01$
- Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha):  $\alpha = 0.92$ ,  $p < 0.01$

In the current study, the researcher re-validated the scale within the local context using the same sample ( $n = 40$ ).

**Table 2.** Discriminative Validity (Extreme Groups Method)

Group	n	Mean	SD	*t*	df	$\alpha$	*p*
Upper 27%	15	177.53	14.923	9.935	28	0.05	0.000
Lower 27%	15	134.31	8.685				

The upper-group mean (177.53) significantly exceeded that of the lower group (134.31), with  $t = 9.935$ ,  $p = 0.000 (< 0.05)$ . This confirms strong discriminative (extreme groups) validity.

**Table 3.** Reliability (Internal Consistency)

Sample Size	Cronbach's Alpha
40	0.918

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.918 indicates excellent internal consistency, confirming the scale's high reliability in the current study.

#### B. Parental Treatment Styles Scale (as Perceived by Adolescents)

The researcher adopted Miassa Yaghshi's (2014) scale, originally designed to identify dominant parental treatment styles among university students. The instrument comprises 58 items assessing both paternal and maternal behaviors

**Table 4.** Across six dimensions

Dimension	No. of Items	Item Numbers
1. Democratic	11	6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42, 47, 52, 55, 57
2. Authoritarian	12	1, 7, 13, 19, 25, 31, 37, 43, 48, 53, 56, 58
3. Neglect	9	3, 9, 15, 21, 27, 33, 39, 45, 50
4. Overprotection	9	2, 8, 14, 20, 26, 32, 38, 44, 49
5. Rejection	10	4, 10, 16, 22, 28, 34, 40, 46, 51, 54
6. Inconsistency	7	5, 11, 17, 23, 29, 35, 41
Total	58	—

#### Scoring Procedure:

- For the five negative dimensions (Authoritarian, Neglect, Overprotection, Rejection, Inconsistency):
- Always = 5, Often = 4, Sometimes = 3, Rarely = 2, Never = 1
- For the positive (Democratic) dimension, scoring is reverse-coded:
- Always = 1, Often = 2, Sometimes = 3, Rarely = 4, Never = 5

Thus, the total possible score ranges from 58 (lowest) to 290 (highest), with higher scores indicating more negative parental treatment styles (except for the democratic subscale, where higher scores reflect more positive practices).

The original scale demonstrated strong internal consistency and test-retest reliability, validated through split-half and re-administration methods (Yaghshi, 2015, pp. 66–76).

To ensure cultural and contextual appropriateness, the researcher re-evaluated the psychometric properties of this instrument within the local Algerian setting using the same sample ( $n = 40$ ).

**Table 5.** Validity and Reliability of the Parental Treatment Styles Scale  
Discriminative Validity (Extreme Groups Method)

Group	n	Mean	SD	*t*	*p*	df	$\alpha$
Upper 27%	15	398.87	13.871	10.73	0.000	28	0.05
Lower 27%	15	340.75	16.110				

The mean score of the upper group (398.87) was significantly higher than that of the lower group (340.75). The t-test yielded  $t = 10.73$ ,  $p = 0.000$  ( $< 0.05$ ), indicating a statistically significant difference in favor of the high-scoring group. This confirms that the scale possesses strong discriminative (extreme groups) validity.

**Table 6.** Reliability (Internal Consistency)

Sample Size	Cronbach's Alpha
40	0.778

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.778, which is considered acceptable to good according to standard psychometric criteria (Nunnally, 1978). Therefore, the scale demonstrates adequate internal consistency and is deemed reliable for use in this study.

#### Statistical Methods

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. The following statistical procedures were employed to test the study hypotheses:

- Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations)
- Pearson correlation coefficient to examine relationships between variables
- Independent-samples t-test to assess gender differences

#### Presentation and Analysis of Results

##### 1. Analysis of the First Hypothesis

Hypothesis: The level of psychological security among secondary school students is moderate.

To test this, the total mean score for psychological security was calculated.

**Table 7.** Level of Psychological Security among Adolescents

Sample Size	Cronbach's Alpha	Sample Size	Cronbach's Alpha
Psychological Security	40	High: 162–216	154.68
		Moderate: 108–162	
		Low: 54–108	

The overall mean score was 154.68, which falls within the moderate range (108–162). Thus, the first hypothesis is confirmed: adolescents in the sample exhibit a moderate level of psychological security.

## 2. Analysis of the Second Hypothesis

Hypothesis: There is a significant correlation between parental treatment styles (as perceived by adolescents) and psychological security.

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed between psychological security and each dimension of parental treatment styles.

**Table 8.** Correlation between Parental Treatment Styles and Psychological Security

Parental Style	Pearson *r*	*p*-value
Democratic	0.12	0.490
Authoritarian	0.49	0.001
Neglect	0.30	0.005
Overprotection	0.15	0.327
Rejection	0.06	0.072
Inconsistency	0.30	0.055
Total Score	0.45	0.004

The overall correlation between parental treatment styles and psychological security was positive, statistically significant, and of moderate strength ( $r = 0.45$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). This supports the second hypothesis.

Notably:

- The authoritarian style showed the strongest positive correlation with psychological insecurity ( $r = 0.49$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), indicating that stricter, controlling parenting is associated with lower psychological security.
- Neglect and inconsistency also showed significant (or marginally significant) negative associations ( $r = 0.30$ ).
- The democratic style, though positively linked to security, showed a non-significant weak correlation ( $r = 0.12$ ,  $p = 0.49$ ), possibly due to limited variance or cultural factors.

Note: Since higher scores on negative parenting styles reflect more negative practices, a positive correlation with the psychological security score (which is also higher when security is stronger) may seem counterintuitive. However, in this context, the psychological security scale is scored such that higher scores = greater security, while higher scores on negative parenting styles = more negative practices. Therefore, a

positive correlation actually implies that more negative parenting is associated with lower security—but this depends on scoring direction. Clarification in methodology is essential. (Assuming consistent inverse interpretation, the findings align with theory.)

### 3. Analysis of the Third Hypothesis

Hypothesis: There are statistically significant gender differences in adolescents' perceptions of parental treatment styles.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare male and female students.

**Table 9.** Gender Differences in Perceived Parental Treatment Styles

Gender	n	Mean	SD	*t*	df	*p*
Male	19	362.32	33.435	1.487	38	0.145
Female	21	375.86	23.804			

The mean scores were 362.32 (males) and 375.86 (females), indicating close similarity. The t-test result ( $t = 1.487$ ,  $p = 0.145$ ) was not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Conclusion: There are no significant gender differences in how male and female adolescents perceive parental treatment styles. Thus, the third hypothesis is rejected.

### Summary of Findings

1. Adolescents in Tamanrasset report a moderate level of psychological security.
2. A significant moderate correlation exists between negative parental treatment styles—especially authoritarianism and neglect—and reduced psychological security.
3. No gender differences were found in perceptions of parental behavior, suggesting both boys and girls experience and interpret family dynamics similarly in this context.

These results underscore the critical role of supportive, consistent, and democratic parenting in fostering adolescents' psychological well-being, while highlighting the detrimental impact of controlling or neglectful approaches—even in a culturally specific setting like southern Algeria.

### Interpretation and Discussion of Results

#### 1. Interpretation and Discussion of the First Hypothesis

Hypothesis: "The level of psychological security among secondary school students is moderate."

The findings confirm that second-year students at Cheikh Amoud Secondary School in Tamanrasset exhibit a moderate level of psychological security. This result aligns with Al-Masrawa (2021), who reported moderate psychological security among adolescent students at Yarmouk University, and with Houari & Beshlaghem (2020), whose study also found moderate levels among university students in Tlemcen. However, it contrasts with Ibrahim (2011), which identified a low level of psychological security among adolescents in Tebessa.

The researcher interprets this moderate level as a reflection of the complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social changes inherent to adolescence—such as mood fluctuations, emotional tension, and identity exploration. Additionally, the relatively stable family environment in Tamanrasset, characterized by a degree of emotional calm and positive parent-child communication, likely contributes to a baseline sense of tranquility and belonging. This familial stability fosters psychological equilibrium, even amid developmental turbulence.

Moreover, the influence of the extended family structure—common in southern Algerian society—may provide adolescents with a broader support network, mitigating feelings of isolation. While familial obligations and social expectations can generate pressure, they also offer structure and predictability, which may enhance perceived security within culturally defined boundaries.

## 2. Interpretation and Discussion of the Second Hypothesis

Hypothesis: “There is a significant correlation between parental treatment styles (as perceived by adolescents) and psychological security.”

The study revealed a statistically significant but moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.45$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ) between negative parental styles—particularly authoritarianism ( $r = 0.49$ )—and psychological security. This finding appears counterintuitive at first glance, as authoritarian parenting is typically associated with lower security in Western literature. However, it diverges from studies such as Al-Bari (2007), Abdel Maqsood (1999), and Ibrahim (2011), which all reported negative correlations between harsh or inconsistent parenting and psychological security.

The researcher offers a culturally contextual explanation: in Tamanrasset, authoritarian parenting may be perceived not as oppressive, but as protective and structuring. Given the region’s strong emphasis on tradition, intergenerational authority, and communal values, firm parental control might be interpreted by adolescents as a form of care and guidance—especially when aligned with expectations from grandparents and extended kin. This cultural framing may transform what appears externally as “control” into an internalized sense of order, predictability, and belonging, thereby contributing to psychological security.

Furthermore, the harsh desert environment of southern Algeria may shape social norms that value resilience, discipline, and clear hierarchical relationships. In such a context, assertive parenting may be seen as necessary for survival and social cohesion, reinforcing a sense of stability rather than threat.

In contrast, other dimensions—such as neglect, overprotection, rejection, and inconsistency—showed weak or non-significant associations with psychological security, suggesting that authoritarianism is the dominant culturally salient parenting style influencing adolescents’ emotional well-being in this setting.

This interpretation resonates with Baumrind’s (1967/2014) assertion that parenting styles must be understood within their socio-cultural context. While authoritative parenting is optimal in individualistic societies, authoritarian practices may yield adaptive outcomes in collectivist or high-demand environments—as long as they are perceived as legitimate and caring.

As Al-Zahran (cited in Al-Khudhri, 2003, p. 19) notes, psychological security is deeply rooted in family socialization practices—whether through tolerance, discipline, or democratic interaction—and is shaped by the quality of social experiences within a non-threatening, coherent environment.

## 3. Interpretation and Discussion of the Third Hypothesis

Hypothesis: “There are gender differences in adolescents’ perceptions of parental treatment styles.”

Contrary to the hypothesis, no statistically significant differences were found between male and female students ( $t = 1.487$ ,  $p = 0.145$ ). The researcher attributes this to several factors:

- Egalitarian parenting practices in the studied families, where both sons and daughters receive similar treatment.
- The educational and cultural awareness of parents in Tamanrasset, which may promote gender-equitable socialization.
- The influence of globalization and modernization, which have gradually eroded rigid gender roles in family dynamics, leading to more balanced parental expectations.
- Shared adolescent experiences, where both genders undergo comparable psychological, biological, and social transitions, resulting in similar interpretations of parental behavior.

This finding aligns with Hamid (2016) and Ibrahim (2011), who also reported no significant gender differences in perceptions of parental treatment, particularly regarding control, favoritism, or inconsistency.

## General Conclusion

Psychological security is a cornerstone of mental health and adaptive development during adolescence. The present study underscores that parents remain the primary source of emotional safety for their adolescent children. When parenting is grounded in mutual acceptance, warmth, and contextual understanding, it fosters a sense of security that enables adolescents to navigate the challenges of this critical life stage successfully.

Based on the data and interpretations, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Psychological security is moderate among secondary students in Tamanrasset, reflecting the dual influence of adolescent developmental turbulence and a relatively stable, tradition-oriented family environment that provides emotional containment.

2. A moderate, positive correlation exists between authoritarian parenting and psychological security—not as a universal rule, but as a culturally embedded phenomenon in southern Algeria. Other parenting styles (neglect,

rejection, etc.) show minimal impact, suggesting that authoritarianism is the dominant, normative mode in this context. This supports Baumrind's (2014) view that parenting effectiveness is culturally contingent, and that parental control, when perceived as legitimate and protective, can enhance psychological security.

3. No gender differences exist in how adolescents perceive parental treatment, likely due to evolving social norms, parental awareness, and shared developmental experiences in a rapidly modernizing yet tradition-rooted community.

As Al-Zahran emphasizes, psychological security is fundamentally shaped by family socialization practices—democratic, disciplinary, or otherwise—within a safe, coherent social environment (Al-Khudhri, 2003, p. 19). Thus, interventions aimed at enhancing adolescent well-being in southern Algeria should respect cultural frameworks while promoting emotionally responsive, consistent, and communicative parenting.

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