

## Relationship between Parental Attitudes and Anger Expression Styles in Children and Adolescents\*

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### Abstract

**Aim:** In this study, it is aimed to examine the relationship between parental attitudes, anger and anger expression styles.

**Method:** The research was conducted using a survey method. The sample consisted of 412 participants aged between 8 and 18 years, including both children and adolescents from Diyarbakır. In order to collect data, a socio-demographic data form prepared by the researcher, the Trait Anger and Anger Expression Scale, and the Parental Attitude Scale were administered on participants. Descriptive analyses, T-tests, ANOVA, and correlation analyses were employed to analyze the research data.

**Results:** Of the children and adolescents participating in the study, 41.7% were between the ages of 11 and 15. The study found a positive correlation between the trait anger subscale and permissive (r: 0.191;  $p<0.05$ ), protective (r: 0.145;  $p<0.05$ ), democratic (r: 0.102;  $p<0.05$ ) and authoritarian parental attitudes (r: 0.341;  $p<0.05$ ). Additionally, a moderate, positive relationship was found between the controlled anger subscale and protective (r: 0.333;  $p<0.05$ ) and democratic parental attitudes (r: 0.537;  $p<0.05$ ). There was also a positive relationship between the outwardly expressed anger subscale and permissive (r: 0.219;  $p<0.05$ ), protective (r: 0.145;  $p<0.05$ ), democratic attitudes (r: 0.140;  $p<0.05$ ) and authoritarian attitudes (r: 0.348;  $p<0.05$ ). Finally, positive correlation was found between the suppressed anger subscale and permissive (r: 0.218;  $p<0.05$ ), protective (r: 0.157;  $p<0.05$ ), democratic (r: 0.263;  $p<0.05$ ), and authoritarian (r: 0.138;  $p<0.05$ ) parental attitudes.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between trait anger, controlled anger, suppressed anger, and outwardly expressed anger levels and parental attitudes. In this context, this study suggests that parents should be aware of their parenting styles because these styles impact children's anger and its expression.

**Keywords:** Children, adolescent, anger, anger expression, parental attitudes.

### Çocuk ve Ergenlerde Öfke İfade Tarzları ile Ebeveyn Tutumları Arasındaki İlişki

#### Öz

**Amaç:** Bu çalışmada, ebeveyn tutumları ile öfke ve öfke ifade tarzları arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır.

**Yöntem:** Araştırma, anket yöntemi kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Örneklem, Diyarbakır ilindeki 8-18 yaş aralığındaki çocuk ve ergenlerden oluşan 412 katılımcıdan meydana gelmektedir. Verilerin toplanması için katılımcılara araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan sosyo-demografik veri formu, Sürekli Öfke ve Öfke İfade

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Tarzi Ölçeği ve Ebeveyn Tutumları Ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Araştırma verilerinin analizinde tanımlayıcı analizler, T-testleri, ANOVA ve korelasyon analizleri kullanılmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Çalışmaya katılan çocuk ve ergenlerin %41,7'si 11-15 yaş aralığındadır. Araştırmada, sürekli öfke alt ölçeği ile hoşgörü (r:0,191; p<0,05), koruyucu (r:0,145; p<0,05), demokratik (r:0,102; p<0,05) ve otoriter ebeveyn tutumları (r:0,341; p<0,05) arasında pozitif yönde bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, kontrollü öfke alt ölçeği ile koruyucu (r:0,333; p<0,05) ve demokratik ebeveyn tutumları (r:0,537; p<0,05) arasında orta düzeyde pozitif bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Dışa vurulan öfke alt ölçeği ile hoşgörü (r: 0,219; p<0,05), koruyucu (r:0,145; p<0,05), demokratik (r:0,140; p<0,05) ve otoriter ebeveyn tutumları (r:0,348; p<0,05) arasında pozitif bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Bastırılan öfke alt ölçeği ile hoşgörü (r:0,218; p<0,05), koruyucu (r:0,157; p<0,05), demokratik (r:0,263; p<0,05) ve otoriter (r:0,138; p<0,05) ebeveyn tutumları arasında pozitif bir korelasyon bulunmuştur.

**Sonuç:** Bu çalışma, sürekli öfke, kontrollü öfke, bastırılan öfke ve dışa vurulan öfke düzeyleri ile ebeveyn tutumları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bu çalışma çocuklarının öfke ve öfke ifade tarzlarını etkiledikleri için ebeveynlerin ebeveynlik stillerinin farkında olmaları gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Çocuk, ergen, öfke, öfke ifadesi, ebeveyn tutumları.

## Introduction

Anger is an intense emotion experienced in situations of threat, restriction, attack, or frustration, often accompanied by aggressive behaviors directed towards the situation or individual causing it<sup>1</sup>. Anger can range from a mild sense of discomfort to extreme hatred and violence, encompassing mental, physical, and emotional factors. Based on its duration, anger is categorized into state anger and trait anger. State anger refers to the tension and irritability experienced when a person's goals are obstructed or when they face an injustice. Trait anger, on the other hand, is characterized by a persistent and increasing level of anger in response to life events. Anger can be expressed in various ways. While sometimes visible through the physical reactions of the body, in other cases, it may be overly suppressed and show no clear signs. Similar to the emotion itself, anger behaviors are learned, and these behaviors can be transformed into constructive, healthy, and positive actions<sup>2</sup>.

Parents play a pivotal role for healthy psychological growth of children<sup>3</sup>. Individuals who grow up in a nurturing environment where they receive love and respect during childhood are better able to develop themselves. According to Baumrind (1967), four different types of parenting are described, these parenting attitudes include authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved parenting styles<sup>4</sup>. Democratic parenting is characterized by respecting the child's existence and desires, assigning responsibilities according to developmental stages, and granting the child the right to speak and make choices. Authoritarian parenting, on the other hand, involves parents not accepting their children as they are and managing them according to their desires, often resorting to excessive punishment when the child resists. In permissive parenting, parents exhibit excessive tolerance toward their children. Uninvolved parenting involves a lack of interest in the child's physical and emotional needs, insufficient affection and compassion, and indifference to discipline and control. In such families, parents do not provide guidance, supervision, or discipline, leaving the children to manage on their own without imposing any restrictions on their behavior.

Research papers, particularly focusing on university students, have shown that democratic parenting contributes positively to self-actualization in individuals. In

contrast, authoritarian parenting, marked by strict discipline and conditional love, as well as overly protective or neglectful parenting styles, have been found to hinder the development of key personality traits such as self-confidence and independence. Overly protective, rejecting, restrictive, punitive, and inconsistent parenting styles also negatively affect personality development. Individuals who are uncomfortable with this situation experience anger, which they may either suppress or express destructively in inappropriate situations and places<sup>5-6</sup>. Anger outbursts and aggressive behaviors within the family negatively impact all family members, with children being more vulnerable to these effects<sup>7</sup>. Authoritarian parenting style involves low levels of healthy environments for children, which leads to aggressive behaviors. Unfortunately, children who are physically punished do not fully develop internal control, leading to feelings of resentment, hatred, and anger towards their parents and others in their environment<sup>8-9</sup>. Kağıtçıbaşı and Cemalcılar (2014) emphasize the importance of presenting non-aggressive role models to children during their socialization period, stating that only in this way can future aggressive behaviors be prevented<sup>10</sup>. Bulut (2018) examined the relationship between anger expression styles and parental attitudes between high school students and concluded that parental attitudes influence adolescents' continuous anger. Continuous anger was found to increase proportionally with protective parental attitudes, though the relationship was weak. A negative significant relationship was found between continuous anger scores and democratic parental attitudes, while a positive relationship was observed between continuous anger and authoritarian parenting attitudes. A positive correlation was also found between controlled anger and democratic parental attitudes, as well as between outwardly expressed anger and authoritarian parental attitudes. However, no significant relationship was found between inwardly held anger and protective, democratic, or authoritarian parental attitudes<sup>11</sup>. In Say's (2016) study, the quality of relationships between parents and adolescents, problem-solving, and anger levels were investigated, and it was found that specific parental attitudes were related to continuous anger in adolescents<sup>12</sup>. Sağır (2016), investigated the effect of parental attitudes on anger expression styles in adolescents. The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between anger expression styles and continuous anger levels in adolescents and parental attitudes. Moreover, it was found that as democratic parental attitudes increased, adolescents' continuous anger, inwardly held anger, and outwardly expressed anger decreased, and anger control improved. Conversely, as authoritarian and protective/demanding parental attitudes increased, adolescents' continuous anger, inwardly held anger, and outwardly expressed anger increased, while anger control decreased<sup>13</sup>. Another study examined the relationship between adolescents' anger towards school and perceived parental attitudes in their study. It was found that students who perceived their parents as democratic or permissive/tolerant displayed more acceptable behaviors in expressing their anger compared to those who perceived their parents as permissive/neglectful or authoritarian<sup>14</sup>. With all these results, it is possible to mention that there is a gap about studies on this particular topic in developing countries. So, it is important for us to conduct this study in order to examine the relationship between parenting styles, anger, and its expression in children and adolescents in Diyarbakır. The main hypothesis to be

tested in this research is that there is a significant correlation between parenting styles, anger levels, and anger expression in children and adolescents.

## Material and Methods

This study is a descriptive and a cross-sectional study. 412 children and adolescents aged 8-18 years living in Diyarbakır constituted the sample. Data were collected through an online questionnaire created via Google Drive. To collect data, sociodemographic data form which was prepared by the researchers, Trait Anger and Anger Expression Scale and Parental Attitude Scale were used. Trait Anger (T-Anger) and Anger Expression Scale (Anger-Ex) was developed by Spielberger<sup>15</sup>. Its validity and reliability were established by Özer<sup>16</sup>. Parental Attitude Scale measures parenting patterns. The scale, validated and made reliable by Demir and Şendil, consists of 46 questions and four sub-dimensions. The scale assesses the following sub-dimensions: democratic, authoritarian, protective, and permissive attitudes<sup>17</sup>.

## Data Analyses

The data were analyzed using the SPSS 22.0 statistical software package. Descriptive statistical methods were used to evaluate the data. A normality distribution analysis was performed to determine the appropriate statistical tests. The Skewness-Kurtosis test statistics for the scale data ranged between -1.5 and +1.5, indicating a normal distribution, thus allowing for the application of parametric tests. For comparisons of quantitative data, the independent samples t-test was used for comparisons between two groups. For comparisons involving more than two groups, the One-Way ANOVA test was used, followed by Tukey's test to identify the group causing the difference. The results were evaluated at a 95% confidence interval, with a significance level of  $p < 0.05$ .

This study was approved by the Istanbul Gelisim University Ethics Committee Presidency with the decision dated 08/05/2020 and numbered 2020-28-29 to conduct the research. The participants in this study were informed before the survey and a consent form was signed.

## Results

Demographic characteristics of the participants are present in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of participants

Demographic characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	214	52.0
Male	198	48.0
<b>Age Range</b>		
8-10	99	24.0
11-15	172	41.7
16-18	141	34.2
<b>Parental Relationship Status</b>		
Both Alive and Married	367	89.1
Mother Deceased	19	4.6
Father Deceased	19	4.6
Both Alive and Divorced	7	1.7

The analysis of differences in Trait Anger and Anger Expression Scale and Parental Attitudes scores by gender among the participants in the study was conducted using an Independent Samples T-Test (Table 2). The analysis revealed that there were no significant differences between genders ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 2.** Independent T-Test Analysis of Differences in Trait Anger and Anger Expression Style Scale (TAAE) and Parental Attitudes Scores by Gender

	Gender	n	Mean	t	p
<b>Trait Anger</b>	Female	216	2.6384	0.784	0.433
	Male	196	2.5745		
<b>Controlled Anger</b>	Female	216	3.5064	0.679	0.498
	Male	196	3.4471		
<b>Outwardly Expressed Anger</b>	Female	216	2.5029	0.290	0.772
	Male	196	2.4815		
<b>Inwardly Held Anger</b>	Female	216	2.5723	1.255	0.210
	Male	196	2.4777		
<b>Permissive Style</b>	Female	216	2.0654	-0.430	0.668
	Male	196	2.0925		
<b>Protective Style</b>	Female	216	3.5540	-0.240	0.810
	Male	196	3.5731		
<b>Authoritarian Style</b>	Female	216	2.0328	-1.182	0.238
	Male	196	2.1081		
<b>Democratic Style</b>	Female	216	4.0779	-0.313	0.754
	Male	196	4.1050		

The analysis of differences in Trait Anger and Anger Expression Style Scale (TAAE) scores by age among the participants was conducted using One-Way ANOVA. The analysis revealed that there were significant differences in anger expression scores based on age ( $p < 0.05$ ). Post-hoc (Tukey) analysis identified that individuals aged 16-18 had higher levels of trait anger, outward anger, and internalized anger compared to those 8-10 years old. The analysis of differences in parenting attitudes by age among the participants was conducted using One-Way ANOVA. The analysis revealed that there were significant differences in the permissive parenting attitude levels based on age ( $p < 0.05$ ). Post-hoc (Tukey) analysis showed that parents of children aged 16-18 exhibited higher levels of permissive attitudes compared to parents of children aged 11-15 (Table 3).

**Table 3.** One-Way ANOVA Analysis of Differences in Trait Anger and Anger Expression Style Scale and Parental Attitude Scores by Age Among Participants

	Age	n	Mean	SD	F	p
<b>Trait Anger</b>	8-10*	99	2.4596	.79088	4.531	<b>0.011</b>
	11-15	172	2.5628	.85813		
	16 18**	141	2.7674	.79602		
	Total	412	2.6080	.82839		
<b>Controlled Anger</b>	8-10	99	3.4987	1.01086	1.146	0.319
	11-15	172	3.4041	.88506		
	16 18	141	3.5541	.78764		
	Total	412	3.4782	.88615		
<b>Outwardly Expressed Anger</b>	8-10*	99	2.3535	.74446	4.401	<b>0.013</b>
	11-15	172	2.4586	.74463		
	16 18**	141	2.6321	.73963		
	Total	412	2.4927	.74900		
<b>Inwardly Held Anger</b>	8-10*	99	2.2816	.67014	9.168	<b>0.000</b>
	11-15**	172	2.5233	.79346		
	16 18**	141	2.7048	.75980		
	Total	412	2.5273	.76878		
<b>Permissive Style</b>	8-10	99	2.0657	.68497	6.781	<b>0.001</b>
	11-15*	172	1.9644	.55104		
	16 18**	141	2.2261	.66931		
	Total	412	2.0783	.63542		
<b>Protective Style</b>	8-10	99	3.6487	.78691	0.780	0.459
	11-15	172	3.5484	.81907		
	16 18	141	3.5209	.80323		
	Total	412	3.5631	.80561		
<b>Authoritarian Style</b>	8-10	99	2.0101	.68066	2.547	0.080
	11-15	172	2.0211	.58861		
	16 18	141	2.1676	.67989		
	Total	412	2.0686	.64592		
<b>Democratic Style</b>	8-10	99	4.1925	.89360	1.532	0.217
	11-15	172	4.1105	.88203		
	16 18	141	3.9954	.86846		
	Total	412	4.0908	.88135		

SD: Standard Deviation

The analysis of differences in Trait Anger and Anger Expression Style Scale and parental attitudes scores by parental marital status among the participants was conducted using One-Way ANOVA. The analysis revealed that there were no significant differences in



anger expression scores and parental attitude scores based on parental marital status ( $p > 0.05$ ).

The relationship between the scores of Trait Anger and Anger Expression Style Scale and parental attitudes scales was examined using correlation analysis. There was a low-level positive correlation between trait anger subscale and permissive attitudes ( $r:0.191$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), protective attitudes ( $r:0.145$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), and democratic attitudes ( $r:0.102$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and moderate-level positive correlation between trait anger subscale and authoritarian attitudes ( $r:0.341$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). There was a moderate level positive correlation between controlled anger subscale and protective attitudes ( $r:0.333$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and democratic attitudes ( $r:0.537$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). There was a low level positive correlation between outwardly expressed anger subscale and permissive attitudes ( $r:0.219$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), protective attitudes ( $r:0.145$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), and democratic attitudes ( $r:0.140$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), and a moderate level positive correlation with authoritarian attitudes ( $r:0.348$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). There was a low level positive correlation between internalized anger subscale and permissive attitudes ( $r:0.218$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), protective attitudes ( $r:0.157$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), democratic attitudes ( $r:0.263$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), and authoritarian attitudes ( $r:0.138$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Based on these results, it can be said that participants' parents' authoritarian attitudes have a moderate-level correlational effect on the levels of trait anger and outwardly expressed anger. Additionally, participants' parents' protective and democratic attitudes are moderately correlated with the levels of controlled anger.

**Table 4.** Analysis of Relationship Between Trait Anger and Anger Expression Style Scale and Parental Attitude Scores

		Trait Anger	Controlled anger	Outwordly Expressed Anger	Inwardly Held Anger	Permissive Style	Protective Style	Athoritarian style	Democtratic style
Trait Anger	r	1							
	p.								
Controlled anger	r	-,198**	1						
	p.	,000							
Outwordly Expressed Anger	r	,713**	-,070	1					
	p.	,000	,156						
Inwardly Held Anger	r	,505**	,138**	,521**	1				
	p.	,000	,005	,000					
Permissive Style	r	,191**	,026	,219**	,218**	1			
	p.	,000	,599	,000	,000				
Protective Style	r	,145**	,333**	,145**	,157**	,149**	1		
	p.	,003	,000	,003	,001	,002			
Authoritarian Style	r	,341**	-,122*	,348**	,263**	,386**	,113*	1	
	p.	,000	,013	,000	,000	,000	,022		
Democratic Style	r	,102*	,537**	,140**	,168**	-,016	,655**	-,079	1
	p.	,039	,000	,005	,001	,752	,000	,111	

## Discussion

In this study, the analysis of Trait Anger and Anger Expression Scale scores by gender revealed no significant differences in anger and anger expression styles ( $p>0.05$ ). According to Manap and Kış, there was no significant difference in anger scores among males and females. In their sample, 3495 participants (47.05%) were male and 52.95%

were female. The results indicate that anger levels do not vary based on gender<sup>18</sup>. However, other studies in the literature have shown differing results. Özmen, Özmen, Dündar, Çetinkaya, and Taşkın found that the most influential factors on adolescents' trait anger levels and anger styles were anxiety, gender, and family type. Male students were found to have higher levels of trait anger and expressed their anger more, while female students controlled their anger more<sup>19</sup>. Keskin, Gümüş and Engin also reported that anger expression styles differ by gender, with variations in anger provocation, levels, and expression modes between males and females. The impact of gender on anger expression is noted as women often direct their anger inwardly, manifesting as depression and self-harm, whereas men express their anger directly<sup>20</sup>. The differing results in our study may be related to methodological differences and sample variations compared to other studies. In our study, it was observed that there were no differences in parenting attitudes based on the participants' gender. Çeçen and Arcan found no significant differences in parenting styles between male and female high school students<sup>21-22</sup>.

In our study, it is found that trait anger, outwardly expressed anger, and internalized anger varied by age, with those aged 16-18 showing higher levels compared to younger participants. Erdoğan similarly found that trait anger and anger expression styles varied by age, with 16-year-olds exhibiting higher levels compared to younger participants<sup>23</sup>. Adolescence is a time of profound change, involving physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. These changes create major challenges for managing anger.

The analysis of Trait Anger and Anger Expression Scale scores by parental relationship status revealed no significant differences. Researchs found higher levels of trait anger, expressed anger, and suppressed anger among adolescents from fragmented families, with less ability to control their anger<sup>19,24</sup>. Additionally, Altuntaş identified significant differences in trait anger, anger control, and outwardly expressed anger values based on birth order, with higher levels found in adolescents with divorced parents, whereas no differences were found among those with non-divorced parents<sup>25</sup>. The lack of significant findings in our study may be related to the small number of children with divorced parents in the sample and methodological differences.

In the analysis of the relationship between parenting attitudes and anger expression styles, correlations were found between these variables. A moderate positive and significant relationship was observed between authoritarian attitudes and trait anger. A moderate positive and significant relationship was observed between controlled anger and protective and democratic attitudes. A moderate positive and significant relationship was also found between authoritarian attitudes and outwardly expressed anger. This suggests that children with authoritarian parents tend to have higher levels of trait anger and are more likely to express their anger outwardly. Conversely, protective and democratic parenting attitudes were moderately correlated with controlled anger, indicating their importance in managing anger among children and adolescents. Bulut examined anger expression styles and parenting attitudes among high school students, finding that parenting attitudes impact trait anger. Bulut's study found a direct correlation between trait anger and protective attitudes, a negative and significant correlation between trait anger and democratic attitudes, and a positive and significant



correlation between trait anger and authoritarian attitudes. Controlled anger showed a positive correlation with democratic attitudes, while outwardly expressed anger had a negative correlation with democratic attitudes and a positive correlation with authoritarian attitudes<sup>11</sup>. In democratic parenting, parents show flexibility in their approach and therefore have low level of psychological control and it is helpful in minimizing negative and aggressive behavior in children. On the other hand, authoritarian parents shows more psychological control to influence their will on children. This can leave children conflicted, less communicative, and less trustful. That is why the authoritarian parenting style has more negative effects on children's aggressive behavior compared to authoritative and permissive parenting. If the parents have an authoritarian attitudes, children show more aggressive behavior than other types of parenting style<sup>26-29</sup>. Authoritarian discipline, which is characterized by high pressure on children and expressed aggression and rejection, generates anger, resentment, and rebellion in children. These feelings predict social rejection that further amplifies the anger<sup>30</sup>. Montemayor found that children with indifferent or inconsistent parenting exhibited higher tendencies towards aggressive behaviors<sup>31</sup>. Sağır also found significant differences in anger expression styles and trait anger levels based on parenting attitudes, with increased democratic attitudes associated with reduced anger and better anger control<sup>13</sup>. Students perceiving their parents as democratic or permissive exhibited more acceptable anger behaviors compared to those perceiving their parents as permissive/neglectful or authoritarian<sup>14</sup>.

## Conclusion

The findings suggest that parental attitudes play a crucial role in shaping how children manage and express their anger. The study underscores the importance of understanding the impact of different parenting styles on children's anger expression. It is highly recommended that authorities should provide educational sessions to parents and parents should participate them so that they can handle their children's emotions. Parents are encouraged to adopt supportive and constructive attitudes to positively influence their children's anger management. Trainings about parenting will help parents to learn different ways for developing a healthy home environment for their children. Although this study has some limitations, such as its cross-sectional design, reliance on scale-based measures, being conducted in a specific region that may limit the generalizability of the findings to other areas with different demographics, and being conducted online, the study has valuable contributions to understanding the relationship between parenting styles and anger of children in Diyarbakır, Turkey. These results highlight the benefits of parenting as a highly important support for managing anger for children.

**Ethical Considerations:** This study was approved by the Istanbul Gelisim University Ethics Committee Presidency with the decision dated 08/05/2020 and numbered 2020-28-29 to conduct the research. The participants to be included in the study were informed before the survey, and a consent form was signed.

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