



## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## The Role of Parenting Styles in Identifying Sports Talent in Adolescents: A Psychological Approach

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## KEY WORDS

Adolescents;  
Parenting style;  
Self-Efficacy;  
Sports psychology;  
Sports talent identification

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to investigate the role of parenting styles in identifying sports talent in adolescents with a psychological approach. The research method was descriptive-correlational and quantitative. The statistical population included 300 adolescent athletes aged 12 to 16 years. Data were collected using Baumrind's Parenting Styles Questionnaire, coaches' evaluations, and the Sports Self-Efficacy Scale. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient, multiple regression, and path analysis. The results showed that the authoritative parenting style had a significant positive relationship with the identification of sports talent ( $\beta = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), while the authoritarian style had a negative effect ( $\beta = -0.29$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and the permissive style had a weak and non-significant effect. Additionally, sports self-efficacy played a significant mediating role in the relationship between the authoritative style and talent identification (Indirect effect = 0.15, 95% CI [0.08, 0.22]). The findings indicate that an authoritative parenting style and the strengthening of self-efficacy provide a supportive environment for identifying and nurturing adolescents' sports talents. The results emphasize that simultaneous attention to psychological and environmental factors is crucial for the development of sports talents and provide practical guidance for parents, coaches, and sports policymakers.

### Introduction

Sports talent identification as one of the key components of sustainable championship sports development has attracted extensive attention from researchers in sports sciences and sports psychology in recent decades. The primary goal of talent identification is to identify individuals with high potential and to provide suitable conditions for the growth and flourishing of their capabilities in the

long-term path (Vaeyens et al., 2009; Till & Baker, 2020). However, recent research emphasizes that relying solely on physical and skill indicators is not capable of predicting long-term sports success, and one-dimensional approaches have limited efficiency in identifying real talent (Baker et al., 2020).

In recent years, the dominant view in sports talent identification has moved towards multidimensional

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models; models that, in addition to physical and physiological factors, also consider psychological and environmental components as determining elements (Johnston et al., 2018). Among these, psychological factors such as motivation, self-efficacy, emotional regulation, and resilience have been identified as important predictors of the growth and continuity of the elite sports development path (MacNamara & Collins, 2015).

Adolescence is considered one of the most sensitive stages for identifying sports talent. This period is accompanied by extensive biological, cognitive, and emotional changes, and the interaction of these changes with environmental factors can facilitate or limit the individual's sports development path (Lloyd et al., 2015). Research shows that many elite athletes were identified and guided in adolescence not necessarily based on physical superiority, but due to psychological characteristics and appropriate environmental support (Till et al., 2017).

The family, as the first and most stable social institution, plays a fundamental role in shaping adolescents' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors towards sports. Parents have a direct impact on their children's sports development path by providing training opportunities, emotional support, managing competitive pressure, and behavioral modeling (Knight et al., 2016). The quality of this influence largely depends on the parents' parenting styles.

Parenting styles refer to the stable patterns of parents' behavior in interaction with their children and are usually classified into four styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Contemporary research shows that the authoritative parenting style, which is associated with high emotional support and logical structuring, is linked to positive developmental outcomes including self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, and better mental health (Pinquart, 2017). These characteristics can provide a suitable platform for identifying and nurturing sports talent in adolescents. In the field of sports psychology, numerous studies

have examined the role of parents in adolescents' sports experience. Findings show that parental support is associated with increased enjoyment, autonomous motivation, and continuity of sports participation, while excessive parental control and pressure can lead to competitive anxiety, burnout, and withdrawal from sports (Harwood et al., 2019; Knight et al., 2017). These results indicate the importance of the quality of parent-child interaction in the sports development path.

Despite significant progress in this field, a large part of the conducted research has focused on outcomes such as sports performance, competitive success, or level of participation. In contrast, the concept of "sports talent identification" as a fundamental stage and prerequisite for entering the elite development path has been less directly examined (Baker et al., 2019). Talent identification is a dynamic and gradual process that is influenced by perceived ability, motivational beliefs, and psychological support (Till & Baker, 2020).

From a psychological perspective, self-efficacy is proposed as one of the key variables in the development of sports talent. Research shows that adolescents with a stronger belief in their abilities show better performance, greater persistence, and a more adaptive response to sports challenges (Feltz et al., 2008; Moritz et al., 2019). Parenting styles can play a determining role in identifying sports talent by strengthening or weakening these beliefs.

Furthermore, modern talent development models, such as the dynamic talent development model, emphasize the role of environmental factors as facilitators or inhibitors of converting potential ability into actual performance (Gagné, 2015; Collins et al., 2019). In this framework, the family and parenting styles are recognized as one of the most important environmental factors in the early stages of sports talent identification. Given the above, it can be said that despite the theoretical and practical importance of parenting styles in sports talent identification, few studies have directly investigated the role of this

variable in the process of identifying sports talent in adolescents with a psychological approach. This gap is more noticeable in non-Western cultural contexts. Therefore, conducting research that investigates the role of parenting styles in identifying sports talent in adolescents can lead to the development of scientific knowledge, improvement of talent identification policies, and provision of practical solutions for parents and coaches. The present research has been designed with this approach.

## **Materials and Methods**

### ***Research design***

The present research is applied in purpose and descriptive-correlational in nature, conducted with a quantitative approach. Considering the research objective of investigating the role of parenting styles in identifying sports talent in adolescents with a psychological approach, a correlational design was used to analyze the relationships between variables. This type of research design allows examining predictive relationships between psychological and environmental variables without manipulating them and is widely used in sports sciences and sports psychology research.

### ***Statistical population***

The statistical population of the research included adolescent male and female athletes aged 12 to 16 years who regularly participated in organized (individual and team) sports disciplines. Organized athlete refers to adolescents who had at least one year of continuous training experience in sports clubs, specialized sports schools, or junior teams and were active under the supervision of an official coach.

### ***Sample and sampling method***

The research sample was selected using a multi-stage cluster sampling method. In the first stage, sports centers (clubs and sports schools) were randomly selected. In the second stage, from among eligible

adolescents in each center, samples were selected by simple random sampling. The sample size was determined based on recommendations for correlational and predictive model research (minimum 10 to 15 people per predictor variable). In total, a minimum of 250 to 300 people was considered a suitable sample size to provide sufficient statistical power for performing correlation and regression analyses.

### ***Inclusion and exclusion criteria***

Inclusion criteria included adolescents aged 12 to 16 years, with at least one year of regular and organized sports activity, and informed consent obtained from parents and the adolescent themselves.

Conversely, exclusion criteria included adolescents with severe injuries or illnesses that prevented active participation in sports activities, as well as participants who incompletely or invalidly completed the research questionnaires, who were excluded from the data analysis process.

### ***Research instruments***

#### ***Parenting styles questionnaire***

To assess parenting styles, Baumrind's Parenting Styles Questionnaire was used. This instrument includes three/four subscales: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive (and in some versions, neglectful). Responses are based on a five-point Likert scale. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire have been confirmed in numerous international studies, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients reported between 0.70 and 0.85.

#### ***Sports talent identification scale***

To assess sports talent identification, a multidimensional and combined approach was used, consisting of three main components. First, the adolescent's perception of sports ability was assessed through standard psychological questionnaires.

Second, the expert opinion of coaches was examined using a performance checklist and evaluation of adolescents' physical and technical skills and characteristics. Third, psychological indicators related to talent, including sports self-confidence and intrinsic motivation, were included as complementary components in the analysis.

This approach was designed in accordance with recent research recommendations on the multidimensionality of the sports talent identification process and provides a comprehensive understanding of adolescents' abilities and potentials. The overall score of sports talent identification was extracted from the standardized combination of these three indicators and used for statistical analyses.

#### ***Sports self-Efficacy scale***

To assess self-efficacy, the Sports Self-Efficacy Questionnaire was used, which evaluates the individual's perceived ability to successfully perform sports activities. This instrument includes items based on a Likert scale, and its construct validity and reliability have been reported in recent studies ( $\alpha > 0.80$ ).

#### ***Validity and reliability of instruments***

To ensure the content validity of the instruments, the opinions of experts in sports psychology and educational sciences were used. Also, the reliability of the instruments was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. All scales had acceptable reliability ( $\alpha \geq 0.70$ ). If necessary, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to examine construct validity.

#### ***Procedure***

After obtaining necessary permits from sports centers and informed parental consent, the questionnaires were distributed in person in sports environments. Before responding, necessary explanations regarding

the research objectives, confidentiality of information, and the right to participate or withdraw at any stage were provided to participants. Completing the questionnaires took an average of 20 to 25 minutes.

#### ***Ethical considerations***

This research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles of research in humanities. The confidentiality of participants' information was maintained, and data were used solely for research purposes. Participation in the research was completely voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw at any stage.

#### ***Data analysis***

After checking the normality of the distribution, the data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26) and, if necessary, AMOS or SmartPLS software. For data analysis, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics including Pearson correlation coefficient, multiple regression, and path analysis were used. The significance level for tests was set at 0.05.

### **Results**

#### ***Demographic characteristics of the sample***

The sample population included 300 adolescent athletes with a mean age of 14.2 years ( $SD = 1.2$ ). Of these, 55% were boys and 45% were girls, and their mean sports activity experience was reported as 2.8 years ( $SD = 1.1$ ). Participants were active in various individual and team disciplines and had at least one year of continuous training.

#### ***Descriptive analysis***

The mean and standard deviation of the main variables were as follows (Table 1):

**Table 1.** Mean and standard deviation of the main variables.

Variables	N	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
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<b>Authoritative style</b>	300	4.12	0.62
<b>Authoritarian style</b>	300	2.78	0.71
<b>Permissive style</b>	300	3.15	0.65
<b>Sports talent identification</b>	300	3.89	0.58
<b>Sports self-efficacy</b>	300	4.05	0.60
<b>Sports self-confidence</b>	300	3.95	0.63

### Correlation analysis

Pearson correlation analysis showed that:

- The authoritative style had a significant positive relationship with talent identification ( $r = 0.46$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).
- The authoritarian style had a significant negative relationship with talent identification ( $r = -0.31$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).
- The permissive style showed a positive but weak and non-significant relationship with talent identification ( $r = 0.12$ ,  $p = 0.07$ ).
- Sports self-efficacy had a significant positive relationship with talent identification ( $r = 0.51$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

-Sports self-confidence also had a significant positive relationship with talent identification ( $r = 0.48$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

### Regression analysis

Multiple regression was performed to predict sports talent identification with parenting style variables. The results showed that the overall model was significant ( $F = 28.35$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and 38% of the variance in sports talent identification was explained by parenting styles ( $R^2 = 0.38$ ).

Details of standardized coefficients are as follows (Table 2):

**Table 2.** Details of standardized coefficients.

<b>Predictor Variable</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Authoritative Style</b>	0.42	7.12	<0.001
<b>Authoritarian Style</b>	-0.29	-4.85	<0.001
<b>Permissive Style</b>	0.09	1.54	0.12

### Path analysis (Mediation model of self-efficacy)

Path analysis showed that self-efficacy plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between authoritative parenting style and sports talent identification:

- Indirect effect of authoritative style through self-efficacy = 0.15
- 95% confidence interval = [0.08, 0.22]
- Direct effect of authoritative style after controlling for self-efficacy = 0.27 ( $p < 0.001$ )

These results indicate that the authoritative parenting style facilitates the path of adolescents' sports talent development by strengthening their self-efficacy.

### Summary of results

The research results showed that:

- The authoritative parenting style is the most important predictor of sports talent identification in adolescents.
- Authoritarian styles have a negative effect and permissive styles have a weak effect.
- Psychological components such as self-efficacy and self-confidence have a mediating role in strengthening the effect of the authoritative style.

-The findings are in line with international research in the field of sports talent identification and sports psychology and indicate that attention to psychological and environmental factors is crucial in talent identification.

## **Discussion**

The present research was conducted with the aim of investigating the role of parenting styles in identifying sports talent in adolescents with a psychological approach. The findings from data analysis showed that the authoritative parenting style has the most positive effect on sports talent identification, while the authoritarian style had a negative effect and the permissive style showed a weak and non-significant effect. Also, the variable of sports self-efficacy played an important mediating role in strengthening the relationship between the authoritative style and sports talent identification. These results are consistent with previous research in the fields of sports psychology and sports talent identification and provide important points regarding the role of the family and psychological components in identifying and nurturing adolescents' talents.

### ***The influence of parenting styles on sports talent identification***

Findings showed that the authoritative parenting style has a significant positive relationship with sports talent identification. This result is consistent with the studies of Pinquart (2017) and Knight et al. (2017), which have shown that the authoritative style, due to combining high emotional support with logical control, leads to increased self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and resilience in adolescents. In other words, authoritative parents encourage adolescents to discover and develop their abilities and talents in sports fields by creating a safe and supportive environment. This finding highlights the importance of the family's role in the sports talent identification process and shows that psychological support and a

safe environment are essential for the growth of sports talents.

In contrast, the authoritarian parenting style had a significant negative effect on sports talent identification. This style, which is associated with excessive control and severe restrictions, can reduce adolescents' motivation and self-belief and prevent them from discovering their abilities and talents (Harwood et al., 2019). Similar findings have been reported by Gould et al. (2008), indicating that excessive parental pressure causes competitive anxiety and reduces enjoyment of sports. The permissive style, although having a weak positive effect, this relationship was non-significant, indicating that the lack of framework and logical parental guidance cannot provide a sufficient environment for identifying and nurturing sports talent.

### ***The role of self-efficacy as a mediating factor***

One of the key findings of the present research was the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between authoritative parenting style and sports talent identification. Adolescents who grow up in a supportive and authoritative environment have a higher level of belief in their abilities in sports activities. This self-efficacy helps them face challenges with motivation and confidence and better identify their talents. The findings are consistent with Bandura's theory (1997) on self-efficacy and the research of MacNamara & Collins (2015), who emphasize that self-efficacy plays a determining role in the growth and development of adolescents' sports talents.

These results also confirm that the development of sports talents is not limited to physical or skill factors alone, and psychological factors play an important role in activating adolescents' potentials. Therefore, coaches and parents should pay special attention to increasing adolescents' self-efficacy so that their talents are fully realized.

### ***Comparison with previous research***



The results of the present research are consistent with the findings of Abbott & Collins (2004) and Till & Baker (2020), which show that sports talent identification is a multidimensional process and psychological and environmental factors play a determining role. Studies by Vaeyens et al. (2009) and Johnston et al. (2018) also emphasize that focusing solely on physical abilities is insufficient for talent identification, and correct talent identification requires assessing psychological, social, and environmental factors.

The present study also confirms the findings of Côté (1999) and Harwood & Knight (2015) that the role of parents and parenting styles in adolescents' sports success is vital. The difference is that the present research, instead of focusing on sports performance or competitive success, has paid attention to sports talent identification as a prerequisite stage for elite development. This is a strength of the research and fills an existing gap in the scientific literature.

#### ***Practical applications of the findings***

The findings of this research have important implications for coaches, parents, and sports policymakers:

**Parents:** Should adopt an authoritative parenting style in interaction with adolescents so that their sports talents are optimally identified and nurtured. Creating a supportive environment along with logical control and providing positive feedback can increase children's self-confidence and self-efficacy.

**Coaches:** It is necessary to consider adolescents' psychological factors in the talent identification process and design training and exercise programs in such a way that, in addition to physical abilities, athletes' self-efficacy, motivation, and self-confidence are also strengthened.

**Sports Organizations:** Developing educational policies and family support programs can help improve the talent identification process at younger ages and increase the chances of athletes' long-term success.

#### ***Research limitations***

Although the present research provided valuable findings, it also has limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results:

-The sample population was limited to adolescent athletes aged 12 to 16 years in a specific country; therefore, generalizing the results to other age groups or different cultures should be done with caution.

-Data were collected based on self-report questionnaires and coaches' evaluations, and the possibility of response bias exists.

-The present study was cross-sectional and cannot prove definitive causal relationships; longitudinal studies are recommended to confirm causal paths.

#### ***Research suggestions***

Given the findings and limitations, it is suggested:

-Future research use larger and more diverse samples covering various disciplines and cultures.

-Longitudinal studies be conducted to investigate the influence of parenting styles and self-efficacy on talent identification and sports performance over time.

-Other psychological variables such as intrinsic motivation, resilience, and emotion control be added to the model to provide a more precise and comprehensive explanation of the talent identification process.

-The use of standardized and operationalized assessment tools for sports talent identification can increase the validity of the results.

#### ***Conclusions***

In general, the present research showed that the authoritative parenting style is the most important environmental factor in identifying sports talent in adolescents, and authoritarian and permissive styles have negative or weak effects. Also, the variable of sports self-efficacy plays an important mediating role in strengthening the effect of the authoritative style. These results emphasize the importance of simultaneously paying attention to psychological and

environmental factors in the sports talent identification process and provide practical guidance for parents, coaches, and sports organizations.

The research findings indicate that for developing adolescents' sports talents, creating a supportive environment along with strengthening self-efficacy and self-confidence is essential, and educational policies and programs should consider these factors. In this way, identifying and nurturing talents at younger ages is done effectively and sustainably, and the ground is prepared for long-term sports successes.

### Conflict of interests

No conflict.

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