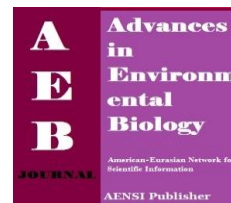




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Study the Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Exam Anxiety: An Examination of the Moderating Role of Classroom Management Styles

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ABSTRACT

This research was done in order to investigate the relationship between parenting styles and exam anxiety with an examination of the moderating role of classroom management styles. The research population included all the elementary pupils in the fifth and sixth grade of District 10 Education in Tehran city in the academic year of 1391-1392. The sample comprised 121 pupils who were randomly selected using cluster sampling method. The research instruments were some questionnaires on 1) class management styles, 2) parenting styles, and 3) the exam anxiety. The collected data were analyzed by descriptive statistics of Pierson's correlation and multiple regressions. The results indicates that among these three parenting styles- autocratic, permissive and authoritarian-the authoritative parenting style has significant negative relationship with the exam anxiety, and the autocratic parenting style has a positive relationship with the exam anxiety. These results depict some applications for teaching, learning and giving exams to the pupils, which will be dealt with in this paper.

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INTRODUCTION

During the past decades, anxiety and its related areas have been one of the most extensive research areas; this anxiety has been defined as a painful feeling which is associated with a troublesome situation or an expectation of an indefinite risk. Exam anxiety is a general term which represents anxiety along with a social fear of one's own capabilities which leads to a reduction of self-power to stand different situations such as exam situation. These situations evaluate the individual and it needs to solve a problem, since individuals with intense anxiety are forced to activities and behaviors which are not related to the exam, their performance will be disturbed, and they cannot perform as their low anxiety peers do on the exams [2].

There is some evidence that shows almost 10 million students experience exam anxiety annually, and this anxiety is paralyzing for 25% of them (Hill, 1984 quoted by Abolqasemi, 1378). Bork believes that exam anxiety may appear very early even in the years proceeding school (pre-school year). While Shovarze believes that exam anxiety forms between 10-11 years of age, it becomes fixed and continues to maturity. He stated that the exam anxiety scores in elementary schools increases as the kids become older [12]. Since in modern society, evaluation and assessment are among the most important principles in each educational system, the studies and researches in the educational performance have reported a negative interrelationship between exam anxiety and students performance in the exam. In fact, exam anxiety does not let the exam organizers reach their main goal, which is evaluating students' abilities. Despite the fact that several students have the ability and the needed knowledge, they cannot show their capabilities and knowledge because of exam anxiety.

The main reason for the decline in the performance of the students with intense anxiety is that they lose their ability to focus on the related parts of the homework and some disturbing thoughts make them uneasy and their performance worsens. Increasing the anxiety for the test among the children and adolescents paved the way for some extensive studies and researches in this area, which analyzed the effective factors on exam anxiety in order to recognize different dimensions of personality, education and training. One of the most effective factors on health and welfare of the child is the parenting style which has been greatly investigated in many researches to find out its part on the well being or mental sickness of the kid. Moreover, in the educational area we should pay attention to the key role of the teacher [7].

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Family as the first organizer of character, values and mental criteria of the children has a significant role in determining the destiny and their child's lifestyle. Family as the first and the most effective social unit can influence the child's life and manners considerably. As the child grows up, the environment of the house and its conditions can be either a positive factor and a launching platform for progress and improvement, or a disturbing, hindering factor. In other words, the educational system of the family and parenting styles and skills is one of the most important factors in the formation of a child's personality.

In the 1940s, the procedure of parenting style was transformed since they were after flexibility and negotiation. In this decade, the parenting style theories were under the influence of psychological school; a school which put emphasis on emotional security of the child and the disasters which originated from an intense control of his natural impulses. Later, according to the guidance of Dr. Spock, the parents were told to use their integrity and follow the flexibility that is in line with their own needs and the needs of their children. Parenting style is a complex activity that includes special methods and behaviors which affect the child's growth individually or together. Actually, the basis of parenting style shows parents' efforts to control and socialize their children. Miz and Petit believe that parenting styles is a total of parental behavior in an interactive space for children. Parental discipline is often changed, based on the interaction between the two dimensions of their behavior: the first one deal with the study of the children's emotional and behavioral range of responsive, receptive and child-oriented method which gradually goes toward a neglecting, and excluding behavior whose centrality lies in the desires of the parents in the past. The second dimension of parental control depicts a restraining and demanding behavior, it varies, and there are a number of limitations for the child. From the integration of these two important dimensions, namely (acceptance vs. rejection) and (strictness against leniency), the pattern of a firm and reassuring parent, autocratic, and permissive one can be constructed.

Parenting styles include: 1) authoritative style: generally speaking, the authoritative parents response emotionally. They are kind, supportive, and sensitive toward the interests and needs of their children yet, at the same time, they are restrictive, too, but they explain the reasons for these restrictions in a reasonable way to the kids. Their control is done with compassion, democracy, and open interaction. Authoritative parents guide the children's activities reasonably and encourage the children to express themselves orally. The kids who grow up in this kind of families, gradually, reach a cognitive and social maturity, they also become responsible for their own lives as well. In fact, knowing the objectives and disciplines of the household issues clarifies their lifestyle and the direction they intend to take [11]. The serious and authoritative parents accept the role of their parenthood beside the role of educating their children; they try nonstop to find out about new ways of educating the kids to perform their role without the slightest mistake.

2) Authoritarian and autocratic style: these parents in contrast with the authoritative parents are irritable, inflexible, tyrannical, cruel, and ignorant toward the needs of their children. They think sheer obedience is a virtue. These parents are cold and cruel toward their children, yet their behavior is accompanied with physical punishment and severe restrictions, they emphasize that the child must be controlled and the child must obey them without any questions [17]. Their children are not very independent and they lean on their parents for anything they want to do, they do not even have an original opinion of their own, they tend to be silent, polite, shy, and from a social perspective negative and incapable. They usually think of their parents as unkind and ignorant, they believe that their parents' expectations are unreasonable and wrong. Yet, they are afraid to stand up against such tyranny in such a cruel environment.

3) Permissive style: these parents do not punish the child for the impulsive behavior, or because of a childish desire or action, these parents accept these actions and they admit them. They are responsive rather than demanding, they lack mature behavior [10]. These parents pay too much attention to their children and they expect nothing from their children in return. They often give too much independency and freedom to their children, but they do not usually express very clear expectations to their kids. These parents let their children on their own and they are not a very good model for the children [9]. Permissive parents are responsive, receptive, kind and child-centered, they do not have much control on their children [8]. They support their children in an excessive way, and they do not react against their negative behaviors, they even encourage these behaviors at times. It seems that these parents do not worry about their children and they may even banish and reject them, or they may be too busy solving their own problems that they may not have enough energy to spend with their children. Bamrynd found out that the children, whose parents are permissive, often become aggressive and impulsive, especially if they are boys. They tend to be bossy, self-centered, autonomous, rebellious, and they do not show any signs of independence or accountability [13].

4) The neglectful parents: we recognize this type by their few demands and the fact that they are not responsive. These parents do not have any control on their children's activities and the house environment is cold and unfriendly, these parents usually keep their children at a distance and they do not pay much attention to their needs. As Bamrynd reports the children of these parents suffer from many behavioral problems such as aggressiveness and repetitive bad temper. Their adolescents tend to take part in anti-social issues (Sigelman, 1999).

The quantity and quality of the students' interactions with each other and with their teachers, the methods used to control the students' activities and behavior and the educational methods that they use, all in all, are effective factors on the students' exam anxiety. These variables are known as class management which establish a psychological-social environment that affect the self-comprehension of the learner and his ability to control his own learning and his own personal system and discipline these elements lead to a different level of exam anxiety which is experienced by the students. Teachers according to their attitudes and beliefs on the nature of the students' behavior use different methods in managing their classes, each of which has a different effect on the students' performance.

The researchers reported different methods of class management and different teachers' behavior in classes, yet in this area, recognizing the differences, and knowing which of these management techniques is more effective and influential matters to the researchers. Gliman and Tomshrio and Wolfgang explained class management in a continuum of three approaches (non-interventionist, interactionist, and interventionist) with regard to three variables, i.e. instruction management, behavior management, and people management. In a non-interventionist approach, they presume that people behave according to their innate nature and education is just a thing which helps these gifts and talents show up, these teachers believe that there should be a minimum kind of control on the students' activities. Gordon and Haim Ginott were among the supporters of this approach. In contrast, the interventionist approach considers the environment as a determining factor in forming the behavior. This approach exploits a lot of guidance and control on the students; Canter considers discipline a type of interventionist approach. Lee Canter and Fredric Jones are among the supporters of this approach as well.

Interactionist approach lies between the aforementioned styles; this approach put emphasis on both the actions that people do to change the environment and also on the influence of the environmental factors on the people. In such an environment, there is a high chance of a better interaction among the students and the teacher, and the students have a better chance to control their own activities. Teachers based on their beliefs on the learning and development of the students use a certain method to manage their classes; they choose the management style based on the approach which best fits their beliefs and dominates their actions. Each style with its own special conditions in the class environment has a different effect on the degree and level of exam anxiety of the students. There seems to be a difference between exam anxiety of boys and girls, i.e. girls are more nervous than boys that can be described in terms of cultural differences and gender roles. As it seems, girls show their anxiety more, because it is acceptable.

Wang, Walbert and Herbert in a meta-analysis determined that meta-cognition of the students, class management, the quality of education, interactions of students and the teacher and the class environment are effective in the learning process; these factors are defined by the class management, this concept covers the interaction of the students and the teacher and the class atmosphere as well. Consequently, various styles and methods of teachers in managing the class have different ambiguous effects on the students' performances. Considering the negative aspects of exam anxiety on the performance of the students, it seems necessary to do more research on this subject and find out about its problems; since the teachers and consultants at school and any educational environment are after helping the students overcome their exam anxiety. Such a fact made the researcher do this survey, therefore, the main aim of this paper is to investigate the relationship between parenting styles (permissive, autocratic and authoritative) and the exam anxiety of the children; the researcher is also after determining the role of class management in minimizing the exam anxiety of the students. Thus, the research questions are as follows:

1. Is there a meaningful relationship between the parenting style (permissive, autocratic and authoritative) and the exam anxiety of the children?
2. Is there a meaningful relationship between the class management style of the teachers (interventionist, interactionist, and non-interventionist) and the exam anxiety of the children?
3. Can we predict the exam anxiety of the children according to the class management style of the teachers (interventionist, interactionist, non-interventionist)?

Research method:

The present research is of post-facto type which is a descriptive and integrated one. The control group consisted of all the students of the fifth and sixth grade in the elementary level of Tehran city, District 10 in the academic year of 1391-92. The total number of the students was 11921; 6310 students were female, and 5611 students were male. In this study, a multi-stage cluster sampling was used; at first we randomly chose 3 schools for females and 3 schools for males in the district 10 of Tehran. Afterwards, we randomly chose 10 students in the sixth level and 10 students in the fifth level. Finally, the students answered 3 questionnaires. The questionnaires were gathered by the researcher and the data was typed in the computer and the needed statistical analysis was done on them.

*Research Instrument:**a) Classroom management questionnaire (Amin Yazdi & Alee):*

This questionnaire was designed by Amin Yazdi and Alee based on the theoretical framework of Wolfgang and Gliman; it took Martin, Yin and Baldwin's questionnaire on controlling the class (ABCC) as a model. This questionnaire consists of 25 items in three criteria (management of the behavior, people, and education) and the scale of the answers is related to the Leckret continuum. Validity of the questionnaire is calculated in two ways: a) asking the experts to confirm the accuracy and consistency of the test with the variable dimensions, in this method, a questionnaire including the explanatory variables on the dimensions and items related to each dimension was given to the professor of educational administration and educational psychology. Each question had two answers: appropriate and inappropriate. In the end, as the appropriate answers were more than the other choice, so the accuracy of the items of the questionnaire was admitted. b) We performed a factor analysis on the data acquired from the questionnaire in order to assess the validity of the questionnaire, the results of this analysis show that 9 factors are greater than 1 and about 70% of the measured variance is explained. In the next phase, considering the Scary diagram, 3 factors circulated. An analysis of the factor framework after circulation variance shows that the first element measures the educational management variables, the second one measures the people management variables, and the last one measures the behavior management variables. As a result, all the items of the questionnaire have factorial burden. There is also a meaningful harmony between factor 1 and 2 ($r=0/31$), 2 and 3 ($r=0/56$) and factors 1 and 3 ($r= 0/18$). The correlation coefficient between the people management and behavior management (factors 2 and 3) is higher in comparison with the educational management. The reason for this fact is that both these types of management consider human factors in class. All in all, the results support the validity of the questionnaire of class management. To determine the validity of the questionnaire, we used Cronbach alpha coefficient. Based on the output of the software SPSS, the alpha coefficient for 25 items in the questionnaire of the sample research was 68/0. This fact indicates the reliability of the questionnaire.

b) Parenting styles questionnaire:

This questionnaire includes 30 statements, 10 of them relate to permissive style, 10 to autocratic style, and 10 to authoritative one. The pattern of answering the questions follows the 5 degree criterion of Leekret. Buri reported the reliability of this questionnaire with the re-examination among a group of mothers for the permissive style ($r=0/81$), for the autocratic style ($r=0/86$), and for the authoritative style ($r=0/78$); Among the fathers for the permissive style ($r=0/77$), for the autocratic style ($r=0/85$) and for the authoritative style ($r=0/88$). Farzi Golfazani, Gerami, Poor Ahmady, Aslami and Jafary [12] did this research and used the same numerical style. Esfandiary reported the reliability of this test and used a sample of 12 mothers based on the re-examination method with the lapse of one week for the permissive style ($r=0/69$), autocratic style ($r=0/77$) and for the authoritative style ($r=0/73$). The validity of the test was confirmed by 10 psychologists and psychiatrist. In general, the results of internal and external studies confirmed the validity and reliability of parenting styles.

c) Test anxiety inventory [1]:

Abolqasemi and et al in 1375 provided this test with 25 questions and a response criterion of multiple-choice (from never to often). This inventory is used to analyze exam anxiety in the children and adolescents; getting the score 43 or above shows the highest exam anxiety which is not normal and getting a score less than 43 shows that the student does not suffer from an abnormal exam anxiety (Abolqasemi and et al, 1375). The validity of this inventory was examined by dividing the groups into male and female. For the female students the validity was 0/88 and for the male 0/67, and for the entire sample 0/77. The criterion validity of this inventory was reported based on the correlation of the values and the criteria of self concept of Coper Smith for the whole sample, boys and girls, respectively was 57/0, 68/0 and 43/0 (Abolqasemi et al, 1375). In this study, Cronbach's alpha for the total sample was equal to 71/0 and for the groups with high and low test anxiety were respectively 69/0 and 70/0.

In this study, after choosing the schools in a random way and getting the required certificated from the Ministry of education and training of the associated district for the chosen schools, we went through the necessary process and enlightened the school principals. Then, the exam anxiety questionnaire for the child was completed by the students, and the parenting style questionnaires were completed by mothers and fathers and the questionnaire related to class management was completed by the teachers, next we entered the data in the SPSS software for the analysis and statistical results. These data were analyzed in two parts: descriptive statistics (average and deviation from the standard) and cognitive statistics (the correlation of Pierreson and analyzing a multiple regression).

Results:

The information related to our control group shows that 55/9 percent of the samples were boys and 44/1 percent of them girls. 48/6 percent were in the fifth level and 51/4 percent were in the sixth level. Considering the father's education of the samples, we found out that 20/7 percent did not have a diploma, 36 percent had a

diploma, 13/5 percent a university degree above diploma (Fogh Diplom), 25/2 percent had a bachelor degree, 2/7 percent had mastery, and 1/8 percent got a doctorate. Considering mothers, we recognized that 18% did not have a diploma, 45% had a diploma, 8/1 % had a university diploma, and 26/1% had a bachelor degree, 1/8% mastery, and 0/9% a doctorate. The results about the age of the samples show that 33/3% were 12 years old, 43/2% 13 years old, and 23/4% 14 years old. 3/6% of the fathers were 30-35 years old, 41/4% were 40-45, 33/3% 40-45, and 21/6% were above 45. The variable factor of mothers' age shows that 40/5% were 28-35, 30/6% 40-45, 22/5% from 40 to 45, and 6/3% above 45.

Table 1: The descriptive statistics of anxiety and class management styles.

Variable	Number	Average	Standard deviation
Exam anxiety	111	50/07	17/43
Educational management	111	10/19	4/33
People management	111	11/24	3/28
Behavior management	111	8/25	2/79

In table number 1, we can see the average and standard deviation for the variables of exam anxiety and class management (educational management, behavior management, and people management).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of parenting styles.

parenting styles	Variable	Number	Average	Standard deviation
Father	Permissive style	111	14/69	4/66
Father	Autocratic style	111	14/88	5/68
Father	Authoritative style	111	33/32	4/47
Mother	Permissive style	111	18/34	5/54
Mother	Autocratic style	111	15/17	5/04
Mother	Authoritative style	111	32/49	4/38

In table number 2, we can see the average and the standard deviation for the samples; here we divided the parenting styles of fathers and mothers (permissive, autocratic, and authoritative).

Table 3: Pierreson correlation between the paternal parenting style and the exam anxiety.

	Permissive style		Autocratic style		Authoritative style	
	P	R	P	R	P	R
Exam anxiety	-0/152	0/112	0/204	0/032	-0/40	0/001

The results of the Pierson correlation among the exam anxiety item and the parenting style of the father are presented in table 3. The results show that there is a meaningful positive relationship $p < 0/05$ between the autocratic parenting style and the exam anxiety, it means that by increasing the autocracy of the father, exam anxiety increases as well, there is also a reverse meaningful relationship between authoritative style and exam anxiety $p < 0/01$, it means that this parenting style minimizes the exam anxiety of the child. There was a negative relationship between permissive style of the father and the exam anxiety but it was not meaningful.

Table 4: Pierson correlation between maternal parenting style and the exam anxiety.

	Permissive style		Autocratic style		Authoritative style	
	P	R	P	R	P	R
Exam anxiety	-0/126	0/186	0/245	0/010	-0/288	0/002

In table 4 we see Pierson's correlation among the exam anxiety and the maternal parenting style. According to the results, we can claim that there is a positive meaningful relationship between the autocratic maternal style and the exam anxiety $p < 0/05$, there is a reverse relationship between the authoritative style and the exam anxiety $p < 0/01$, it shows that the authoritative style minimizes the exam anxiety to a certain degree.

Table 5: Pierson correlation between the class management styles and the exam anxiety.

	Educational management		People management		Behavior management	
	P	R	P	R	P	R
Exam anxiety	0/192	0/044	0/022	0/822	0/189	0/047

Table number 5 analyzes the relationship between the exam anxiety of the student and the class management techniques and styles. Based on the findings, we can claim that there is a positive meaningful relationship between the educational and behavior management and the exam anxiety $p < 0/05$, it means that by increasing the management (educational and behavioral), the score of the student's exam anxiety increases and vice versa. But we could not find a meaningful relationship between people management and the exam anxiety.

As it is shown in table number 6, based on the results of regression analysis with the Enter method, the multiple correlation coefficients for the combining the linear parenting styles, permissive, autocratic, and

authoritative with the exam anxiety of the student equals $MR=0/175$ and $SR=0/198$ which is meaningful in $P=0/001$ level. Among these three parenting styles as predicting factors, the authoritative parenting style $t=-4/05$ and a meaningful level of $P=0/001$ make sense, therefore in predicting the exam anxiety (0.362) they play a significant role which forbids the exam anxiety. In this paper, the authoritative parenting style had a more powerful standpoint in predicting the exam anxiety in class.

Table 6: Predicting the exam anxiety by considering parenting styles.

The criterion variable	The predicting variable	MR	R^2	F	Sig	B	T	Sig
Exam anxiety	Permissive style	0/175	0/198	8/823	0/001	-0/163	-1/86	0/065
	Autocratic style					-0/140	1/55	0/123
	Authoritative style					-0/362	-4/05	0/001

Table 7: Predicting the exam anxiety from different class management styles.

The criterion variable	The predicting variable	MR	R^2	F	Sig	B	T	Sig
Exam anxiety	Educational management	0/128	0/152	6/36	0/001	0/225	2/47	0/015
	People management					-0/167	-1/85	0/066
	Behavior management					-0/262	-2/901	0/005

As it is shown in table number 7, according to the results of the regression analysis with the enter methods, the multiple correlation coefficient for the linear combination of the class management styles with the exam anxiety of the students equals $MR=0.128$ and $SR=0/152$ which is meaningful in $P=0/001$ level and the hypothesis is confirmed. Among three class management styles as predicting factors, the variable of authoritative behavior management $t=-0.262$ and $P=0/005$ is meaningful, so in predicting (0.262) the exam anxiety, it has a significant role in forbidding the exam anxiety, in a way that this paper predicts that the authoritative parenting style is more powerful in predicting the exam anxiety of the children. The other variables are respectively educational and people management.

Conclusion:

All of us feel stress in different situations in our lives. Some events make us believe that we are in a dangerous situation, in this condition, stress and anxiety is a natural reaction to deal with the problems. But if this situation continues, it turns out to be a problem by itself which causes anxiety and depression without a good cause. In this situation, a student who learned the lessons well cannot express his knowledge at the time of the exam, therefore, we expect a reversing relationship between the scores of exam anxiety and the exam scored. Increasing the exam anxiety among the children and the adolescents caused a great investigation and scientific studies in this field, these researches deal with effective factors on exam anxiety and investigating different dimensions of personality, educational and behavioral. One of the leading factors which can influence the hygiene and health of the children is parenting style; in many researches the researchers are after finding the role of this issue in health of sickness of the children and adolescents.

In educational area, the teacher has a key role, so we must pay attention to the class management styles of the teacher, too. The aim of the present research is analyzing the relationship between the parenting styles and exam anxiety of the children and the balancing role of the class management styles. The results of the correlation between parenting styles and the exam anxiety showed that among autocratic parenting style of the parents and the exam anxiety of the students there is a positive meaningful relationship, and there is a negative meaningful relationship between the authoritative parenting style and the exam anxiety. Nadery conducted a research and found out that too much strictness on the part of the parents and the strict, inflexible disciplinary styles are the main factors in creating the anxiety in children. The dominant emotional atmosphere in the family can disturb the child mentally and physically, if there is a chaotic environment in the family. Yet, parents' expectations, too, can cause anxiety in the children, when parents do not consider their child's abilities and expect something impossible from the child, or when they compare their child with other kids, they plant the seed of humility and weakness in their child's soul and this child experiences much more anxiety in comparison with other kids. Finally, the social-economical level, too, is nowadays one of the important variables. In lower-class families, parents cannot encourage their children in an appropriate way and they use more punishment methods which causes the child suffer from a much more intense anxiety.

We observed a meaningful relationship between the class management style and the exam anxiety variable; there is a positive meaningful relationship between the class management style and the exam anxiety; by increasing the educational and behavioral management, the scores of the students increases as well and vice versa. The results of these hypotheses are in harmony with the researches which Morris and Leebert conducted, in both they talked about two factors apart from anxiety and affectivity. The important element of the exam

anxiety is the item of anxiety and the cognitive activity not related to the homework assignment which includes knowing the anxiety and turpitude about the function of the results of the failure resulting from the exam, negative thoughts about blowing the test, insulting oneself for the performance, evaluating one's ability in comparison with others and expressing oneself in a negative way.

The affectivity item refers to the impulsiveness, self awareness, nervous reactions, independency, physiological reactions and the emotional conditions accompanied by anger. In addition to the anxiety and affectivity items Diphen baukher and Hazalius introduced a third item responsible for the exam anxiety--interference caused by homework. The interference caused by homework refers to this fact that people tend to distract because of unrelated aspects of the homework. Disability in front of the problematic issues which cannot be solves and intellectually engagement is seen in this factor. This interference caused by the homework exists in every situation in all samples with high or low anxiety level in all conditions.

Suggestions:

- a) People with a lower exam anxiety have a higher quality in life and education. So, the educational experts should pay attention to this fact that if they educate the parents, the children will live a better life here after.
- b) There is a relationship between the parenting style and the exam anxiety seen in the children. The psychologists should pay more attention to this fact. Therefore, by recognizing the characteristics of the mentioned personality, the levels of parenting style should be examined in them and the needed therapy should be suggested and used.
- c) Exam anxiety should be examined in other psychological situations, and with regard to the fact that this item has a positive relationship with some personality traits; the experts should use some tools and therapy to predict and cure this psychological ailment.

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