

# The Impact of Socio-Economic and Type of Religion on the Behavior of Obedience among Arab-Israeli Teenagers

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**Abstract**—This article examines the relationship between several socio-economic and background variables of Arab-Israeli families and their effect on the conflict management style of *forcing*, where teenage children are expected to obey their parents without questioning. The article explores the inter-generational gap and the desire of Arab-Israeli parents to force their teenage children to obey without questioning. The independent variables include: the sex of the parent, religion (Christian or Muslim), income of the parent, years of education of the parent, and the sex of the teenage child. We use the dependent variable of “Obedience Without Questioning” that is reported twice: by each of the parents as well as by the children. We circulated a questionnaire and collected data from a sample of 180 parents and their adolescent child living in the Galilee area during 2018. In this questionnaire we asked each of the parent and his/her teenage child about whether the latter is expected to follow the instructions of the former without questioning. The outcome of this article indicates, first, that Christian-Arab families are less authoritarian than Muslims families in demanding sheer obedience from their children. Second, female parents indicate more than male parents that their teenage child indeed obeys without questioning. Third, there is a negative correlation between the variable “Income” and “Obedience without Questioning.” Yet, the regression coefficient of this variable is close zero. Fourth, there is a positive correlation between years of education and obedience reported by the children. In other words, more educated parents are more likely to demand obedience from their children. Finally, after running the regression, the study also found that the impact of the variables of religion as well as the sex of the child on the dependent variable of *obedience* is also significant at above 95 and 90%, respectively.

**Keywords**—Arab-Israeli parents, Obedience, Forcing, Inter-generational gap.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THIS article examines the impact of several socio-economic variables as well as the type of religion of the parents on the behavior of obedience of a teenage child among the Arab-Israeli families. The study examines, in other words, the link of the socio-economic status of Arab-Israeli parents and their religion (Muslim- vs. Christian-Arabs) and the impact of these variables on the preference of these parents to embrace the conflict management style of forcing on their children, so that the children would obey their parents without questioning.

The independent variables include: the sex of the parent, religion, income of the family, the number of the years of

education of the parent, and the sex of the teenage child. We circulated a questionnaire and collected data from a sample of 180 parents and their teenage child living in the Galilee area during 2018. The data collected from the parent as well as from their teenage child were reported in one record in order to compare the variation between the parent and his/her teenage child on the specific issue of obedience/forcing.

It should be noted at the onset that Arab-Israeli citizens are living in a peculiar socio-economic and socio-political environment [1]. The society itself has had went through major socio-economic and political transformations since the 1948 War following which Israel gained its independence, while the majority of the Palestinians turned into refugees and a small minority of them had become Israeli citizens [11]. This society in general had been transformed from a very conservative, isolated society into a society that is highly integrated in the life of the Israeli culture [2]. In 1948, the bulk of these Arab citizens were living in villages that were isolated and under-developed [12]. The villages were not connected to the electricity grid and the citizens did not have running water. These Arab villagers by the end of the 1948 War, suddenly and reluctantly, became citizens of the newly established Jewish state that saw them as a fifth column that constitutes a security threat to the state [2]. The Arab-Israeli women were mostly illiterate and the bulk of men barely finished elementary school. The society as a whole used to be a peasant society. In our era however, the majority of young generation finishes high school and the Arab students constitute around 15% of the Israeli student population [7]. The villages have increased in terms of their population and the society as a whole went through a rapid process of modernization and Israelization [13]. These transformations have created a widening gap between the young generation that aspires to emulate the living style of the culture of the Israeli secular young generation and the desire of the parents to preserve and conserve their own Arab-Palestinian and Islamic culture [3], [4].

## II. THE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLE OF FORCING

According to the conflict management style of forcing, an individual in general utilizes his/her viewpoint and forces it on another person, thus achieving a win-lose result [15]. This conflict management style requires this person to give a high priority for his/her interests and low priority for the interests of the other person [14]. “Battling” or forcing conflict management style expands one’s self-assuredness (which

means, self-concern) and limits sympathy (which means, worry for other people). Individuals operating in a competitive environment for the most part aspire to have authority over others, and for the most part see the competition as a “game” of “winning or losing” outcome [16]. In such social units, authoritarian individuals will in general compel others to acknowledge their own perspectives by utilizing aggressive forcing strategies (contentions, affronts, allegations, savagery, and so forth.) that advance an uncomfortable feeling of fear. This system of activity gives the most elevated likelihood of accomplishing the ideal outcome, when the worry for the person's interests is high and the worry for the other party's interests is low to even non-existent.

The forcing style implies conclusiveness, demanding positions that must be expounded without a compromise or any attempt to accommodate the needs of the other party to the extent of longing to satisfy one's wants to the detriment of the other party in a contention [17]. It is a technique that utilizes the power assets at the disposal of the person, in which he should utilize whatever control he feels is fitting to accomplish what he needs. Regardless of whether achieving a goal occupies a high priority for that individual, forcing his/her perspective and being in control becomes an end by itself, so that maintaining one's authority in the present would serve his/her ability to continue forcing his ideas in the future. The forcing style of conflict management implies demanding one's rights without withdrawal and outright insistence on one's position. This person has also to contribute the necessary means within a rational thinking for the sake of realizing his/her goal of forcing others to obey him/her without questioning the his/her motives.

### III. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Table I provides correlation between the various variables, such as the sex of the parent, religion, years of education, income, and whether in the view of the parents, their teenage child obeys them without questioning. In this table, we notice that there is a negative correlation between Sex and Income. The variable Sex denotes 1 for Male and 2 for Female. This means that an average Arab woman earns less than an average Arab man. We also notice that there is a positive correlation between Sex and each of the two dependent variables of obeying without questioning: Obey\_WO\_Q and Obey\_WO\_Q\_C (the former is reported by the parent and the latter is reported by the teenage child). This means that Arab women

tend more than Arab men to think that their teenage child obeys them without questioning, and the teenage participants in the survey in fact concur with this statement.

Next we find the variable of Religion. We notice that there is a negative correlation between Religion and EduYears or years of education. Given that the variable Religion denotes 1 Muslim and 2 Christian, then the negative indicator surprisingly means that Muslim families tend to be more educated than the Christian ones, while traditionally Christians used to be much more educated than Muslims in Palestine [5]. Yet when it comes to the correlation with Income, Religion and Income have a positive correlation which means that Christian families tend to earn more than Muslim ones. Other interesting indicators include the correlation between Religion and the dependent variables of Obey\_WO\_Q and Obey\_WO\_Q\_C. We notice that in both cases the correlation is negative which means that Christian families tend to be less demanding from their children to obey without questioning or in other words, Christian families tend less to pursue the conflict management style of forcing.

Next we find the variable of EduYears or years of education. First we find that there is a correlation between education and income among Arab-Israeli families and that is something highly expected and trivial. Yet, while the correlation between EduYears and Obey\_WO\_Q is negative and close to zero, the correlation between EduYears and Obey\_WO\_Q\_C is positive. This means that teenage children from more educated families reported that they tend to obey without questioning and this outcome is highly correlated with the level of education of the parents. The higher the education of the parents, the more likely that their teenage child will obey them without questioning, as this outcome was reported by the teenage child via this variable. In this sense, more educated parents are more likely to interfere in the life of their children and to demand that the latter obey without questioning [6]. Yet, the parents tend to report this outcome differently and according to the correlation between EduYears and Obey\_WO\_Q, we see that more educated parents think that their children do not obey them without questioning. In sum, we notice that parents and the teenage children within the same family give different interpretation to the meaning of obeying without questioning. While some teenagers reported that they obey without questioning, their parents think otherwise.

TABLE I  
 PEARSON CORRELATION MATRIX

	SEX	RELIGION	EDUYEARS	INCOME	SEXC	OBEY_WO_Q_C	OBEY_WO_Q
SEX	1.000						
RELIGION	-0.156	1.000					
EDUYEARS	0.077	-0.022	1.000				
INCOME	-0.284	0.134	0.482	1.000			
SEXC	-0.002	0.059	0.116	0.046	1.000		
OBEY_WO_Q_C	0.163	-0.174	0.208	-0.016	0.136	1.000	
OBEY_WO_Q	0.084	-0.207	-0.061	-0.023	-0.066	0.015	1.000

In Table I, we also notice that the variable of Income has negative correlation with both dependent variables, which means that more affluent families tend to be less demanding from their children to obey without questioning or that these parents tend less to pursue the conflict management style of forcing [7].

The next variable in Table I is the Sex of the teenage child (SexC). The question here is whether teenage girls tend to be more obedient than boys in the same age or not [8], [9]. There is a positive correlation between the Sex of the teenage child SexC (which denotes 1 Male, and 2 Female) and Obey\_WO\_Q\_C, which means that the children reported that girls tend to be more obedient than boys; yet based on the correlation between SexC and Obey\_WO\_Q the correlation is negative but small. This still means that parents think that girls are less obedient than boys. It may indicate that parents tend to interfere in the personal life of their girls more than in the personal life of their boys and as a result, girls tend to resist such interference, thus the negative correlation.

In Tables II and III, we examine the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable of Obey\_

WO\_Q by using least-squares regression. We notice from Table II, that all of the five independent variables have only 5% explanation of the variation in the dependent variable, as the value of the Squared Multiple R is 0.057.

In Table III, we notice that only the variable of Religion is significant at above 99%, as its p-value stands at 0.007, where the rest of the variables are insignificant. The coefficient of the Religion variable is negative at -0.57, which means that Christian families tend to be less demanding from their children to obey without questioning or to pursue the conflict management style of forcing and this outcome is highly significant.

TABLE II  
 DEPENDENT VARIABLE: OBEDIENCE WITHOUT QUESTIONING (REPORTED BY PARENTS)

Dependent Variable	OBEY_WO_Q
N	180
Multiple R	0.239
Squared Multiple R	0.057
Adjusted Squared Multiple R	0.030
Standard Error of Estimate	0.998

TABLE III  
 REGRESSION: DEPENDENT VARIABLE: OBEDIENCE WITHOUT QUESTIONING (REPORTED BY PARENTS)

Regression Coefficients $B = (X'X)^{-1}X'Y$						
Effect	Coefficient	Standard Error	Std. Coefficient	Tolerance	t	p-value
CONSTANT	4.658	0.487	0.000	.	9.573	0.000
SEX	0.171	0.163	0.084	0.850	1.049	0.296
RELIGION	-0.571	0.210	-0.205	0.958	-2.725	0.007
EDUYEARS	-0.030	0.025	-0.106	0.705	-1.207	0.229
INCOME	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.654	0.899	0.370
SEXC	-0.092	0.150	-0.045	0.982	-0.609	0.543

Tables IV and V deal with the dependent variable of Obey\_WO\_Q\_C, reported by the children, by using again a least-squares, linear regression and referring to the same independent variables. We notice from a glance at the Squared Multiple R that these variables explain around 10% of the variation of this dependent variable. From Table IV, we notice that there are three variables whose p-value is low. The variable of Religion is significant at above 95%, EduYears is significant around 99% and the variable of SexC is also significant at above 90% of the cases. This means that all of these three variables have indeed impact on the way the teenage children reported their view of which factors affect whether they obey the instructions of their parents without questioning. We notice that the variable of Religion is negative again and has a similar value as in Table III. This strengthens the claim that Christian families are indeed less demanding that their children obey without questioning. The next variable that is significant is EduYears and its coefficient has a value of 0.084. This means that years of education are positively correlated with the demand of obedience without questioning and that more educated families demand that their children do obey their instructions without questioning. By the same token, one can claim that less educated families unwittingly bestow on their children more freedom, thus they

are less demanding on forcing their children to obey them without questioning.

The next variable that is significant is SexC. The coefficient of this variable has a positive value, which means that girls based on this data tend more than boys to obey without questioning and that parents are more demanding from their girls to obey without questioning that they demand from their boys [10]. This is a plausible conclusion given that Arab families tend to be more conservative and put limits on the freedom of movement of their girls than that of their boys, who are encouraged to be independent and dominant figures in their society, where girls are taught to be dependent.

TABLE IV  
 DEPENDENT VARIABLE: OBEDIENCE WITHOUT QUESTIONING (REPORTED BY CHILDREN)

Dependent Variable	OBEY_WO_Q_C
N	180
Multiple R	0.326
Squared Multiple R	0.106
Adjusted Squared Multiple R	0.080
Standard Error of Estimate	1.312

TABLE V  
REGRESSION: DEPENDENT VARIABLE: OBEDIENCE WITHOUT QUESTIONING  
(REPORTED BY PARENTS)

Effect	Regression Coefficients $B = (X'X)^{-1}X'Y$					
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Std. Coefficient	Tolerance	t	p-value
CONSTANT	2.394	0.640	0.000	.	3.743	0.000
SEX	0.276	0.214	0.100	0.850	1.288	0.199
RELIGION	-0.564	0.276	-0.150	0.958	-2.048	0.042
EDUYEARS	0.084	0.032	0.221	0.705	2.586	0.011
INCOME	0.000	0.000	-0.079	0.654	-0.897	0.371
SEXC	0.335	0.198	0.122	0.982	1.694	0.092

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The Arab-Israeli society has gone through major changes during the last few decades due to the forces of Israelization, modernization and globalization. The gap between the current generation and their parents is enormous. From the analysis, we can come to the conclusion that the variable of Religion is important in affecting the Obedience behavior of the teenage children. Muslim families demand more obedience from their children than Christian-Arab families. Also, there is more demand for obedience from girl teenagers than from boys, and finally, there is a negative correlation between years of education of the parents and the demand of obedience.

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