

Influence of Different Parenting Styles on Adolescents' Identity Construction

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Abstract: Parents have a significant role on adolescent's way looking for their identity and independence. The successful parents nourish their children with such secure feelings that encourage them to be autonomous going towards their independence. Adolescence is a life period when a person starts to be more oriented inside instead of being psychologically depended upon family, and ideally saying parents wish to help their younger adolescent to develop his identity and let him try different ways to deal with day to day issues, which leads to learn new behavior. In this context the formation of identity and independence are not individual processes but a common and interdependent process where the adolescent and his parent take part. Different parenting styles play different role in identity formation for an adolescent. The present paper attempts to conceptually review the effect of different parenting styles on adolescents' identity construction and direction for further research.

Keywords: Parenting style, adolescence, identity construction.

INTRODUCTION

In adolescent period a gradual changes take place from being a recipient of care to being a provider. This development requires a change in the view of oneself in the world [1] and in this shift identity construction is a major developmental deed. Identity is a self-structured concept that evolves over the course of life that provides an individual with a sense of steadiness and persistence across time and place; thereby it enables and impacts the personal psychosocial progress and well-being as well as commitment to guide and care for the next generation [2]. Different researchers have different explanations when they try to define the concept of identity e.g., Waterman [3] believes that identity can reflect individual's self-realizing competency because identity can express through this self-realizing behavior in which a person feels as self-defining or deserving, captivating, energizing, purposeful, and supportive to fulfill his/her goals of life; according to Berzonsky [4] theory on identity styles, he asserted that identity is a process and assessment for identity-relevant information; Stryker [5] who developed the identity theory claimed that a person assign different meanings and give importance to different identities, which are articulated by identity-related activities [6]. Other thinkers believe identity is just an answer to the question about 'who am I?' [7].

The Concept of Identity

In broader terms the concept of identity is introduced by Erikson (1968). He depicted identity as a fundamental organizing principal which develops

relentlessly throughout the life-span and provides a sense of continuity within the self and interaction with others (personal sameness), also it's a frame to differentiate between self and others (uniqueness) which assents the individual to function autonomously from others. This concept of identity is extensively used by researchers to explain the adolescents' identity [8-12]. If a person fails to achieve his identity during adolescence then identity crisis may occur, it's called identity cohesion vs. role confusion [2]. Marcia's [1] research on identity statuses in adolescence period also apply to Erikson's identity crisis framework. He claimed that there are four stages for identity formation: identity foreclosure (when a commitment is made without exploring alternatives), identity diffusion (the apathetic state that represents the relative lack of exploration and commitment), identity moratorium (the active exploration of alternatives), and identity achievement (resolution state). He further explained that when the crisis occurs it results in a loss of ability for self-delineation and obligation to values, goals, or relationships, and a painful sense of inarticulateness. This is often observed as "unreflective, chaotic and contradictory descriptions of the patient about himself and others" and "inability to integrate or even perceive contradictions" [13, 14]. On the other hand, if an adolescent positively solved the stage of identity crisis it will indicate his single personal identity and also it strengthens the performance for his various roles [2] and this attained identity expressed the lower level of neurotic and psycho-somatic symptoms [15], increased

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self-esteem [16] and better mental and emotional health [17, 18].

Parenting and Identity Construction

Parents and family members play an important role in shaping and forming the identity of an adolescent. They continue to exert an influence on how an adolescent feels about himself or herself [2, 19, 20, 21, 11, 22, 9]. In a research conducted by Bubnys and Rudnickaitė [23] claimed that adolescents who live in cohesive families reach higher states of identity. Other research has also shown that a positive parental attitude towards an adolescent, his or her acceptance in family [18], family cohesion, good and warm family relations [8] as well as secure attachment with parents [24] are positively related to adolescent's identity construction. Yablonska [25] found that the most favorable conditions for children's identity development during their adolescence period in families are determined by optimal levels of family cohesion and adaptability, egalitarian parenting style, acceptance of own children, reasonable autonomy and a high degree of parents' consistency during upbringing. Therefore, it is very important to understand parent-child relationships during the transitional period of adolescence in forming the identity.

Different parenting styles

Parenting or child rearing is a complex and challenging activity that involves the responsive provision of varied amounts of care, affection, support, stimulation, and control according to the needs of the child [26]. Baumrind [27] describes parental style as a parental behavior and practices the way they are perceived by their children and it is composed by two dimensions i.e. demandingness and responsiveness. In demandingness parental expectations take place that are related to child's behavior and socialization while responsiveness involves general tendency of parents' to provide warmth, care, support and positive attitude towards child's needfulness. Based on these dimensions four parenting styles emerges [28], authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, neglectful parenting style, and permissive parenting style. Authoritative parenting style always high on both dimensions i.e. demandingness and responsiveness while lower the level on these dimensions indicate neglectful parenting. In authoritarian parenting style demandingness enlists higher level than responsiveness, and higher responsiveness and lower level of demandingness describes a tendency towards permissive parenting style.

Effect on adolescents' identity construction

Authoritative parenting, which allows children to view their parents' behavior as responsive and directive towards their wishes and opinions, positively associated with adolescents' identity construction and

facilitates the development of child competent behavior [10, 27] and also children of authoritative parents have less adjustment problems [29, 30]. In contrast, Authoritarian parents give lesser amount of emotional support to their child and they are also very controlling in nature. They never asked for any kind of opinion on any decision from their kid. This could be related to decrease level of individuality development. They become less explorative in nature and form normative identity style rather than moving to identity achievement. This insecure parent-child relationship positively associated with identity diffusion [31] and they tend to have low self-esteem and negative attitude as well [32]. On the other hand Cakir and Aydin [33] found that permissive parenting style is associated with the adolescent identity foreclosure status because they are supportive and encouraging in nature. They do not impose limitations and rules on their children. Neglectful parenting was found to be associated with diffusion identity formation [34]. Parents support and guidance helps individual to overcome with crises whereas neglectful attitude would enhance their confusion and conflicts which may lead to diffusive or avoidant identity.

Though, these studies show quite good explanation and description regarding parenting style effect on identity formation, but in available literatures there is no such congruency in their results, and also parents and children many times show varying degree of conformity on parenting style attributes. For example, Smetana [35] found that adolescents perceived their parents to be permissive and authoritarian in his research, while parents believed themselves to have a more authoritative parenting style. Some studies have also found that parents perceived themselves to be both more demanding and more responsive than their children did [36, 37]. Further studies found that positive identity attainment feebly correlated with maternal acceptance and unrelated with firm vs. lax control; though parental rejection, psychological control and lax control were all found to be associated with identity diffusion [34]. The level of differentiation of self is also found negatively associated with permissive parenting style in male adolescents in comparison to female adolescents [12].

CONCLUSION

Every family has a particular way of cultivating their child which shapes and molds his or her identity. Supportive and thwarting dimensions of parenting styles have a differential impact on identity construction of an adolescent, depending on whether they are associated to distinct experiences of need satisfaction and frustration. The above findings have important implications for the development of robust and systematic intervention programs which accurately

target the protective and risk factors for adolescents' identity development. Another important consideration would be additional quality research is required to determine how precisely distinctive parenting styles affect the formation of adolescent's identity in respect of their age, socio-economic status, their gender and their parental reports as well.

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