The Role of Parenting Styles in Psychosocial Development of Adolescents

Talil Hanna Abrhiem, Ph.D.
Campus Dean & Professor of Business, Strayer University
E-mail: talilabrhiem@yahoo.com

Author’s Note: The information and views expressed in this article are solely those of the author, and do not represent the opinion of Strayer University

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this literature review is to examine how parenting styles influence psychosocial behavior in adolescents. Psychosocial behavior refers to an adolescent’s autonomy, identity, and achievement. This paper also examines Diana Baumrind’s research on specific parenting styles and the role parents play in helping to achieve proper psychosocial development. Erik Erickson’s psychosocial theory illustrates an adolescent develops through an “identity crisis” in which the adolescent begins to identify with a parent’s belief/values and how the parent views the adolescent. Parenting styles and practices as well adolescent self-concept are closely intertwined in adolescent psychosocial development.

Keywords: psychosocial behavior, Psychosocial Development of Adolescents, Parenting Styles

1. INTRODUCTION

Research suggests parenting styles and the quality of a parent and adolescent relationship may have an impact on the psychosocial development among adolescents. An adolescent’s emotions, autonomy, achievement, and identity are all referred to as part of psychosocial development throughout life (Erickson, 1968). Erik Erickson’s psychosocial theory describes adolescent development through a series of eight stages based on the impact of social experience (Erickson, 1968). Erickson’s theory explains how each stage builds upon one another based on the completion of the previous stage. Additional factors influencing psychosocial development of adolescents comprise various parenting styles. These parenting styles include demandingness versus responsiveness and structure versus non-structure. Parenting styles and the role of parenting are both important aspects in helping an adolescent achieve optimal psychosocial development. The purpose of this paper is to examine how parenting styles influence psychosocial behavior in adolescents and ultimately how this affects adolescents in the education system and beyond.

2. PARENTING STYLES

Researchers interested in the process of human development continuously examine how parenting styles may affect the behavior and development of adolescents. Psychologist, Diana Baumrind (1968), explains how parenting revolves around the idea of one particular parenting function: control. She describes three types of parenting typologies: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Authoritative parenting refers to a balance of control and nurturance (Baumrind, 1968). This style of parenting encourages a verbal “give and take” which shares the reasoning behind policy. The authoritative parent is able to support the child’s present qualities, while at the same time setting standards of expectation. The authoritarian parent attempts to shape, control, and evaluate the attitudes and behaviors with a set standard of conduct (Baumrind, 1968). This type of parenting seeks high control with low nurturance and support. The permissive parent is high in nurturance and support, but low in control. This type of parent allows for excess of autonomy (Baumrind, 1968). Baumrind’s model also indicates children contribute to their own development through their influence on parents (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Each type of parenting style, as explained by Baumrind, would affect how a child acts throughout an education system differently. While some of the styles would result in the child having more discipline and drive, other styles may affect the child and his or her ability or desire to have educational accomplishment.

Two researchers, Maccoby and Martin’s (1983), describe a parenting style as “reflecting two specific underlying processes: 1) the number and type of demands made by the parents and 2) the contingency of parental reinforcement”. Maccoby and Martin expanded Baumrind’s work into four parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful. These four parenting styles involved combinations of acceptance/responsiveness and demandingness/control. Demandingness is referred to when parents may
allow/implore for a child to become integrated into the family. This process includes maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys. Responsiveness is referred to as actions in which intentionally promote individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). This parent is supportive to a child’s needs and demands. Maccoby and Martin describe authoritative parenting where the parent is demanding and responsive. For an authoritarian parent, the parent is demanding, but not responsive, which may be considered a totalitarian style of parenting. An indulgent parent is responsive, but not demanding. Lastly, with a neglectful parent, there is neither demandingness nor responsiveness (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Different parenting styles results in children having different educational goals. The child that comes from a parent that expects certain standards be achieved will develop a stronger ambition to succeed in higher education compared to the child that comes from a parent that does not establish goals and expectation.

Steinberg’s model proposes parenting styles and parenting practices influence development. Steinberg states that the values and goals parents have in socializing their children, the parenting practices they employ, and the attitudes they express towards their children are all important characteristics to consider (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Steinberg elaborates on how parenting styles have a direct effect on the development of specific child behaviors and characteristics (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). He explains parenting style influences child development primarily through moderating influence on the relationship between parenting practices and developmental outcomes (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). By finding a balance between the different factors involved in parenting practices, the parent can positively help an adolescent develop a desire to succeed in accomplishing the goals that may be set, whether these goals be set by the adolescent or their parent.

3. PARENTING STYLES EFFECT

There is a wide-ranging amount of literature on parenting styles and the different models of parental control that are linked to the outcomes of adolescence psychosocial behavior. Baumrind states children who are raised by authoritative parents tend to perform better in society than children raised by parents who are permissive or authoritarian (Baumrind, 1991). She explains the authoritative style of parenting in early to middle childhood shows higher levels of social competence, greater ability to regulate emotions, the ability to excel independently, and an increase in creativity and persistence (Baumrind, 1968). Baumrind’s research found adolescents of authoritative parents had higher self-esteem and greater social confidence (Baumrind, 1991). She also discovered adolescents were self-reliant, presented higher academic performance, less likely to be involved in deviant behavior and more likely to have pro-social behavior (Baumrind, 1991). Steinberg’s research indicates parent’s involvement in school and adolescent achievement is greater among authoritative than non-authoritative parents (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). He explains that authoritative parents are more effective during school-related interactions because of their use of explanations, their encouragement of discussion, and in acknowledging an adolescent’s perspective (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Steinberg states “although most parents hope their children will excel academically, parenting styles differ in the importance they may place on the goals of academic achievement and social success in which they help their adolescent succeed” (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). While one parenting style may put a great deal of importance on the academic aspect of an adolescent’s life by developing goals and expectation, another style may only briefly touch on this aspect of the adolescents life without putting any emphasis on the importance of academic achievement.

Adolescents from authoritarian families were found to be more dependent and passive (Steinberg, 2001). These adolescents were found to be less self-assured and had low self-esteem as well as having weak communication skills (Steinberg, 2001). Darling and Steinberg (1993) also found these adolescents were likely associated with low sociability, obedience, and more likely to be involved in delinquency and substance abuse. Baumrind noted in early childhood children exposed to authoritative parenting were fearful, aggressive, and experienced difficulty in regulating emotions (Baumrind, 1991). Authoritarian parenting can also be associated with behavioral and psychological control. Behavioral control includes structuring the child and tracking behavior in different environments (Barber, 1996). Psychological control is an attempt by the parent to control their children through manipulation of thoughts and feelings (Barber, 1996). Behavioral and psychological control has been found to predict very different outcomes in adolescents. Low levels of behavioral control are associated with problems such as antisocial behavior and drug use (Barber & Harmon, 2002). High levels of psychological control are linked to anxiety, depression, and withdrawn behavior (Barber & Harmon, 2002). Based on the parenting styles discussed, it appears an authoritative parent is more likely to express behavioral control while an authoritarian parent is likely to express psychological control. It is important to consider behavioral and psychological control because it may affect an adolescent’s development of autonomy and self-regulation (Barber, 1996). Some adolescents may rebel against psychological control over behavioral control thus resulting in negative behavior.
Adolescents from permissive or indulgent parents are considered to be less responsible, easily influenced by friends and peers, have little to no interest in school, and are more likely to get involved in delinquency and drug use (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). These adolescents lack behavioral and verbal control, are more aggressive, and have difficulty following school rules. (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987). These abilities, or lack of abilities, result in the child not succeeding in the educational sphere. Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir (2009), look at the way parenting styles and involvement affect school dropout rates by conducting a study on adolescents around the age of 14. The study finds that the perceived parenting style in the eyes of the adolescent has a direct effect on whether the student completes secondary education or not (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2009). The adolescent believes the parent has certain expectations and so the adolescent attempts to rise to those expectations. Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, (2009), elaborate by stating that having a parent demonstrate an interest in the life of an adolescent, when the parent has expectation like that of the authoritative parent and not a disinterest like the neglectful parent, an adolescent is less likely to become a school dropout. This involvement is sometimes a simple as the adolescent knowing they have a support system if needed from their parent (Blondal & Adalbjarnardottir, 2009). By believing and knowing their parents have expectation and are supportive, an adolescent is more likely to be successful in school and continue their education.

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Much of the information researched through the Internet and Learning Resource Center refer to professional development (or professional development day) for teachers. Yet, professionals development applies to the corporate world and individuals interested in sharpening their skills important to their positions and job performance. Professional development, that leads to greater opportunities to learn advanced skills in a chosen field of study or trade.

Smith and Kristsonis (2006) define professional development to be “activities designed to build the personal strengths and creative talents of individuals and thus create human resources necessary for organizational productivity.” The authors, however, reminds us that little research was done on the comparison of professional development in public education to professional development can also occur in informal contexts, such as “discussions among work colleagues, independent reading and research, observations of colleagues’ work, or other learning from a peer” (Mizell, 2010). Moreover, professional development is a strategy of time set aside from a regular work day of school day to strengthen one’s skills to become relevant and more marketable to the employers.

5. VALUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It goes without saying that professional development is important but many corporate businesses have given little thought to staff education, for a couple of reasons:

Employers facing uncertain economic times spend less on professional development to bolster their bottom line. Employers recognize that there’s been a shift in employee tenure expectations. Based on labor market statistics, employee job tenure is shorter now than in previous years. In a January 2012 U.S. Department of Labor Statistics report, the median number of years that wage and salary workers had been with their current employer was 4.6 years. This indicates a decrease in tenure when compared to 5.8 in 1983 and 6.9 in 1996 (Employees Tenure Summary 2012).

In light of this, employers may be well justified in pushing back investments in this area. However, Bourke (2014) argues that employee development is a key contributor to a company’s future and sustainability and provides a competitive advantage to employers. Bourke contends that firms are making investments in professional development are positioning their organization to capitalize on growth opportunities when the economy rebounds…”and”... employers would be investing in a workforce that is knowledgeable, loyal and passionate.”

6. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EMPLOYMENT

Despite high employment and underemployment rates in America, there are three millions jobs that continue to go unfulfilled (Woellert, 2012). Deloitte LLP, a consulting firm, surveyed executives who said the typical knowledge and skills in areas of reading, writing, and arithmetic are no longer sufficient for workers; the results suggested that a company’s success in the future will require four additional skills “ critical thinking and problem –solving skills, communication skills, collaboration skills, and, creativity and innovation skills” (Quast, 2012).

A Deloitte’s Shift Index Study that began in 2009 reveals that, “The best and brightest employees are attracted to firms that are rich in relationships, generate knowledge flows, and provide tools and platforms to help them
grow and achieve their fullest potential” (Deloitte, 2014). The Deloitte Study enforces that professional development should be a critical tool that help both employees and their employers to be successful.

While Deloitte Shift Index Study reveals useful information for employers, not all employers have grasped the importance of an effective professional development program for employees. An article in the July-August 2012 issue of the Harvard Business Review, “Why top you managers are in a nonstop job hunt,” cited s study of 1,200 top young managers and their experience with professional development. The study identified that there was “a career development gap between the support that the young managers expected to get and what they actually received in areas of mentoring, coaching, training, and support from direct or senior managers” (Hamori, Cao & Koyuncu, 2012).

7. INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Whether an employer lacks the funds or awareness to offer professional development to employees, individuals can advance their careers and gain new or enhanced skills by developing their own professional development strategies.

Alexis Grant, a writer for U.S. New & World Report, shares tips for helping individuals to grow without their company’s support. The writer points out that individuals should make an effort to help themselves grow professionally to succeed in the short and long term; not learning new skills and acquiring new knowledge will likely cause them to fall behind peers and could be detrimental when looking for a change in positions. Not focusing on professional development could mean not being marketable to employers. Grant (2011) mentions Alexandra Levit, author of New job, new you: A guide to reinventing yourself in a bright new career, who writes in an email “In this employment climate, you always have to be looking ahead to what is going to be required in your potential next role.”

By focusing on transferable skills, individuals can become relevant across industries. Individuals can participate in their own professional development by attending workshops, seminars, technical- or trade schools, or obtaining an academic degree. The individual can then receive recognition with either a certification-of-completion, CE (continuing education) units, a certification (or license), or credit hours towards an academic degree.

If participating in classroom training is not possible, there are other options available. The American Society of Training & Development contributed an article online which explains that while classroom training is extremely effective, it requires considerable travel time and expense. Virtual classroom, webinars, and other web-based services are continuous opportunities for individuals to link directly to some best experts in the world (Goodman & Schieman, 2013).

Furthermore, the International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning issued a publication indicating that online learning shows that “the number of students taking least one online class has now exceeded 6 million” (Perrin, Downes, Perrin, Muirhead, & Betz, 2010). To put this into perspective, now nearly one-third of all students in higher education have opted-in to online education.

8. ERIK ERICKSON’S THEORY
Erik Erickson’s theory of psychosocial development involves eight stages of development in which each stage builds upon the previous. Erickson’s theory describes how the impact of social interactions and experiences shape individuals throughout their lifespan (Erickson, 1968). He describes how a “crisis” is what helps an individual move to the next developmental stage. Erickson explains each process as part of the constructing and reconstructing of one’s identity. The fifth stage of Erickson’s psychosocial development is known as identity vs. role diffusion (Erickson, 1968). This stage normally occurs during early adolescence when teens are seeking independence and trying to grasp an understanding of one’s self and purpose (Erickson, 1968). Erickson explains “those who receive reinforcement and support with personal exploration will be able to progress into the next stage of psychosocial development” (Erickson, 1968). The adolescents who achieve identity are associated with higher self-esteem, demonstrate emotional autonomy, and also develop positive relationships with others. Adolescents struggling to find their identity are associated with role diffusion. Erickson states these adolescents remain confused about one’s self, unsure of their beliefs and future, may seek acceptance from peers, and are insecure (Erickson, 1968). This theory leads to the possibility that when the parenting style fails, an adolescent will look elsewhere for acceptance or guidance.

Though it seems as authoritative parenting achieves optimal psychosocial development, it is important to consider the ecology of an adolescent. Another element of psychosocial development among adolescents is
academic achievement. Steinberg’s research explains White and Hispanic adolescents benefited from authoritative parenting in regards to academic performance versus African American and Asian American adolescents. Steinberg found Asian Americans students were more concerned with excelling academically and reported parents with setting higher expectations, although Asian American parents were non-authoritative (Steinberg, 1992). He also discovered African American and Hispanic students whose performance were lower reported parents to have lower standards of academic performance (Steinberg, 1992). These findings indicate parent’s academic expectations may have an influence on an adolescent’s motivation to excel in an academic setting. Another constituent are peers of adolescents. Peers who support academic achievement can influence an adolescent’s habits based on crowd affiliation (Steinberg, 1992). This demonstrates that even though the parental styles affect an adolescent’s drive, there are other factors that may influence achievement in the academic system.

9. CONCLUSION
Research suggests parenting styles and the quality of a parent adolescent relationship may have a significant impact on the psychosocial development among adolescents. Diana Baumrind describes three parenting typologies: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Maccoby and Martin’s research expanded Baumrind’s work into four parenting styles involving combinations of acceptance/responsiveness and demandingness/control. In Steinberg’s research he proposes parenting styles and parenting practices influence adolescent development.

When considering parenting styles and adolescent outcomes, Baumrind’s research suggests adolescents with authoritative parents have higher self-esteem, greater social confidence, and were overall more competent individuals. Steinberg’s research agrees with Baumrind in the aspect that adolescent achievement is greater among authoritative parenting as well as social success. Another influence is an adolescent’s peers with regards to the psychosocial development. Peers tend to hold that certain influential power by setting social expectations. A final aspect of psychosocial development in adolescence is Erik Erickson’s theory, which is known as identity vs. role diffusion. In contrast to parenting styles, Erickson explains a “crisis” is what helps an adolescent progress to achieve adolescent identity, autonomy, purpose, and positive relationships.

With the prior research that has been conducted there are many positions and views that have been taken on adolescence and psychosocial development. One common factor that can be concluded from all the research is a combination of parenting styles and practices could and should always be considered a major determinant in psychosocial development.

Professional development not only applies to professions in education, but to all professions. Professional development can be part of a career path or a personal desire to improve one’s skills and marketability. It would behoove employers to recognize that employee retention is best if professional development is offered across industries. But, when employers are reluctant or unable to offer professional development, individuals should take control of their own professional future by investing professional development strategies, such as participating in workshops or online classes can help maintain employment competiveness, and it increases an individual’s marketability to employers.

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