The Relationship Between Parenting Dimension and Identity Style in Adolescents

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between identity styles (information oriented styles, normative style, and diffuse avoidant style) with three perceived parenting dimensions (parental support, psychological control, and behavior control) which was measured by Identity Style Inventory (ISI-5), Children Report of Parent Behavior Inventory (CRPBI), and Psychological Control Scale-Youth Self-Report (PCS-YSR). Each identity style was hypothesized to be associated with a particular parenting dimension. The study was conducted on 165 adolescents, all were 12th grade students in Jabodetabek. The results show that there was a significant positive relationship between parental support and diffuse avoidant style, a significant negative correlation between psychological control and diffuse avoidant style, and a positive significant correlation between paternal behavior control and normative style. This finding provide urgency for parents to have high parental support to encourage their children’s use of information oriented style. Further research should examine other factors that shape identity style and explore how culture plays a role in parenting.

Keywords: adolescents, identity, identity style, parenting dimensions

1. Introduction

Adolescence is the most unique developmental period in one’s life time, full of dynamics, and full of challenges and hopes for the next developmental period. Adolescents experience transition from childhood to adulthood during which they tend to act ambiguously and have attitude and opinion that change quite often (Santrock, 2014). Adolescents also experience changes physical and psychological changes which influence their role changes in life.

Adolescents in Indonesia, especially in Jakarta, seem to change their thinking, their attitude toward things and also their fashion frequently (Arnett, 2014). From preliminary study, several students from 12th grade senior high school who studied in learning center institution admitted that they did not know what field of study they should choose if they want to attend university. Getting confused on several crucial issues and having internal conflict of not knowing what to choose are commonly experienced by adolescents as part of developing their identity. Erikson (1968) stated that having a confirmed and coherent identity is important and is developed during adolescence. From here, Erikson argues for identity achievement vs identity diffusion where the latter is a term for those who struggle with identity issues.

Following Erikson’s theory of self-identity, Marcia (1966) developed theory of identity status to identify different status of identity that adolescents experience. From that condition in adolescence, students in 12th grade should resolve their conflicts in determining important life choice, in this case is the most suitable major for them in university. In that process, Marcia (1988) explain the two major issues need to be resolve while adolescences are facing that problem and these are exploration and commitment. Exploration is a process of finding information in order to revise and update one’s knowledge about oneself, while commitment is an established view of oneself (Marcia, 1988). Before the students in 12th grade is able to determine their choice and raise their commitment, they have to do exploration of all the choices available and process information that they already have from that process of exploration. Meanwhile, adolescents tend to have different strategy in the process of exploration, processing, structuring, using, and revising information that is relevant for oneself (Berzonsky, 1990). Therefore, this phenomenon is interesting to be studied: What is the identity style of those in 12th grade senior high school who find it difficult in deciding an area of further study?
relevant for oneself. Berzonsky (1990), focuses on the exploration process and identifies differences in how individuals seek, process, and use identity-relevant information. The model distinguishes three styles of exploration that are thought to represent the socio-cognitive underpinnings of Marcia’s (1966) model: The information-oriented, the normative, and the diffuse-avoidant style.

Information oriented style adolescent overcome their identity crisis by actively searching, processing, and using the information relevant to make choices that they already know. Information oriented style is related with the things needed to solve life problems. Information oriented style have a cognitive correlation with need for cognition, cognitive complexity, self-reflection, vigilant decision making, subjective well-being, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness from big five personality (Berzonsky, 1990, 1992; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992; Dollinger, 1995; Nurmi, dkk, 1997).

While individuals with normative style are those following normative expectation from significant others and peers when making decisions. In Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, Orlofsky’s (1993) categorization, normative processing style is for those who have no commitment, do not explore and are categorized as diffusion or foreclosure (Berzonsky, 2000). Diffused Avoidant Style will avoid or only passively explore their alternatives in developing their identities. They often procrastinate or delay their action to decide until the situation pushes them to make one. In Marcia et al’s categorization (1993), diffuse avoidant style is for adolescents without commitment and in the diffusion style (Berzonsky & Neimeyer, 1994). Details about this identity style can be found in Berzonsky (1990, 1994, 2003, 2008). Dollinger (1995), Nurmi, Berzonsky, Tammi, and Kinney (1997), and Passmore, et al (2005).

This kind of identity style becomes important for the students in 12th grade because they have to adapt and have the best style (information oriented style) to solve their problems about deciding the best major that could be fits them in the university.

There are a lot of research which document the validity of distinguishing among these three identity styles. It has been shown that each style is characterized by a specific pattern of psychosocial and social- cognitive correlates and consequences (Soenens, Duriez, & Goossens, 2005). However, little research has devoted attention to potential determinants of these styles. A number of studies explored the idea that individual differences in identity styles are at least partly rooted in underlying differences in personality (Dollinger, 1995; Duriez, Soenens, & Beyers, 2004). Apart from this, the family context is also considered to contribute to the formation of identity in general and to the development of one’s identity style in particular (Grotevant, 1987). Another research show that identity style is influenced by factors such as parenting, personality, and culture (Berzonsky, 2003).

Parenting and Identity Development. The notion that nurturant parents promote high-quality exploration and subsequent commitment received support in identity status research (Sartor & Youniss, 2002). The way parents in nurture and rear child is one of the most important part in the formation and development of identity style because parents are the most important figures for children.

Parenting Dimension Approach and Identity Style. Berzonsky, (2004) showed that student with information orientation tend to perceive their parents as authoritative, while students with normative style perceived their parents as authoritarian and diffused avoidant style perceived their parents as authoritarian and permissive. Barber (1996) has focused on dimensional approach to parenting, which are parental support, psychological control, and behavior control. The forming research (Smits, Soenens, Luyckx, Duriez, Berzonsky, & Goosens, 2008) showed that there was relationship between parenting and identity style. Students with information oriented style perceived their parents as showing positive parenting, supporting their children, giving open communication, and having a good relationship with their children (parental support), students who have support from their parents will use information oriented style and increase their adaptive skills in the new place and reach their wellbeing (Smits, Vanteeneniste, Vansteeniste, & Luyckx, 2010), while diffused avoidant children perceived their parents as pushy to adolescents and not responsive to emotional and psychological needs of the adolescents’ ad limit the adolescents’ expression autonomy (psychological control), and students with normative style perceived their parents as supportive and regulate adolescents by applying some familial or societal norms (parental support) (Smits, Soenens, Luyckx, Duriez, Berzonsky, & Goosens, 2008). This study examined correlation between parenting dimension and identity style.

This study was the replication of the former study by Smits, et. al (2008) in the different context in Indonesia and in the special phenomenon that was found in 12th grade students before. Replication becomes important to test a theory in different context, culture, and different sample. In this study, parenting variables are further distinguished between paternal and maternal variables because several studies show that adolescents react differently to their father as compared to their mother. (see for instance, Elia, 2000; Smits, et. al, 2008). This study aimed to see whether there is any relationship between parenting dimensions (parental support, psychological control, and behavior control) and identity style (information oriented style, normative style, and diffuse avoidant style) among adolescents in 12th grade senior high school who are studying in the learning center’s institution outside the school. Study’s aims were also to see how the difference in paternal and maternal parenting affect students in using different identity styles.

2. Method

A. Participants

The samples were one hundred sixty-five adolescents, all were in 12th grade senior high school who were tutees in
learning center’s institution branches in Jakarta, Depok, and Bekasi, ranging between 17-19 years, acted as participants. This group was chosen because they were in critical age, in the process of identity formation which is requires them to determine commitment by making a good exploration (identity style) and preliminary study found that phenomenon of making decision about university major occur during their grade. They filled out the informed consent before proceeding with filling out the questionnaire.

B. Measure

Identity style. Participants completed Indonesian version of 5th Identity Style Inventory (ISI -5). Before that, ISI-5 was translated into Indonesian using expert judgement. This approach involved two experienced researchers who translated the questionnaire. Next, translation-back translation procedure were used. Reliability-validity procedures were used to ensure that all these instruments were adequate to be used in this study. Cronbach’s alpha for the information-oriented scale (9 items, e.g., “When making important decisions, I like to have as much information as possible”) was 0.79. Cronbach’s alpha for the normative scale (9 items, e.g., “I prefer to deal with situations in which I can rely on social norms and standards”) was 0.71. Cronbach’s alpha for the diffuse/avoidant scale (10 items, e.g., “When I have to make a decision, I try to wait as long as possible in order to see what will happen”) was 0.73. Validity analysis procedure by correlating ISI-5 with Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale as a construct validity check has also been done by Berzonsky, et al (2013). The result of validity analysis was r = 0.307 for information-oriented style, -0.305 for normative style and -0.381 for diffuse avoidant style. The correlation was significant at 0.05 level.

Parenting dimension. Participants completed a brief Indonesian version of the Child Report of Parent Behavior Inventory (CRPBI; Schaefer, 1965) for parental support dimension, Psychological Control Scale-Youth Self-Report (PCS-YSR) for psychological dimension and behavior control dimension that has been translated from English to Indonesian also using expert judgement and back translation. Cronbach’s alpha for the parental support (10 item, e.g., “Father/Mother often praises me”) was 0.72. Cronbach’s alpha for the psychological control (8 item, e.g., “Father/Mother often interrupts me.”) was 0.60. The last, for behavior control (5 items, e.g., “Father/Mother often asks me who my friends are”) was 0.76. For each parental dimension, a correlation with Parental Authority was done as a construct validity check. PAQ (Indonesia version) has been tested for validity and reliability previously by Annisa, T (2014). The result was r = 0.389 for parental support, 0.371 for psychological control, and 0.286 for behavior control.

3. Results and Discussion

Demographic of participants. Table 1 shows that most participants were n 17 years old, most of them were female, and most of them were tutees n learning center’s branches in Jakarta.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics Participants</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 years</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>73.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domisilli</td>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Depok</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bekasi</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parenting</th>
<th>Information Oriented</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Diffuse Avoidant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Paternal Parental Support</td>
<td>-0.029</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>-0.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Paternal Psychological Control</td>
<td>0.086</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.164*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Paternal Behavioral Control</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.195*</td>
<td>-0.134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Maternal Parental Support</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>-0.164*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Maternal Psychological Control</td>
<td>-0.054</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>0.222**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Maternal Behavioral Control</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>-0.101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). None of the parental dimension variables has any correlation with the information-oriented style. For the normative style, only paternal behavior control has significant positive correlation. It seems that if their father show high behavior control it will lead students to use normative style. However, more significant correlations are found between another parental dimension variables and diffuse avoidant style. Parental support has negatively significant correlation with diffuse avoidant style and this applies for both paternal and maternal variables (r paternal parent support.diffused-avoidant style = - 0.194, p = 0.013 ; r maternal parent support.diffused-avoidant style = -0.164, p = 0.0. Psychological control (both paternal and maternal) has significant positive correlation with diffuse avoidant style, r paternal psychological control.diffused-avoidant style = 0.164, p = 0.036 ; r maternal psychological control.diffused-avoidant style = 0.222, p = 0.004. There is negative correlation between parental support and diffuse avoidant, it means if parents show high support, the adolescents tend to use a low diffuse avoidant style. In addition to that, when parents show a very high psychological control, the adolescents tend to show also a high diffuse avoidant. Finally, there is significant correlation between parenting dimension and identity style.

Among the three identity styles, only diffused-avoidant style has significant correlations with parental support (negatively) and parental psychological control (positively). This is similar with a study by Smits, et al (2008) and Smits, Vansteenkiste, Vansteenkiste, and Luyckx (2010). Both parental support and parental psychological control will help students develop their self-
identity. When they have self identity, adolescents are adaptive to problem solving and exploring life choices (Berzonsky, 1990, 1994, 2008; Berzonky & Kuk, 2000; Nurmi, et al 1997). High parental support and low psychological control would encourage adolescents to do exploration which is needed in making their own decision (Berzonsky, 2004; Smits, dkk, 2008). Specifically, high paternal psychological control tends to inhibit adolescents’ commitment making (Berzonsky, 2004). Parental pressure to achieve high goals without taking into account adolescents’ ability will make adolescents feel stressful so adolescents tend to be aphatic when facing problem (Soenes, Vansteenkiste, Luyten, & Goosens, 2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental support</td>
<td>-6.794*</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological control</td>
<td>-2.435</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior control</td>
<td>-10.217*</td>
<td>&lt; 0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that there are differences between paternal and maternal behaviors. Participants perceive paternal support more positively compared to paternal psychological control and paternal behavioral control. On the other hand, both maternal support and maternal behavioral control are received similarly. Analysis using paired comparison show that the differences between paternal and maternal behaviors are significant for parental support, psychological control, and behavioral control. Participants perceive maternal behaviors more positively than paternal behaviors. This is not surprising as in Indonesia, mothers are usually regarded as the party responsible for parenting (Elia, 2000).

4. Conclusion

From this study, we found that there is correlation between three parenting dimensions (both maternal and paternal) and identity style. Parental support has negative correlation with diffused-avoidant style, while students who have parents with high psychological control tend to diffused avoidant style. When students perceived their father with high behavior control, the students tend to use normative style. Besides that, students perceived their parents (father and mother) as having a different level of parenting. Mother’s is perceived higher than father’s.

This finding can be used as reference by adolescents in 12th grade to solve their problems of determining what field of study they should choose in university. First, they have to explore all the choices, and process information that they already have by using the best identity style. This can be also be used as reference by parents to show support for their children who are in the process in forming stable identity. This finding may also contribute former research by Smits, et al. 2008) in different cultural context. This research can also stimulate subsequent research in the same scope, namely identity style in Indonesia. This result can also be used as reference by parents to practice the best parenting for their children.

Unexpectedly, however, there is no correlation between parental support (both father and mother) and information oriented style. When students have good support from their parents, their parents were open, it will lead adolescents to be more actively explore their choices, in this case is when facing a problem in choosing major in university. Additional research on the link between parental support and information oriented style is needed. In our view, this finding have some limitation, there is a number of factors that we have yet to check in this study and each of these factors provides directions for future research.

First, the amount of explained variance in this study is low to modest. Because modest effect sizes are relatively common in research on identity styles (e.g., Adams et al., 2006), it seems likely that other factors (e.g., personality) besides parenting also contribute to identity style development. Second, constructs were assessed through adolescent self-report only. Although it is appropriate to gather information about subjective processes such as identity development from the adolescents themselves, the use of a single informant may have caused problems of shared method variance and self-presentational bias.

Fourth, the present study examined main effects of parenting on identity styles only without considering the role of possible moderating variables. Moderators that were not observed in this study could help explain some finding that was not predicted before, such as, not all parenting dimensions have a correlation with identity style.

There is also a number of limitations to the design of this study. First, our sample comprised of highly educated students only who also participate in the extracurricular outside the formal class. The sample is only in Indonesian culture; therefore, we cannot generalize our research to other culture. Research in different culture becomes more important because culture is one of the factors which affect identity style. Therefore, further research should be conducted in a different place with a different culture.

References


