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A comparison of the psychological characteristics of adolescence and drawing its profile according to parents and adolescents in Isfahan City (Iran)

Asgar Aghaei ^{a*}, Fereshteh Afsar ^b, Aboulghasem Nouri ^c

^a (Ph.D) Department of Psychology, Khorasgan (Isfahan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran

^b (MA) Department of Psychology, Khorasgan (Isfahan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran

^c (Ph.D) Department of Psychology, Khorasgan (Isfahan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran

Abstract

The aim of this study was to compare various points of view of parents and adolescents in Isfahan (Iran), about the psychological characteristics of adolescents. The statistical population included all adolescent in the age range of 12-25 years, and their parents in the city of Isfahan in 2011. The statistical sample included 400 adolescent (197 girls, 204 boys) and 400 parents, who were selected according to cluster random sampling. The research instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire. The results of the statistical data analysis Manova and Scheffe showed that there are significant differences between the point of views of adolescents and parents about the psychological characteristics of adolescence in Isfahan. ($P < 0.01$).

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1. Introduction

Adolescences are a recent historical discovery or invention. In the Rousseau – Stanley Hall tradition, adolescence has been considered as a period of "storm and stress" and "oscillation and oppositions." However, empirical research does not offer convincing empirical data supporting these type ideas (Koops&Zuckerman,2003).Hall's normative turmoil has been replaced by the recognition that as they pass from childhood to adolescents may take a number of different paths, many of which are not tumultuous(Dubas,Miller&Petersen,2003).Dealing with adolescence they always has been a challenge for both parents and clinicians. In today's society, adolescence is a prolonged developmental stage that lasts approximately for 10 years, nominally described as between the ages of 11 and 22 years (Gutgesell&Payne, 2004).Adolescence is an important developmental stage in which many new characteristics have gained. In this period, it is expected from the adolescent to develop a healthy identity. Identity formation consists of sexual, vocational and ideological dimensions. During this period, they take decisions which will affect their future lives. An important decision is career choice. Transition from high school to university constitutes an example of a life crisis (Dogan&Kaza, 2010).Erik Erikson is the most influential theorist of emotional development. He looks at adolescence as a period of identity formation and separation from adult caretakers. He refers to this

Asgar Aghaei ^{*}. Tel.: +98 9131101969
E-mail address: aghaeia@yahoo.com

stage as a choice between age identity formation and role diffusion, making the case that if adolescents do not form a coherent sense of self and values, they will lack a consistent sense of identity as they progress into adulthood (Hazen, Schlozman & Beresin, 2008). During the teenage period, the teenagers spend less time with their parents. In relation to their parents, mostly the teenagers bear a stressful period at this important growth stage (Guteman & Eccles, 2007). Regarding the importance of this period, parents and the family find a new special role. If the parents are aware of the psychological features of this period, they can make a better relationship with their teenagers, and following it, the teenagers can adapt themselves to the stresses of the maturation period much better. Not comprehending the teenagers properly might lead to a conflict between parents and their teenagers. The teenagers wish to have more independence but their parents may show a reaction towards this need of the teenagers, and each reaction might lead to misunderstandings and conflicts between parents and the teenagers. As a great percentage of population in Iran consists of teenagers, it is necessary that parents be aware of the psychological features of the teenagers' generation. In this study, it's tried to study the psychological features of the teenage period and make a comparison between the teenagers' and the parents' points of views about this period. Rich & Jackson (2003) did a research on the relationship between the teenagers' and their parents', the aim of which was to study the way a conflict is made in the interactions between the teenagers and the parents. Both the parents and the teenagers were reactive, negative, aggressive, or refusal. A study by Jeffery, Caster & Howass (1999) showed that the parents had a significant role in increasing the anxiety level of the teenagers. In other words, one may say that the methods of rearing practices have a significant effect on the psychological features of this period. A study by Dehart, Pelham, and Tennen (2006) revealed that those mothers who apply authoritarian style in their child rearing practices give their children a greater self-esteem. The less this style is applied, the less self-esteem will be there would be child. On the other hand, those parents who apply the conservative or the critical styles or those who do not provide their teenagers with reasonable answers, find their children less cooperative, while these children might experience depression and suffer from a low self-esteem and decision making (Hirshfeld, Biederman, Brody, Faraone & Rosenbaum 1997).

Method

Statistical population:

The research method was ex post facto the statistical population consisted of all adolescent students, in the age range of 12-25 years, as well as their parents in the year 2011 in the city Isfahan. Iran. The sample included 400 adolescents (197 girls and 204 boys) and 400 parents who were selected via cluster random sampling in one of the educational districts in the city.

Research instrument:

The research instrument was a questionnaire of 56 items on the psychological features of the teenage period. To measure the psychological features of the teenage period, the questionnaire was constructed by the researchers (Afsar, Aghaei, Nouri & Golparvar, 2011). Before constructing the final version of the questionnaire, various texts on basic features of the teenagers were studied and the related features were selected; then the extracted features were converted into questions, in the Likert 5- points. After revision by supervisors as well as 6 experts, some editions and necessary changes were made on the questions, and a final questionnaire with 56 items' was provided for the final administration. To study the construct and the content validity, the researchers asked for the ideas of the supervisors, the consultants, and some of the professors at the university. To study the construct validity of questionnaire, the exploratory factor analysis with VARIMAX was used.

The factor analysis, in one stage with Kaiser, Meyer & Olkin (kmo) were equal to .935 (Human, 2001), and through Bartlett tests, it was equal to 33750.3, ($p < .001$). the 12 obtained factors with special values higher than 1 could cover covered 48.87% of the total variances of the questionnaire.

Based on the content of the questions, 12 factors were obtained and named as follow:

Based on the content of the questions, 12 factors were obtained and name : anxiety (5 questions, alpha, 0.76), challenge and criticism (5 questions, alpha, 0.7), appearance and romantic relationships (5 questions, alpha, 0.7), independence seeking and conflict (5 questions, alpha, 0.7), fear of general health (3 questions, alpha, 0.5), behavioural changes (4 questions, alpha, 0.6), tendency toward peer (3 questions, alpha, 0/6), idealism and fantasy (4 questions, alpha, 0/6),

Social desirability(2questions,alpha,0.29),courage and integrity(2questions.alpha,0.39),futurism and confusion (2questions,alpha,0/23) ,shame and shyness(2questions,alpha,0/4).

Analysis method

Two levels of descriptive and inferential analyses were applied on the statistical data. In the descriptive level, the distribution frequency tables, and the mean and the standard deviation were calculated. In the inferential level, the multi-variant variance analysis (Man ova), and the follow up tests (Scheffe) were applied to make a comparison between the two groups. To analyse the data, SPSS16 software was used.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive information about the psychological characteristics of parents and adolescence

Variable	Group	Number	Mean	Std.Dviation	Std.error
Anxiety	adolescence	410	62.3	72.0	0.03
	parents	377	59.3	66.0	0.03
Criticism challenge	adolescence	410	34.3	67.0	0.03
	parents	377	52.3	65.0	0.05
Appearance &romantic relations	adolescence	410	82.3	78.0	0.05
	parents	377	84.3	62.0	0.03
Independence &conflict	adolescence	410	38.3	7.0	0.03
	parents	377	4.3	65.0	0.03
Fear of public health	adolescence	410	83.3	72.0	0.03
	parents	377	85.3	63.0	0.03
Behavioral changes	adolescence	410	57.3	68.0	0.03
	parents	377	87.3	61.0	0.03
Tendency toward peer	adolescence	410	7.3	69.0	0.03
	parents	377	93.3	64.0	0.03
Idealism& fantasy	adolescence	410	85.3	65.0	0.03
	parents	377	85.3	57.0	0.03
Social desirability	adolescence	410	07.4	78.0	0.04
	parents	377	05.4	7.0	0.04
Courage &integrity	adolescence	410	71.3	82.0	0.04
	parents	377	74.3	72.0	0.04
Futurism &confusion	adolescence	410	71.3	88.0	0.04
	parents	377	64.3	74.0	0.04
Shame ­ness	adolescence	410	03.3	96.0	0.04
	parents	377	35.3	84.0	0.04

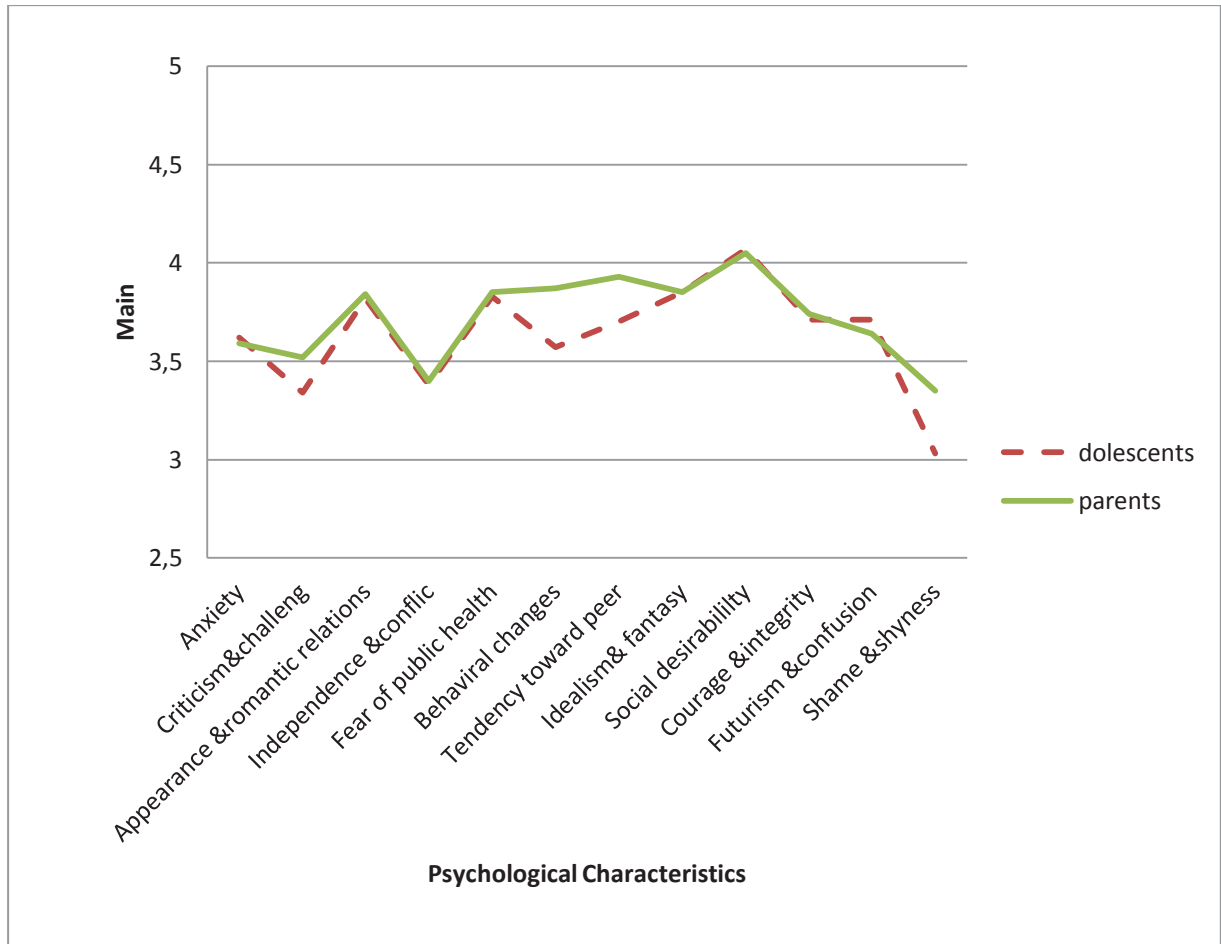
Table2: Results of multivariable analysis of variances in parents and adolescents

row	Variable	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
1	Anxiety	0.33	2	0.16	0.37	0.69
2	Criticism challenge	7.31	2	3.65	8.6	0.001
3	Appearance &romantic relations	10.1	2	5.4	12.29	0.001
4	Independence &conflict	15.64	2	7.81	18.15	0.001
5	Fear of public health	0.18	2	0.09	0.21	0.81
6	Behavioral changes	21.79	2	10.89	27.35	0.001
7	Tendency toward peer	32.63	2	16.32	40.28	0.001
8	Idealism& fantasy	7.26	2	3.63	10.54	0.001
9	Social desirability	0.16	2	0.08	0.15	0.86
10	Courage &integrity	3.27	2	1.63	2.95	0.053
11	Futurism &confusion	8.84	2	4.24	6.88	0.001
12	Shame ­ness	24.15	2	12.07	15.88	0.001

Table 3: Table 3: Scheffe post hoc test on significant issues between parent and adolescents with psychological characteristic of adolescents.

Variable	Group1	Group2	Mean difference	Std.error	sig
Criticism&challeng	adolescence	parents	0.17	0.05	0.001
Behaviral changes	adolescence	parents	-0.3	0.04	0.001
Tendency toward peer	adolescence	parents	-0.22	0.04	0.001
Shame ­ness	adolescence	parents	-0.32	0.06	0.001

As seen in table 3, the differences between the two groups (parents and adolescence) in 4 meaningful dimensions.



Figures 1: psychological profile of psychological characteristics of adolescence from the perceive of parents and adolescents in Isfahan (Iran).

Conclusion and discussion

An overview of the parents' and the teenagers' points of views in Isfahan (Iran) reveals that regarding the criticism and challenge, behavioral change, peering, and shyness dimensions, there is a significant difference between the points of views of the parents' and the teenagers'. The results of the present study is associated to the results obtained by Dehart, Pelham, Tennen (2006), Guteman, and et.al (2007), Rieseh and Jackson (2003), Hirshfeld and Bierderman (1997). It is also associated to the studies by Jeffery et al (1999). It seems as if the difference between the parents and their teenagers might be due to the gap between the two generations. Although parents are in contact with their children and have an interaction with them, they cannot understand the teenagers' feelings as they directly experience them. There is always a distance between them and the parents look at the teenagers from a distance. Of course this gap is not limited to any special time and place. It exists in most cultures and societies. Moreover, the parents have to face great problems of short income and unstable employment, which disturb the order of the family, bringing so many new problems for them. Nowadays, fathers spend more time out of home than before, some of whom having to run two or three jobs to make a living and they are mostly tired and frustrated. Mothers also have joined their husbands to the work market and work to meet their family's needs, so they are mostly out of home and ignore their responsibilities at home. As a result parents don't have enough psychological capacities to face their children's problems and to solve them. Lack of relationship between them and their children widens the gap between them. On the other hand, by the advent of the industrial revolution, computers, the event of global village, teenagers have turned to satellites, spending most of their time on the computer or satellite and making less relationship with their parents. Therefore the very reason can lead to a difference between the parents' and the teenagers' points of views. As a result, it can be concluded (based on figure1) that most of the differences between the parents' and the teenagers' points of views might be found in the behavioral changes, peering, criticism, challenge and timidity. As a result, one may understand that why the teens have less authority in changing their behaviors and peering than their parents. Due to their lack of awareness from this feature of this stage of teenagers' growth, parents overstate this issue. Most of the behaviors of the teenagers at this stage are under the control of the maturation feature. On the other hand, parents look at their teenagers as kids, and it might reveal that they have no proper understanding of this period. However, these differences lead to serious harms to the relationship between the parents and their children, making so many problems in their child rearing practices.

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