

Peer Pressure Influence on the Adolescent: The Required Communication Style in Character Modeling

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper intends to help check parent-adolescent conflict, for one peer pressure influence is perhaps hyped at the peak of self-identification.

Methodology: The paper adopted qualitative method, having proposed three polars of character modeling in the adolescent. Thus, the stage of communication, confrontation and conviction. The paper above all is a content analysis and as such employs secondary sources on peer pressure influence and family relations.

Findings: At this stage of development, the stripling is usually in search of meaning and often times he finds such in the company of friends. This forum irrespective of what becomes of the future or the opinion of the parents. It then remains that one way to tame folks at this stage is by employing the right communication style.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: It is then suggested that family counselors and human learning experts advance these styles to further tame teenage violence in home making.

Keywords: *Adolescent, character modeling, communication style, peer pressure*

Introduction

Adolescence is a transitional period in the human life span, linking childhood and adulthood. It is characterized by biological, cognitive and psychosocial changes including the desire for more autonomy and self-determination. Although some parents encourage autonomy of their children and accept more symmetrical relationship, some however still have different expectations regarding the timing of appropriate autonomy for their adolescents. These changes into more symmetrical relationship and go hand in hand with some conflict between parents and their adolescents. From the foregoing, it would appear that parents- adolescent conflict may likely emanate in families with unhealthy lifestyles. This however does not suggest that families with healthy lifestyles are immune or not affected by the problem.

Parent-adolescent conflict occurs when adolescents desire for more control over decision-making collide with parents beliefs, value and socialization of the adolescent. More so much of it conflict involves the everyday events of family life such as keeping a bedroom clean, dressing neatly, getting home by a certain time, not talking on the phone forever and so on. Parent's adolescent conflict is more experienced with early maturing adolescents than adolescents who mature late or on time. In Port Harcourt Local Government Area, many families encounter series of highly stressful parent-adolescent problems like movement out of the home. Juvenile delinquency, school drop-out, teenage pregnancy, membership in fraternities and cults and drug abuse, mode of dressing amongst others. However, the everyday conflict that characterize parent-adolescent relationships serves a positive function in that these minor disputes and negotiation facilitates the adolescents transition from being dependent on parents disputes to becoming an autonomous individual. In other words, conflicts should not be considered, in most cases, as negative events. According to Takeuchi et al (2008) conflict provide a means for expressing concern and dissatisfaction, for pointing out important topic for discussion and for bringing opportunities for individual development and the ongoing renegotiation of parent-child relations.

Conceptual reviews parent-child interpersonal relationship as against peer pressure influence

In Utley (2011), close relationships are sometimes called interpersonal relationship. The closest relations as the scholar notes are often found with family and a small circle of best friends. Kroger (2002), defines inter personal relationship as the nature of interaction that occurs between two or more people. It occurs between people who fill each other's explicit or implicit physical or emotional needs in same way. Klem et al (2009), posit that interpersonal relationships are associations, connections or affiliations between two or more people. They vary in differing levels of intimacy and sharing, implying the discovery or establishment of common wound, and may be centered around something(s) shared in common. Thus parent child interpersonal relationship consists of a combination of behaviors, feeling, and expectation that are unique to a particular parent and a particular child. The relationship it posit, involves the full extent of a child's development. Fitzgerald (2005) notes that the term parent-child relationship refers to the

unique and enduring bond between a caregiver and his or her child. Linwood further stated that of the many different relationships people form over the course of the life span, the relationship the parent-child relationship is often considered to be the most enduring and significant relationship in one's life. Parent-child relationship transcends into other stages of the child's development even into adulthood.

However, as many writings and research works on the subject that have done, parent-child relationships is discussed or studied under the attachment theory. According to Damon et al (2003), attachment theory provides an explanation of how parent-child relationship emerges and influences subsequent development such as peer pressure. Attachment theory according to some scholars, is a psychological model that attempts to describe the dynamics of long term and short term interpersonal relationships between humans. In infants, attachment as a motivational and behavioral system directs the child to seek proximity with a familiar caregiver when they are armed, with the expectation that they will receive protection and emotional support. Baruth et al (2006), identified four different attachment classification in children and these include secure attachment. Secure attachment is when children feel they can rely on their caregiver to attend to all their needs of proximity, emotional support and protection. Anxious emotional support and protection. Anxious-ambivalent attachment is when the infant avoids her parents. Disorganized attachment is when there is lack of attachment behavior. The importance of examining the attachment types is that according to a social relational perspective, adolescents' representation of parent-child relationship are considered to be the proximal context for understanding the way they interact with their parents. The attachment theory as postulated by Collins (2002), that experiences in close relationships particular with caregivers during childhood and the mental representations and transactions with significant t others, affects the formation and quality of new close relationships.

Attachment organization in the adolescence reflect core aspects of the way adolescent process affect in social relationships and therefore it is likely to be associated with qualities of ongoing relationships with parents. Thus the ability to solve parent-child conflict could be rooted in the security of attachment relationships. To confirm the above position, an empirical study by Baumind (1991), found that adolescents who were securely attached with their parents reported that they held more positive attitudes towards conflict, used more cooperative strategies to cope with conflict, and were involved in conflict less often. In other words, secured attachment relationship between parents and children translate into using more positive conflict resolution techniques. Some scholars would note the importance of a secured attachment relationship subsequent development. Brooke states that "people who had a secure attachment often have a positive self-concept. They feel at ease internally are effective at regulation their emotions, better able to stay within their emotional "window of tolerance" and not be so physiologically aroused or overwhelmed by others and have a higher level of inherent trust and benefit of the doubt that people can be relied upon. Clearly the above assertions would translate into the use of more

positive conflict resolution approaches between parents and adolescent who have had secured attachment relationships from the onset.

Identity crisis management and parent-adolescent conflict

The term identity crisis according to Erikson's theory means the failure to achieve ego identity during adolescence. The stage of psychological development in which identity crisis may occur is called the identity cohesion versus role confusion stage. During this stage, adolescents are faced with physical growth, sexual maturation, and integrating ideas of themselves and about that others think of them. Adolescents form their self-image and endure the task of resolving the crisis of theft basic ego identity. Successful resolution of the crisis depends on one's progress through previous developmental stages, centering on issues such as trust, autonomy and initiative Ellsworth, (1999).

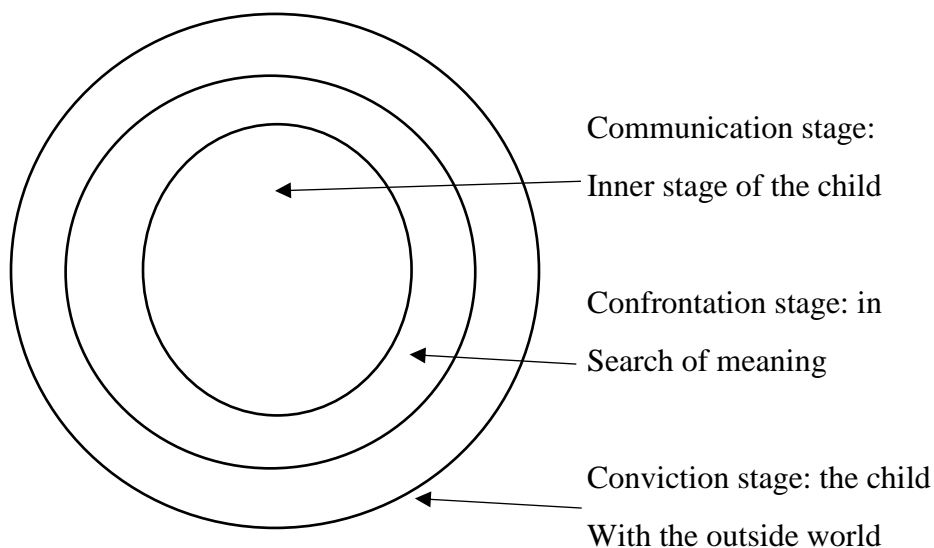
Those who emerge according to Ellsworth (1999) from the adolescent stage of personality development, with a strong sense of identity are well equipped to face adulthood with confidence and certainty. This sort of unresolved crisis leaves the individual struggling to discover themselves. They may go on to seek negative identity, which may involve crime or drugs or the ability to make defined choices about their future. The author thither noted that Erikson described those going through an identity crisis as exhibiting confusion: they seem to have no idea of who or what they are, where they belong or where they want to go. They may withdraw from normal life, not taking action or acting as they usually would at school. They even turn to negative activities, such as crime or drug, as a way of dealing with identity crisis. In congruence Benson (1998), stated that Erikson defined eight crisis stages that characterized individual lives from birth through death. Benson noted that identity achievement versus identity diffusion is the fifth crisis that individuals experience as the negative the potentially stormy years of adolescence. At this stage teenagers experience rapid change in body build, hormones, emotions and cognitive abilities. It then follows that one of the features associated with peer pressure is the search for identity in a research on identity status of adolescents as applied to Erickson's framework identity crisis in adolescents is follows:

- Identity foreclosure: this is an identity status which Marcia claimed that it is an identity developed by an individual without choice. The foreclosure status is when a commitment is made without exploring alternative. These commitments are often based on parental ideas and belief that are accepted without question. This can attribute to identity crisis in adolescents when the security blanket of their assumed identity is removed. The foreclosed individuals often go into crisis, not knowing what to do without being able to rely on the norms, rules and situation to which they have been accustomed.
- Identity diffusion can be described as the apathetic state that represents the relative lack of both exploration and commitment, it can lead to depression and is be described as a lack of identity structure e.g. a star athlete being destroyed by a serious injury.

- Identity moratorium is the status that Marcia theorized that lasts longest in individual. It is the most volatile and can be best described as the active exploration of alternative. Individuals experiencing identity moratorium can be very open-minded and thoughtful but also in crisis over their identity e.g a college student who lacks conviction in his future after changing major subjects multiple times but still cannot seem to find his passion. Identity achievement is the resolution to many identity crisis, it occurs when the adolescents have explored and committed to important aspects of their identity.
- In the same vein, Baruth (2006) links adolescents reasoning development to Jean Piaget's stages of cognitive development. The fourth stage of Piaget's cognitive development which is termed formal operational stage occurs between the ages of 11 and 15. In this state, individuals move beyond concrete experience and think in abstract and more logical terms. As part of thinking more abstractly, adolescents develop images of ideal circumstances. They might think about what an ideal parent is like and compare their parents with this idea standard. They begin to entertain possibilities for the future and are fascinated with what they can be. In solving problems, formal operational thinkers are more systematic, developing hypothesis about why something is happening the way it is, then testing those hypothesis in a deductive fashion.

Proper management of the adolescents (male/female) crisis by their parents, at this stage will help them discover themselves and see conflict with parents in clear terms. The achievement of this, at this stage is mostly dependent on the attachment style the child had with the parents. This is confirmed that the relationship teenagers have with their parents is of utmost importance as influences all areas of social development of the teen.

Communication style, with three polars of character modeling in adolescent



Communication has been defined severally by different scholars. Harpar (2015), defines communication as a process that basically involves the exchanges of information by speaking, writing or using some other medium. The word is derived from the Latin word “communicare” which means to share. According to Klem (2009), communication is the means whereby people relate to others and in the process, ideas feelings and attitudes are accordingly transmitted. It is of note that trying to gain mutual trust and understanding is part of what conflict resolution between parents and teens seeks to achieve. Kroger (2002), stressed that the cause of parent-adolescent conflict has been attributed to several factors but basically to be push by adolescents for more individuality and independence, which parents are often at a loss as to the appropriate timing to allow for such.

Jaccard, Dittus & Gordon (2000), stated that in the process of re-negotiating roles brought about by the aforementioned changes, healthy communication style is essential to promote understanding and mutual respect. Thus, quality of relationships with their parents during daily life. During this stage adolescents need to develop their own opinions, become aware of those of others and be able to integrate the two. Benson (1998) lamented that successful individualism by adolescents involves their being.

Able to express their own point of view, including opinion that may differ from those of their parents, while also being sensitive to and respectful of the opinions of others. This situation as noted by these scholars (2000), create challenges to the existing family structure with the parent-adolescent relationship undergoing transformation from one that is relatively ordered with the parent in the dominant role, to one that involves a more equal relationship between parents and adolescent.

Menon (2003) notes that, just as adolescents need to change the way they communicate with their parents, also need to change their communication with their adolescents in terms of how much independence they allow to their adolescent or expect of them. In congruence Garzar (2011), confirmed that parents and adolescents talk with one another is likely to change over time as are the topics of their conversations with changing expectations of privacy and responsibility, and changing nature of the experiences they share. Baruth (2006), also pointed out that the foundation for effective communication as a means of conflicts resolution between parents and teens lies in the way members of a family have interacted over the years. In other words, the family environment and lifestyle with regards to how people communicate therein would rub-off on how communication could be used effectively in conflict resolution.

Kroger (2002), posted that, when the family setting encourages effective communication, its members get used to expressing their feelings, desire, thoughts and opinions which are then taken note of thus, allowing for healthier relationships within the home. The authors pointed out however that such opinion in terms of unrestrained but mutually respectful interaction would have an adverse effect. Openness in terms of unrestrained but mutually respectful interaction would undoubtedly allow for adjustments necessary to cushion parent-adolescence conflict.

Conclusion

It then remains that peer pressure on teens cannot be addressed with confrontation. Parents must understand the three polars of character modeling in the child as proposed in the paper. Thus the period of communication; the period of confrontation and the period of conviction. Knowing these stages helps shun family crisis between the parents and their adolescents.

Recommendations

1. These polars should be incorporated as parts of the stages the adolescent ` undergoes.
2. parent-teacher association form time should hold meetings for parents and counselors to be sensitized on three polars.

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