

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS IN THE FORMATION OF THE
PERSONALITY OF YOUNG ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract. This article examines the social psychological foundations of personality formation in young adolescents. It explores the influence of family, peer groups, school environment, and digital media on adolescent psychological development. Drawing on Erikson's theory of psychosocial development and Bandura's social learning theory, the study analyzes how social identity and self-concept are shaped during adolescence. The article highlights the significance of social interaction, emotional support, and the presence of positive role models in fostering healthy personality development.

Keywords: Adolescence, personality formation, social psychology, social identity, psychosocial development.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence, commonly defined as the transitional period between childhood and adulthood, represents a critical phase for personality formation. During this stage, individuals develop a sense of identity, autonomy, and social belonging while facing significant biological, cognitive, and social changes. Psychologists emphasize that this period is marked by increased sensitivity to social influences, as young adolescents actively seek validation and guidance from various agents, including family, peers, educators, and media. Understanding the social psychological foundations that shape adolescent personality is essential for fostering healthy emotional, cognitive, and social development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Family remains the cornerstone of early personality formation. Warmth, consistent discipline, and open communication within the family nurture self-esteem and emotional stability in adolescents. Conversely, family conflict, neglect, or inconsistent parenting often correlates with anxiety, aggression, and identity confusion. Research by Steinberg [1] indicates that authoritative parenting—characterized by a balance of emotional support and structure—positively predicts self-confidence, resilience, and pro-social behaviors in adolescents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During adolescence, peer relationships gain prominence as adolescents navigate the challenges of social acceptance and belonging. Peer groups function as both sources of emotional support and contexts for social learning, influencing behavior, values, and self-concept. Bandura's [2] social learning theory underscores the importance of modeling and reinforcement within these groups, as adolescents adopt attitudes and behaviors through observation and imitation. While positive peer influence fosters cooperation and social responsibility, negative peer dynamics—such as pressure to engage in delinquency—pose risks to healthy development.

Schools act as critical arenas for developing interpersonal skills, academic self-concept, and civic responsibility. Supportive teacher-student relationships, collaborative learning environments, and extracurricular activities contribute to a sense of competence and belonging. Studies [4] highlight that

THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

VOLUME-5, ISSUE-7

school climates promoting inclusivity and student engagement reduce behavioral problems and enhance intrinsic motivation, thereby supporting positive personality growth.

In the digital era, media and online platforms exert unprecedented influence on adolescent identity formation. While exposure to diverse perspectives can foster cultural awareness and creativity, excessive or unregulated use of social media is associated with increased anxiety, self-comparison, and reduced face-to-face social skills [5]. Developing digital literacy and critical thinking is crucial to mitigate these risks while leveraging technology for positive socialization.

Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory identifies adolescence as the stage of "identity vs. role confusion," where individuals must reconcile personal aspirations with societal expectations to achieve a coherent self-concept [3]. Successful resolution fosters fidelity and purpose, whereas failure may result in identity diffusion. Complementing this, Bandura's framework explains how observational learning, reinforcement, and self-efficacy shape behavior and personality, emphasizing the role of external models and internal cognitive processes in adolescent development.

One of the pivotal social-psychological factors in adolescent personality formation is the experience of group belonging and positioning within peer hierarchies. During early and middle adolescence, young people become particularly sensitive to social comparison and the approval of peers, which can significantly affect self-esteem and behavioral tendencies. Positive integration into peer groups fosters cooperative skills, empathy, and social confidence, while exclusion or marginalization can lead to emotional withdrawal, aggression, or the adoption of maladaptive coping strategies. Sociometric studies highlight that adolescents who occupy central roles within peer networks often develop stronger leadership qualities and social initiative, whereas those on the periphery may require targeted support to prevent feelings of isolation. These dynamics underscore the importance of schools and parents in monitoring social environments and promoting inclusive practices that help all adolescents find a sense of belonging.

Adolescence is marked by experimentation with various social roles, as individuals attempt to reconcile their personal inclinations with external expectations from family, peers, and society. This negotiation process contributes directly to the development of personality traits such as assertiveness, adaptability, and resilience. Role experimentation often takes place within structured settings, such as clubs, sports teams, and classroom activities, where adolescents can test leadership skills, cooperation, and conflict resolution strategies. The successful adoption of constructive roles reinforces positive self-concept and social competence, while repeated failure or rigid role imposition can lead to identity diffusion or rebellion. Social psychologists emphasize the value of guided role exploration, where adults provide mentorship and safe contexts for adolescents to explore diverse aspects of their identity without fear of ridicule or punitive judgment.

CONCLUSION

Personality formation in young adolescents is a dynamic process, deeply rooted in social psychological interactions. Family, peers, educational institutions, and media collectively shape identity, values, and emotional well-being during this formative stage. By integrating Erikson's and Bandura's perspectives, it becomes evident that socialization, positive reinforcement, and role modeling are critical for healthy personality development. Interventions aimed at strengthening family bonds, fostering supportive school environments, and promoting responsible media use can significantly enhance adolescents' capacity to develop into resilient, socially responsible adults.

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