DIMENSIONS OF PARENTING AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN LATE ADOLESCENCE

by

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Abstract

Previous research examining the link between parenting and identity have either indirectly assessed a single dimension of parenting or explored the degree of achievement rather than the process of identity development. The present study examines the influence of maternal and paternal parenting behaviors on the identity formation process in late adolescence. Participants ($N = 1134$), ranging in age from 18 to 25, completed questionnaires to assess their perceptions of parental behaviors and their current identity status. The results indicate an association between maternal acceptance and identity achievement, and moratorium was correlated with lax control and psychological control. Parental acceptance and psychological control were linked with foreclosure, and all three dimensions of parenting were found to be associated with identity diffusion. The findings are discussed from an intervention standpoint as to which specific parental behaviors can protect against the unachieved identity statuses and facilitate the identity formation process.

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Dedication

According to my mom, I have had a penchant for research from a very early age. Mom says that when I was six months old I sorted all the Easter eggs by color and by 11 months of age I developed an intense fascination with my belly button. Close inspection of my dolls and Mom revealed that they had a belly button too, so I had to know its purpose and what was behind it inside the body. When I exhausted the extent of her knowledge of belly buttons by age two, Mom kept my curiosity fueled by taking me to the library. When the books there still did not provide enough detail, Mom referred me to her father, my Papa, who was a medical doctor for the much sought after information.

Mom loves to tell that story, and I love it because it chronicles her support of my interests and encouragement of my curiosity. She gave me the tools and resources for effective research and taught me not to give up and to keep questioning things. Her unconditional love and support has guided me through the exploration process of my identity development, and she rejoiced with me when I finally made a commitment to pursue a career in academia and to Derek as my partner in life. Mom's boundless energy has kept our wedding plans going while I finished my thesis and for that I cannot thank her enough. I dedicate my thesis to my Mom. I couldn't have done this without her, thanks Mom.

Introduction

The scientific study of adolescence was pioneered by G. Stanley Hall (1904) who viewed these formative years as the best decade of life during which the functions of every sense undergo reconstruction brought on by physiological factors. As their bodies, minds, and societal roles are changing and developing, adolescents are expected to figure out who they are and what they want from life. This formation of personal goals, values, and beliefs is influenced by the various contexts in which adolescents develop, such as within families, schools, and peer groups. Although the amount of time spent at home generally decreases as teenagers approach and enter late adolescence, parents still remain highly influential in guiding their children to successfully traverse the biological, cognitive, and social transitions that are co-occurring with the identity formation process (Hill, 1983).

Identity development involves an active exploration of and a relatively firm commitment to individually specific morals, viewpoints, and aspirations in life (Erikson, 1968). Parents can either help or hinder this process through their childrearing behaviors (Adams, Dyk, & Bennion, 1990). Diana Baumrind (1968) described different patterns of parenting that have proven useful in understanding the influence of parenting behaviors on adolescent development. Authoritarian parenting is a restrictive and punitive style that places firm limits and controls on the child; conversely, permissive parents are accepting, affirming, and have very few demands of their child. Authoritative parents are also accepting and affirming but exert firm control while sharing the reasoning behind disciplinary actions.

Research since the mid-1970s utilizing these parenting styles has demonstrated that authoritative parenting is optimal, as compared to authoritarian or permissive styles, for positive outcomes to various psychosocial issues associated with adolescence (Steinberg, 2001). The

purpose of this study is to investigate which dimensions of authoritative parenting are most influential to the identity formation process.

Previous research examining the link between parenting and identity have either indirectly assessed a single dimension of parenting, such as attachment (e.g. Benson, Harris, & Rogers, 1992; Meeus, Oosterwegel, & Vollebergh, 2002; Schultheiss & Blustein, 1994) or parental separation anxiety (e.g. Bartle-Haring, Brucker, & Hock, 2002), or explored the degree of identity achievement rather than the process of identity development (e.g. Bhushan & Shirali, 1992; Lucas, 1997). Moreover, investigations conducted with sample sizes comparable to or exceeding the number of participants in this study ($N = 1134$) either combined data for mother and for father and analyzed the parental influence as a unit on identity related outcomes of adolescence (e.g. Schmitt-Rodermund & Vondracek, 1999; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1991), or only explored the mother-adolescent relationship (e.g. Sartor & Youniss, 2002). The present study examines the dimensions of maternal and paternal parenting behaviors that influence the process up to and including identity achievement in late adolescence.

Theoretical Framework of Identity

In his theory of psychosocial development, Erik Erikson (1963) identified eight major crises that build upon each other during the lifespan, such that the outcomes of all childhood stages contribute to the establishment of an identity during adolescence. Erikson (1968) posited that the process of identity development begins when infants first recognize their mother and deem her trustworthy. In the autonomy stage, toddlers develop the courage to be independent individuals and the willpower to choose and guide their futures. Preschool children in the initiative stage bring a sense of purpose to their identity through curiosity and experimentation. In the industry stage, school age children build the foundation for a sense of duty in life. Whereas these identifications are optimal, adverse outcomes can occur during these childhood stages. An individual who develops a negative self-image during these early crises enters the fifth stage with a lack of trust, experiences of shame and doubt, and a sense of failure in competency.

The central task of Erikson's fifth stage of psychosocial development is the resolution of an identity crisis. The period of adolescence involves a moratorium for the integration of all the identity elements established in the childhood stages (Erikson, 1968). Identity fluctuates during the teenage years as adolescents actively explore alternatives by trying out various roles offered by their society. In their search for continuity and sameness, the adolescent attempts to incorporate the morality learned in childhood with personal aptitudes and the opportunities offered in social roles (Erikson, 1963).

James Marcia (1966) expanded Erikson's theoretical conception of identity by developing identity statuses as a methodological device to empirically study identity. A semistructured interview that assesses the crisis and commitment domains of identity

development was used to determine an individual's identity status, which are entitled diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement (Marcia, 1966). Crisis or exploration refers to a period of struggling or active consideration in arriving at important life decisions about goals, values, and beliefs. Commitment involves making a relatively firm choice about identity elements and engaging in significant activity directed toward implementation of that choice. Based on different combinations of these domains (see Figure 1), the adolescent follows a developmental pathway which begins in a state of identity diffusion, progresses toward a foreclosed identity or a period of moratorium, and from the latter, an achieved identity is reached.

	Exploration Present	Exploration Absent
Commitment Present	ACHIEVEMENT	FORECLOSURE
Commitment Absent	MORATORIUM	DIFFUSION

Figure 1. Identity status categories based on the presence or absence of exploration in conjunction with the presence or absence of commitment.

In the diffused identity status, the adolescent has not made a commitment to personal values or goals and has no interest in exploring options or possibilities for establishing these values. In the foreclosed identity, the individual has made a commitment to specific values and goals which is not based on personal exploration, but rather on adoption of the values provided

by parents or other influential persons. The moratorium status is the true identity crisis; no commitment to values or goals has been reached but the individual is actively searching and exploring possibilities (Marcia, 1993). Identity achievement is reached when the adolescent has made a commitment to personal values and goals after having experienced a period of exploration.

Parenting and Identity

Adams et al. (1990) integrated several parenting theories to derive generalizations of parental characteristics that facilitate or impede their adolescent's identity development. The more emotionally facilitative behaviors of parents are associated with warmth, companionship, and acceptance. The more conduct-oriented factors that facilitate identity development involve setting reasonable behavioral standards, independence training, acceptance of others' perspectives, and disciplined compliance to behavioral expectations. Parents who encourage self-expression, the acceptance of unique viewpoints, and respect for others' perspectives positively impact identity exploration and commitment. Emotionally-based parenting practices that inhibit adolescent identity development include hostility, restrictiveness, emotional distance, or perceived rejection. High frequencies of parental binding behaviors, systemic rigidity, or chaos in the family's ability to adjust to the child's growth toward maturity greatly impede the identity processes.

These emotionally-based and conduct-oriented factors that either help or hinder adolescents in their identity crisis are descriptive of the previously mentioned patterns of parenting. Prototypic authoritarian parents are generally described by their "attempts to shape, control, and evaluate behavior and attitudes in accordance with a set standard of conduct" (Baumrind, 1968, p. 261). They value obedience and conformity, and tend to favor punitive and forceful measures of discipline. Authoritarian parents also tend not to encourage independence and their style of parenting restricts the child's autonomy (Baumrind, 1971). Authoritative parents, on the other hand, encourage autonomy but with clear standards of conduct. They are warm and nurturing to their children yet apply firm control in a rational, issue-oriented manner that allows for a verbal give and take (Baumrind, 1968).

Both the authoritative and authoritarian styles of parenting are high on demandingness, which refers to the degree to which the parent expects and demands mature, responsible behavior from the child, but differ on the extent of parental responsiveness, which refers to the degree to which the parent responds to the child's needs in an accepting, supportive manner (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Expanding upon Baumrind's (1971) classifications of parenting patterns, Maccoby and Martin (1983) identified two styles of parenting that are low on demandingness and vary on the extent of parental responsiveness (see Figure 2). A prototypic indulgent parent adopts a permissive style, in which parents are highly involved with their children but place very few controls and are more passive in their limited disciplinary actions. Finally, neglectful parents are also permissive in their demands but are low on the responsiveness dimension. These parents are extremely uninvolved and are indifferent with their children.

	Responsive, Accepting	Unresponsive, Rejecting
Demanding, Controlling	AUTHORITATIVE	AUTHORITARIAN
Undemanding, Uncontrolling	INDULGENT	NEGLECTFUL

Figure 2. Classification of four patterns of parenting along the dimensions of responsiveness and acceptance in conjunction with the dimensions of demandingness and control.

If parenting guides adolescents along a particular trajectory, then a neglectful style of parenting is least likely to assist adolescents in resolving their identity crisis. This claim was indirectly investigated by Steinberg et al. (1991) who found that "compared with their counterparts from nonauthoriative homes, authoritatively reared adolescents earn higher grades in school, are more self-reliant, report less psychological distress, and are less involved in delinquent activity" (p. 28). Conversely, an authoritarian maternal parenting style was associated with an elevated level of conduct problems (Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993). Avoidant parents who have a high conflict level with their adolescent espouse a firm and nonaccepting parenting style that negatively affects identity development (Reis & Youniss, 2004).

Adolescents who have explored and committed to an identity experienced more openness, less problems, and better overall communication with both their parents, as compared to an unachieved identity group (Bhushan & Shirali, 1992). Effective parenting transcends the home environment and allows for achievement in contexts outside of the family, such as in school. Parents have the opportunity to facilitate or impede academic achievement, which is just one aspect of an ideological identity, through their parenting style. The warmth, acceptance, and firmness of authoritative parents have a significant impact on school performance and engagement, such that adolescents from authoritative homes perform better in school and have stronger school engagement than their peers from homes with other parenting styles (Steinberg et al., 1992).

In a presidential address, Steinberg (2001) examined the most important ideas to have emerged from the last 25 years of research on adolescent development in the family context and concluded that adolescents benefit the most from having authoritative parents. Moreover, the positive correlation between authoritative parenting and adolescent adjustment appears to

transcend ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and family structure (Steinberg et al., 1991).

Children's perceptions of mothers' and fathers' parenting behaviors are moderately to highly

correlated (Tein, Roosa, & Michaels, 1994) and children of divorce do not differ significantly

from those from intact families in perceptions of parent behavior (Krakauer, 1992). Ample

evidence has been provided in the literature supporting the claim that authoritative parenting

transcends many boundaries (Steinberg, 2001).

Dimensions of Parenting and Identity Development

Parental authoritativeness is effective in assisting adolescent identity development

because of three prominent factors that comprise this parenting style. The components of

authoritative parenting are warmth, firmness, and psychological autonomy granting (Steinberg,

2001). These dimensions of parenting also correspond with Erikson's first three stages of

psychosocial development. In the infantile stage of Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust, mothers (and

fathers) create a sense of trust in their children through parenting behaviors such as sensitive care

of individual needs (Erikson, 1963). In second stage of Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, toddlers

are exploring their surroundings with an untrained sense of discrimination, as such parental

firmness serves as a protective factor against "meaningless and arbitrary experiences of shame

and of early doubt" (p. 252). The third stage of Initiative vs. Guilt mimics the psychological

autonomy granting component of parenting in that it allows a sense of ambition and purpose to

develop in the individual (Erikson, 1968).

Acceptance vs. Rejection. The positive impact of the warmth dimension of the

authoritative parenting style on identity development has been researched in various parent-

adolescent attachment studies. Schultheiss and Blustein (1994) found parental attachment to be a

significant predictor of identity status for women. Females' attachment to both their parents is

positively correlated with identity commitment (Samuolis, Layburn, & Schiaffino, 2001).

Furthermore, Benson et al. (1992) demonstrated that attachment to mother can be viewed as a protective factor against the failure to make commitments based on their findings that secure maternal attachments predicted higher levels of identity achievement and lower levels of moratorium and diffusion.

Conversely, insecure parent-adolescent relationships are positively correlated with identity diffusion, and negatively related to ideological identity achievement (Frank, Pirsch, & Wright, 1990). Insecure attachments are representative of the negative pole on the parental warmth continuum, which is evident by the association of a poor affectionate maternal relationship and high perceived parental rejection with identity diffusion (Adams et al., 1990). Identity committed adolescents have far greater conceptions of their affective relationships with their parents as compared to uncommitted adolescents (Winmann & Newcombe, 1990). Identity commitment was also found to be associated with adolescents' feelings of being accepted and trusted (Meeus et al., 2002). Paternal relationships that include respect and the sharing of feelings support an ideological identity commitment (Bartle-Haring, 1997).

The aforementioned correlates of commitment are beneficial in establishing an identity, but exploration is also necessary for an adolescent to reach the identity achievement status. Connectedness in family interactions offers a context in which adolescents may consider and refine options for their identity (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985). Sensitivity, respect, openness, and responsiveness to others' views are related to connectedness, and adolescents who perceive their parents to be supportive and accepting of them are more open to exploring and experimenting with identity options (O'Connor, 1995). The parental facilitation of adolescent identity exploration was also indirectly linked by the association of higher scores on problem-focused

coping and perceived parental warmth and nurturance (McIntyre & Dusek, 1995). Moreover, school exploration was found to be positively correlated with parental trust and paternal communication (Meeus et al., 2002).

As previously discussed, identity achievement involves an active period of exploration followed by a relatively firm commitment to specific goals, values, and beliefs. Among other factors associated with parental acceptance, the support from mothers and fathers seems to greatly assist adolescents in their identity formation process. Sartor and Youniss (2002) studied the role of parental support and monitoring in the development of identity and found that identity achievement was significantly and positively correlated with parental support across time. Similar findings suggest that parental emotional support, approval, and closeness are associated with greater identity achievement and with less diffusion among males (Lucas, 1997; O'Connor, 1995). Parental closeness and support has also been positively linked with ideological identity achievement, and negatively correlated with interpersonal identity diffusion (Frank et al., 1990). Furthermore, high perceived companionship, physical affection, and support from parents are associated with moratorium and identity achievement among adolescents (Adams et al., 1990).

Firm vs. Lax Control. In conjunction with parental acceptance, firm control is another factor that positively influences the identity formation process. "Without a close mother-adolescent relationship built on acceptance and trust, attempts to maintain firm control over an adolescent may result in rebellion and other acting-out difficulties" (Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993, p. 220). Firmness in parenting is most important as a deterrent against problem behavior (Steinberg, 2001), but in tandem with parental acceptance, these factors are important correlates of late adolescent psychosocial adjustment (Jones, Forehand, & Beach, 2000). Firm control partially encourages social responsibility, self-control, independence, and self-esteem (Peterson

& Leigh, 1990), which in turn support the active exploration of identity alternatives and confidence needed to make a commitment.

Psychological Autonomy vs. Psychological Control. Exploration and commitment are the defining factors of identity achievement, which is also facilitated by a third dimension of authoritative parenting. This factor of psychological autonomy represents the degree to which parents attempt to control their child through psychological pressure techniques (Schludermann & Schludermann, 1970). On the positive end of the continuum, psychological autonomy granting functions much like warmth in that it provides a general protective factor (Steinberg, 2001). Mothers' comfort in providing a secure base from which their adolescent can explore supports adolescent identity achievement (Bartle-Haring et al., 2002). However, the influence of psychological separation is of far greater importance than parental attachment, or secure base behavior, in the identity formation process of men (Schultheiss & Blustein, 1994).

Moreover, in their study of the predictability of family relationship factors on the identity formation process, Schultheiss and Blustein (1994) found that psychological separation was significantly associated with identity status. Parents' feelings about separation from their adolescent children have an influence on the adolescent's development, such that parental separation anxiety has an impact on adolescent identity development (Bartle-Haring et al., 2002). Similar findings by Grotevant and Cooper (1985) suggest that the breadth and depth of identity exploration is associated with parental separateness and individuation. Furthermore, fathers are reportedly more encouraging of independence than mothers (Guerra & Braungart-Rieker, 1999) but mother's encouragement of independence is associated with achievement and moratorium (Adams et al., 1990), which suggests that the culmination of both parents psychological autonomy granting is related to identity exploration and commitment.

Conversely, parental anxiety about distancing seems to have a negative effect on identity commitment since Bartle-Haring et al. (2002) found a significant correlation with father anxiety and moratorium, in addition to both parents' anxiety being related to diffusion. Higher foreclosure scores among females are also related to increased anxiety in fathers, although the opposite appears to be the case among males. This separation anxiety could lead to binding or constraining parent-adolescent interactions which inhibit ego identity development by distracting, withholding information, and showing indifference. On the other hand, parents that encourage the expression of independent thoughts and perceptions enhance ego identity development through explaining, focusing on another person's perspective, problem solving, stimulating curiosity, and using affective expressions of acceptance and empathy (Peterson & Leigh, 1990).

Identity achievement does not just occur over time (Sartor & Youniss, 2002); as such, emancipation is an important developmental issue in the parent-adolescent relationship (Baumrind, 1991). Late adolescence for more and more of today's youth involves going away to college after graduating from high school, which stimulates the process of separating from the family, both physically and emotionally. Through their experiences in the college environment, adolescents explore their sense of self and form opinions and ideas separate from those of their parents (Guerra & Braungart-Rieker, 1999). Although the parenting dimension of psychological autonomy vs. control is not used as often as acceptance vs. rejection and firm vs. lax control (Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993), a culmination of these three factors have an impact on the identity development of adolescents.

Research Questions

The present study examines the dimensions of maternal and paternal parenting behaviors that influence the identity formation process in late adolescence. The relationship between identity exploration and the parenting dimensions of acceptance vs. rejection and psychological autonomy vs. control is examined in addition to the association between identity commitment and firm vs. lax control. Figure 3 depicts the hypotheses tested in relation to the dimensions of parenting and the identity formation process as defined by the four identity statuses. Parental acceptance and psychological autonomy is expected to be related to identity achievement and moratorium. Parental rejection and psychological control is expected to be associated with identity foreclosure and diffusion. A predicted relationship between firm control and the committed identity statuses, achievement and foreclosure, is explored; conversely, a predicted correlation between lax control and the uncommitted identity statuses, moratorium and diffusion, is evaluated.

	Acceptance Psyc Autonomy	Rejection Psyc Control
Firm Control	ACHIEVEMENT	FORECLOSURE
Lax Control	MORATORIUM	DIFFUSION

Figure 3. Hypothetical relationships between dimensions of parenting and identity statuses.

Method

Participants

The participants ($N = 1134$) were undergraduate students from a large southeastern university. The sample of late adolescents ranged in age from 18 to 25, with a median of 19 years and 8 months. A majority of the participants were female (74.9%) and Caucasian (83.5%), and a diversity of college majors were represented along with a wide distribution of parents' total household income that was skewed towards the middle- to upper-class (see Table 1).

Procedures

Students enrolled in an introductory human development course completed a series of self-report measures as an optional assignment, each of which were part of a larger study on the development of the self-system among university undergraduates. The questionnaires pertained to self-perceptions, playfulness, temperament, identity, and perceptions of parenting, and were administered immediately preceding class instruction on each topic. Participants were given the option to exclude their results from the research, and an alternate assignment was available for those not interested in completing the questionnaires (< 1%).

As described in Rogers, Fox, Harrison, and Ross (1999), data were collected during the academic year of 1993-94 ($n = 915$) and in the fall semester of 1998 ($n = 219$). The first wave of participants received a printed copy of the questionnaires and marked their responses on an optical scanning form, which was later converted to computer files for analysis. Surveys in the second wave of data collection were administered via an interactive computer program so that students completed and submitted their responses electronically. The software scored the data and immediately displayed the results to the participants along with explanations and information about resources for self-help.

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Measures

  Parenting. Late adolescents' perceptions of parenting behaviors were assessed with a shortened version of the Children's Reports of Parental Behavior Inventory (CRPBI-30; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1988). The original instrument was exceedingly lengthy with 260 items for each parent, but orthogonal rotations yielded only three factors (Schaefer, 1965a). The first factor was labeled Acceptance versus Rejection based on the association of highest negative loadings with the perceptions of a detached parent. The second dimension was labeled Psychological Autonomy versus Psychological Control since the "defining scales describe covert, psychological methods of controlling the child's activities and behaviors that would not permit the child to develop as an individual apart from the parent" (Schaefer, 1965b, p. 555). The third factor deals with the rules, regulations, and limits placed on the child, and was labeled Firm Control versus Lax Control.

  These factors have been retained through various modifications of the original instrument to reduce the number of items and improve the cross-national validity and generalizability with culturally diverse adolescents (Renson, Schaefer, & Levy, 1968; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1971, 1983). The CRPBI-30 (Schludermann & Schludermann, 1988) is a concise version of the original measure and is utilized in the present study to assess the dimensions of maternal and paternal parenting. Respondents answered 30 identical questions for each parent on a five point Likert-type scale asking whether their parents' behavior is "like" to "not like" the behavior described in the item. Means and standard deviations for the subscales of the parenting measure are reported in Table 2. For this sample, the internal consistencies for the three domains of acceptance vs. rejection, psychological autonomy vs. psychological control, and firm control

vs. lax control are .92, .86, and .85 for mother, respectively, and .94, .86, and .86 for father, respectively.

   Identity. The final version of the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOMEIS-2; Bennion & Adams, 1986) was used to assess the participants' current identity status as achieved, moratorium, foreclosed, or diffused. This self-report measure is comprised of 64 items that are designed according to the ideological or interpersonal domain area, and identity status. The ideological domain measures identity processes in areas such as occupation, religion, politics, and life-style. The interpersonal domain assesses identity in areas such as friendship, dating, sexual roles, and recreation. Each of these dimensions is tapped by 32 items with eight items per identity status. Respondents indicate the degree to which each item reflects their own thoughts and feelings on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

   Bennion and Adams (1986) reported predictive, construct, and concurrent validity estimates of the EOMEIS-2 from their pilot studies, and extensive reviews have supported the discriminant, convergent, concurrent, and factorial validity of this measure (e.g., Cramer, 2000). Descriptive statistics for the identity subscales of this sample are reported in Table 3. However, the ideological and interpersonal domains are significantly correlated (see Table 4). Since the diagonal in the matrix shows the strongest correlations as compared to the off-diagonals, the two dimensions of identity were combined for analyses in this study. The means and standard deviations for the combined ideological and interpersonal domains of identity in this sample are reported in Table 5. The internal consistencies of the achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion scales are .75, .76, .87, and .72, respectively.

Results

Correlational Analyses

Correlations among the parenting dimensions and identity statuses were computed to determine the direction and magnitude of the relationships between acceptance vs. rejection, firm control vs. lax control, and psychological autonomy vs. psychological control for each parent separately and identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion.

As indicated in Table 6, maternal acceptance was the only dimension of parenting significantly correlated with identity achievement. Contrary to expectations, psychological control of both parents and maternal rejection were significantly associated with moratorium. Another unpredicted finding was the correlation with acceptance from both parents and foreclosure. These results suggest that the parenting dimensions of acceptance vs. rejection and psychological autonomy vs. control were not related to the exploration domain of identity as expected. Similarly, the association between identity commitment and firm vs. lax control was not supported by the findings. The correlations between all the parenting behaviors and identity diffusion, however, were significant and in the expected direction. These findings indicate that parental rejection, lax control, and psychological control are associated with diffusion.

Regression Analyses

Multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to clarify the relationships between the dimensions of parenting and identity statuses. Following with the previously discussed Eriksonian perspective pertaining to the resemblance of the parenting dimensions and the first three stages of psychosocial development, acceptance vs. rejection was entered in the first block, firm control vs. lax control in the second, and psychological autonomy vs. psychological control

was entered in the third block of the regression analyses for each identity status to determine the individual and combined significance of the parenting behaviors.

The strength and direction of the standardized coefficients were similar to the results of the correlational analyses for identity achievement that suggest an association with maternal acceptance (see Table 7). Models 1 and 2 of the regressions for predicting moratorium replicated the correlations with the behaviors of both parents, but maternal rejection was no longer significant and lax control became significant for mother and for father with the addition of psychological autonomy in the third model (see Table 8). These results imply a predictive relationship between identity moratorium and both parents lax control and psychological control. A similar phenomenon occurred with the regression for foreclosure (see Table 9); the strength of the relationship with psychological control increased as compared to the correlational analyses, and beta was significant in Model 3. These findings suggest that maternal and paternal acceptance and psychological control are associated with identity foreclosure.

The direction and magnitude of the regression coefficients replicated the correlations between the parenting dimensions and identity diffusion, except for paternal rejection which was no longer significant with the addition of psychological autonomy in the third model (see Table 10). These results indicate that maternal rejection and both parents lax control and psychological control are related to identity diffusion. Moreover, an underlying interaction seems to be occurring between psychological autonomy vs. psychological control and the other two parenting dimensions since the significance of the regression coefficients in the third model does not correspond with the magnitude of the correlations for acceptance vs. rejection and firm control vs. lax control in the cases of moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion.

Interaction Tests

An additional set of multiple regression analyses were conducted to identify any interaction effects between the parenting dimensions on each of the identity statuses. The first series of regressions tested the interaction between psychological autonomy vs. control and firm control vs. lax control, the second set examined the combined influences of acceptance vs. rejection and psychological autonomy vs. control, and the third run of regressions investigated the interaction between acceptance vs. rejection and firm control vs. lax control. In all three sets of multiple regression analyses, the two parenting dimensions were entered in the first block and the interaction term was entered in the second block for mother and father separately on each identity status.

As indicated in Table 11, the interactions tested in all three regressions were not significant for identity achievement. Contrary to expectations, these results and the lack of significant findings in the previous analyses suggest that these dimensions of parenting have little to no effect on identity achievement of the late adolescents in this sample. A summary of the multiple regression analyses for moratorium in Table 12 reveal a significant interaction between firm control vs. lax control and psychological autonomy vs. psychological control for both parents, which indicates that psychological control in conjunction with lax control have a positive association with moratorium. These findings suggest that firm control vs. lax control could be a suppressor variable in relation to moratorium since the correlation was zero for mother and essentially zero for father but the regression coefficients for both parents were significant when entered into a multiple regression analysis with the other dimensions of parenting.

Interestingly, all three combinations of the maternal and paternal parenting behaviors had significant interactions to predict identity foreclosure (see Table 13). These findings, in conjunction with the results of the preceding analyses, reveal that the combined and individual dimensions of parenting have an influence on foreclosure for this sample of adolescents. The summary of the multiple regression analyses in Table 14 reveals a significant interaction between acceptance vs. rejection and psychological autonomy vs. psychological control for both parents on identity diffusion. This interaction supported the hypothesis that parental rejection and psychological control are associated with diffusion.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of parenting behaviors on the identity formation process in late adolescence. The results only confirmed the predicted relationships between the dimensions of parenting and identity diffusion. Although the hypotheses were largely unsupported, exploratory analyses revealed interesting findings that suggest unanticipated connections between parental behaviors and the identity developmental statuses.

Achievement

Identity achievement was weakly correlated with maternal acceptance and unrelated to firm vs. lax control and psychological autonomy vs. control for both parents. This lack of significant results support Waterman's (1993) claim that it cannot be concluded that the parenting variables studied are actually influences on identity development for methodological and conceptual reasons. "Self-report measures are subject to errors of memory, defensive distortion, and conscious impression management" (p. 63). Moreover, ambivalence and conflict found in the family backgrounds of identity achieved late adolescents may have been a response to a stressful exploration process that involved extreme shifts in behavior.

Moratorium

The aforementioned scenario suggests that identity moratorium could become an anxious status if adolescents are continually searching for identity alternatives but fail to commit. Moratoriums have been highest in reported anxiety among the statuses because they are in a stressful, in-crisis state (Marcia, 1993). The results of this study indicate that parents can facilitate this developmental process of moratorium with psychological autonomy granting and firm control. The combination of these two parenting behaviors was also found to be a more

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powerful buffer against a continuous moratorium than either dimension by itself. Therefore, parents who emphasize autonomy and responsibility with firm expectations of behavior greatly assist their adolescent in this identity formation process.

Foreclosure

Identity foreclosed adolescents have committed to an identity, but without exploration. Although the link was not hypothesized, it is not surprising that parental acceptance and psychological control were associated with foreclosure. The interaction between these two dimensions resulted in a more powerful predictor of foreclosure than either parenting behavior independently. This combination of factors affirms the notion that parents who are very accepting but psychologically control their children through guilt and hostility perpetuate an external locus of control such that these adolescents do not claim responsibility for who they are or want to be (Baumrind, 1991).

Diffusion

Concurrent with the hypothesis and the Eriksonian perspective previously discussed, parental rejection, lax control, and psychological control were all found to be associated with identity diffusion. The results are suggestive for parenting intervention since each of the parental behaviors individually and all of the combined effects were significant, indicating that multiple ways exist for parents to buffer adolescents from diffusion. Authoritative parents who are warm and affirming, set standards for future conduct, and value autonomous self-will (Baumrind, 1968) can protect against identity diffusion with any one or all of these defining characteristics.

Identity Development in Late Adolescence

College environments provide late adolescents with a diversity of experiences that can stimulate consideration of personal goals, values, and beliefs and present alternative resolutions

to identity issues (Waterman, 1993). However, a dearth of information exists pertaining to adolescents who do not pursue higher education and the effects of parenting on their identity development. Future research is recommended to assess the identity formation process of late adolescents outside of academia. Subsequent studies with an early or middle adolescence sample are also suggested to ascertain if more robust correlations exist between the dimensions of parenting and identity development.

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Table 1

Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	*N*	%
Gender		
Male	208	25.1
Female	622	74.9
Age		
18-19	243	29.7
19-20	231	28.3
20-21	145	17.7
21-22	116	14.2
22+	82	10.0
Ethnicity		
African American	61	7.3
Asian	44	5.3
Caucasian	699	83.5
Other	33	3.9
College Major		
Business	193	23.1
Education	200	23.9
Engineering	37	4.4
Liberal Arts/Humanities	95	11.4
Physical Sciences	52	6.2
Social Sciences	181	21.6
Undecided	79	9.4
Parent's Income		
< $20,000	49	5.9
$21,000 - $40,000	110	13.3
$41,000 - $60,000	178	21.6
$61,000 - $80,000	191	23.2
$81,000 - $100,000	139	16.9
> $100,000	157	19.1

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Coefficients for Dimensions of Parenting Measure

Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	*n*	α
Mother				
Acceptance	42.12	8.16	1010	.92
Firm Control	31.88	8.00	1005	.85
Psyc Autonomy	36.78	8.41	1010	.86
Father				
Acceptance	37.11	10.19	917	.94
Firm Control	33.65	8.48	885	.86
Psyc Autonomy	37.51	8.34	911	.86

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Coefficients for Subscales of Identity Measure

Subscales	Mean	Standard Deviation	*n*	α
Ideological				
Achievement	33.74	5.65	1021	.62
Moratorium	25.01	6.32	1024	.67
Foreclosure	20.21	6.57	1024	.75
Diffusion	22.34	6.09	1024	.61
Interpersonal				
Achievement	34.03	5.81	1023	.68
Moratorium	25.28	5.71	1023	.62
Foreclosure	17.31	6.37	1021	.81
Diffusion	19.12	5.78	1019	.65

Table 4

Correlations Among Domains of Identity Measure

Ideological	Interpersonal			
	Achievement	Moratorium	Diffusion	Foreclosure
Achievement	.48**	-.07*	-.19**	-.04
Moratorium	-.19**	.53**	.19**	-.00
Diffusion	-.21**	.23**	.37**	.10**
Foreclosure	.07*	.11**	.24**	.70**

p < .05. **p* < .01.

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Coefficients for Scales of Identity Measure with Combined Domains

Scales	Mean	Standard Deviation	n	α
Achievement	67.76	9.81	1018	.75
Moratorium	50.29	10.52	1020	.76
Foreclosure	37.50	11.94	1019	.87
Diffusion	41.46	9.84	1017	.72

Table 6

Correlations Among Parenting Dimensions and Identity Statuses

Parenting	Identity			
	Achievement	Moratorium	Foreclosure	Diffusion
Mother				
Acceptance	.08*	-.13**	.12**	-.15**
Firm Control	.02	.00	.02	-.09**
Psyc Autonomy	.02	-.19**	-.05	-.13**
Father				
Acceptance	.03	-.03	.18**	-.08*
Firm Control	-.03	-.04	-.03	-.10**
Psyc Autonomy	.04	-.13**	-.02	-.09*

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 7

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Predicting Identity Achievement

Parenting Behaviors	Achievement		
Mother	β	R^2	*F*
Model 1		.007	6.13*
Acceptance	.08*		
Model 2		.008	3.47*
Acceptance	.09**		
Firm Control	.03		
Model 3		.008	2.45
Acceptance	.10*		
Firm Control	.02		
Psyc Autonomy	-.03		
Father	β	R^2	*F*
Model 1		.002	1.45
Acceptance	.04		
Model 2		.002	.78
Acceptance	.04		
Firm Control	-.01		
Model 3		.003	.73
Acceptance	.03		
Firm Control	.00		
Psyc Autonomy	.03		

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 8

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Predicting Identity Moratorium

Parenting Behaviors		Moratorium	
Mother	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.015	13.61***
Acceptance	-.12***		
Model 2		.015	7.18**
Acceptance	-.13***		
Firm Control	-.03		
Model 3		.039	12.24***
Acceptance	-.04		
Firm Control	-.08*		
Psyc Autonomy	-.19***		
Father	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.000	.23
Acceptance	-.02		
Model 2		.003	1.13
Acceptance	-.03		
Firm Control	-.05		
Model 3		.025	6.96***
Acceptance	.04		
Firm Control	-.11**		
Psyc Autonomy	-.18***		

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 9

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Predicting Identity Foreclosure

Parenting Behaviors		Foreclosure	
Mother	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.014	13.18***
Acceptance	.12***		
Model 2		.017	7.82***
Acceptance	.13***		
Firm Control	.05		
Model 3		.034	10.80***
Acceptance	.21***		
Firm Control	.01		
Psyc Autonomy	-.16***		
Father	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.041	34.38***
Acceptance	.20***		
Model 2		.041	17.41***
Acceptance	.21***		
Firm Control	.02		
Model 3		.056	15.80***
Acceptance	.27***		
Firm Control	-.02		
Psyc Autonomy	-.14**		

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 10

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Predicting Identity Diffusion

Parenting Behaviors	Diffusion		
Mother	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.024	22.47***
Acceptance	-.16***		
Model 2		.039	18.62***
Acceptance	-.18***		
Firm Control	-.13***		
Model 3		.048	15.36***
Acceptance	-.13**		
Firm Control	-.16***		
Psyc Autonomy	-.12**		
Father	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.007	5.49*
Acceptance	-.08*		
Model 2		.021	8.70***
Acceptance	-.12**		
Firm Control	-.13**		
Model 3		.032	8.82***
Acceptance	-.07		
Firm Control	-.16***		
Psyc Autonomy	-.13**		

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 11

Summary of Regression Analyses for Interactions of Parenting Dimensions on Identity Achievement

Parenting Dimensions				Achievement		
		Mother			*Father*	
Interaction 1	β	R^2	F	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.001	.53		.002	.79
Firm Control	.03			-.01		
Psyc Autonomy	.03			.04		
Model 2		.002	.68		.002	.55
Firm Control	.17			-.05		
Psyc Autonomy	.16			.00		
Firm Control x Psyc Autonomy	-.15			.04		
		Mother			*Father*	
Interaction 2	β	R^2	F	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.007	3.16*		.002	.96
Acceptance	.10*			.02		
Psyc Autonomy	-.04			.04		
Model 2		.010	3.04*		.004	.99
Acceptance	-.09			-.12		
Psyc Autonomy	-.29			-.07		
Acceptance x Psyc Autonomy	.39			.22		
		Mother			*Father*	
Interaction 3	β	R^2	F	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.007	3.49*		.002	.77
Acceptance	.09**			.04		
Firm Control	.03			-.01		
Model 2		.008	2.48		.002	.58
Acceptance	.18			.11		
Firm Control	.14			.04		
Acceptance x Firm Control	-.12			-.08		

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 12

Summary of Regression Analyses for Interactions of Parenting Dimensions on Identity Moratorium

Parenting Dimensions		Moratorium					
		Mother				*Father*	
Interaction 1	β	R^2	F		β	R^2	F
Model 1		.037	17.70***			.025	10.31***
Firm Control	-.08*				-.11**		
Psyc Autonomy	-.21***				-.17***		
Model 2		.037	11.82***			.030	8.42***
Firm Control	-.12				-.43**		
Psyc Autonomy	-.25				-.47**		
Firm Control x	.04				.35*		
Psyc Autonomy							
		Mother				*Father*	
Interaction 2	β	R^2	F		β	R^2	F
Model 1		.036	17.39***			.016	6.81**
Acceptance	-.04				.04		
Psyc Autonomy	-.16***				-.14***		
Model 2		.036	11.61***			.018	5.09**
Acceptance	-.08				.20		
Psyc Autonomy	-.21				.00		
Acceptance x	.07				-.27		
Psyc Autonomy							
		Mother				*Father*	
Interaction 3	β	R^2	F		β	R^2	F
Model 1		.016	7.42**			.003	1.16
Acceptance	-.13***				-.03		
Firm Control	-.03				-.05		
Model 2		.016	5.02**			.003	.92
Acceptance	-.07				.06		
Firm Control	.04				.03		
Acceptance x	-.08				-.11		
Firm Control							

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 13

Summary of Regression Analyses for Interactions of Parenting Dimensions on Identity Foreclosure

Parenting Dimensions		Foreclosure				
		Mother			*Father*	
Interaction 1	β	R^2	F	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.003	1.46		.001	.57
Firm Control	.00			-.04		
Psyc Autonomy	-.06			-.03		
Model 2		.013	4.05**		.048	13.66***
Firm Control	-.42**			-.99***		
Psyc Autonomy	-.46**			-.91***		
Firm Control x Psyc Autonomy	.47**			1.02***		
		Mother			*Father*	
Interaction 2	β	R^2	F	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.034	16.22***		.050	21.93***
Acceptance	.21***			.25***		
Psyc Autonomy	-.16***			-.14***		
Model 2		.044	14.04***		.082	25.04***
Acceptance	.55***			.95***		
Psyc Autonomy	.29			.42***		
Acceptance x Psyc Autonomy	-.71**			-1.09***		
		Mother			*Father*	
Interaction 3	β	R^2	F	β	R^2	F
Model 1		.016	7.69***		.040	17.01***
Acceptance	.13***			.21***		
Firm Control	.05			.02		
Model 2		.021	6.67***		.048	13.66***
Acceptance	-.14			-.16		
Firm Control	-.27			-.29*		
Acceptance x Firm Control	.38*			.42*		

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 14

Summary of Regression Analyses for Interactions of Parenting Dimensions on Identity Diffusion

Parenting Dimensions				Diffusion		
		Mother			*Father*	
Interaction 1	β	R^2	*F*	β	R^2	*F*
Model 1		.036	17.38***		.026	11.03***
Firm Control	-.16***			-.15***		
Psyc Autonomy	-.18***			-.15***		
Model 2		.037	11.62***		.030	8.36***
Firm Control	-.11			-.42**		
Psyc Autonomy	-.14			-.39**		
Firm Control x Psyc Autonomy	-.06			.28		
		Mother			*Father*	
Interaction 2	β	R^2	*F*	β	R^2	*F*
Model 1		.027	12.76***		.011	4.48*
Acceptance	-.13**			-.05		
Psyc Autonomy	-.06			-.07		
Model 2		.039	12.48		.016	4.40**
Acceptance	.25*			.23		
Psyc Autonomy	.45**			.15		
Acceptance x Psyc Autonomy	-.79**			-.43*		
		Mother			*Father*	
Interaction 3	β	R^2	*F*	β	R^2	*F*
Model 1		.038	18.22***		.023	9.44***
Acceptance	-.18***			-.12**		
Firm Control	-.13***			-.13***		
Model 2		.041	13.09***		.023	6.30***
Acceptance	-.40**			-.15		
Firm Control	-.38*			-.15		
Acceptance x Firm Control	.29			.03		

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Appendix A

Correlations Across Parenting Measure

Dimensions	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mother						
1. Acceptance	-	-.23**	.53**	.30**	.00	.22**
2. Firm Control		-	-.38**	-.02	.43**	-.09**
3. Psyc Autonomy			-	.14**	-.10**	.48**
Father						
4. Acceptance				-	-.27**	.47**
5. Firm Control					-	-.41**
6. Psyc Autonomy						-

p < .05. **p* < .01.

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Education

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Research Experience

<u>Virginia Tech</u>: Blacksburg, VA
August 2002 to March 2004
Research Site Coordinator:
- Coordinated all aspects and stages of a long term research project entitled Guide to Health (GTH) at the largest of fifteen research sites.
- Recruited 150 participants and implemented the GTH program by interfacing with key leaders at the research site and publicizing the project with newsletter and bulletin announcements.
- Organized and executed the transfer of data from the research site to the GTH office in addition to managing up to ten student research assistants.

<u>University of Georgia</u>: Athens, GA
January 2000 to May 2000
Research Assistant:
- Partial authorship on the poster presentation for a study pertaining to the human-canine pet attachment which was based on Ainsworth's classic attachment study.
- Recruited and made appointments for participants in the laboratory and home trials, developed a database to track results, and performed ongoing information and material database updates.
- Evaluated participant questionnaires for categorization and contributed in the development of the ethogram to code behaviors observed on taped trials.
- Contributed in weekly sessions with various veterinary doctors and faculty for doctoral dissertation and master's thesis development, and discussion of clinical cases.

Publications

Benson, M. J., McWey, L. M., & Romano, J. J. (2004). *Parental attachment and peer interactions in adolescence: A meta-analysis.* Manuscript in preparation.

Education Systems Corporation: Salem, VA
October 2001 to August 2002
Academic Records & State/Institutional Aid Manager:
❑ Managed and implemented the evaluation process for student graduation requests from fifteen National College of Business & Technology campuses spanning three states.
❑ Interfaced with campus directors and the college president to resolve any enrollment or eligibility issues to ensure satisfactory completion of a program.
❑ Authorized and executed official transcripts to graduates and provided exit packets for those who received any financial aid including Subsidized, Unsubsidized, or Perkins loans.
❑ Developed and implemented new policies and procedures to ensure the efficient completion of various academic processes.
❑ Evaluated student eligibility for CAP, TSAA, and various other state grants and awarded funds per state guidelines in addition to approving PELL and SEOG grants.

Nationwide: Columbus, OH
July 2000 to July 2001 *(First Three Months Employed as a Temporary Worker)*
Senior Administrative Assistant:
❑ Managed and implemented the high turnaround process by which Nationwide multi-million and multi-billion dollar funding agreements are finalized.
❑ Interfaced with executive level management including the President and CEO of Nationwide Financial, Head Counsel and Senior Vice Presidents in both domestic and international locations to obtain agreement approval.
❑ Applied managerial, organizational, interpersonal, and communications skills to successfully coordinate executive level meetings, conferences, and events involving multi-functional divisions within Nationwide and client organizations.
❑ Skillfully made domestic and international travel arrangements at low fares with workable itineraries and processed expense reports for immediate reimbursement upon return.

Other Pertinent Qualities

❑ Excellent interpersonal and communication skills (both verbal and written).
❑ Strong organizational and analytical skills, as well as strong decision-making and leadership abilities.
❑ Demonstrated ability to lead multiple teams/work centers and simultaneously complete required projects and/or tasks.
❑ Adept at learning and assimilating diverse computer programs.
❑ Computer skills include proficiency with Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Internet, E-mail, and Lotus Notes.

References Available Upon Request