INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS ON THE PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENTS: AN ISLAMIC POINT OF VIEW

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is that stage of life where human being starts interacting and gets influenced by a number of aspects. Initially, after getting birth, a child is influenced by the family. Then gradually, the child gets introduced with peers, friends, and family members, finally he/she is influenced by the society. He/she gets a particular family, culture, race, religion and region. Whatever the children get influenced with, its effects will remain with them throughout their life. It may include both the positive and negative influences. For instance, whether the child is extroverted or introverted, whether they become energetic or average, whether they become sharp or normal, it all depends on the influences they get in their surroundings. Such influences include physical, cognitive, social and personality development. The purpose of this study was to study the influence of socio-cultural factors on the personality development of adolescents.

In this study the researcher selected the private and public schools of district central Karachi as universe. The data from adolescents, their mothers and their teachers was collected through a survey questionnaire.

KEY WORDS: influence, adolescents, adolescence, personality development

INTRODUCTION:

Child development refers to the biological, psychological and emotional changes which occur in human beings between birth and the end of adolescence, as the individual progresses from dependency to increasing autonomy. It is a continuous process with a predictable sequence yet having a unique course for every child. It does not progress at the same rate and each stage is affected by the preceding types of development.

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For better child development, there are certain things that are important to consider such as health and wellbeing, families and parenting, education, and socio-cultural factors. Around the world, the health and wellbeing of children is jeopardized by many factors including poverty, AIDS, starvation, poor healthcare, inadequate nutrition and exercise, alcohol and drug abuse, and sexual abuse. An ancient view is that, the ultimate responsibility of both children's health and wellbeing rests in our own hands. Parents, teachers, nurses, physicians, and other adults can serve as models of healthy habits for children, communicate strategies for health and wellbeing to children, and communicate whether children follow these strategies.

Parenting is also an important element in child development. Parents want their children to grow into healthy, happy and socially mature individuals but they often are not sure how to help their children reach this goal. Understanding how children develop can help one become a better parent. Many parents learn parenting methods from their own parents. Unfortunately, when parenting practices are passed from one generation to the next, both desirable and undesirable ones are usually perpetuated. Good parenting takes time. It means committing oneself to day after day, month after month, year after year to providing one's children with a warm, supportive, safe and stimulating environment that will make them feel secure and allow them to reach their full potentials. Like parenting, education is an important dimension of a child life. There is a widespread agreement that something needs to be done to improve the education of children.

Schools and families are just two of the important contexts of development. A context is a setting, and every child's development occurs in numerous contexts including homes, schools, peer groups, religious institutes, neighborhood, communities, cities, and countries. Each of these settings is influenced by historical, social and economic factors. Each may reflect the influence of a culture, ethnicity and socio-economic status. Culture encompasses the behavior patterns, beliefs, and all other products of a particular group of people that are passed from one generation to the next. Ethnicity refers to the characteristics that are rooted in the cultural heritage including nationality, race, religion and language. And socio-economic status refers to the groupings of people with similar occupational, educational, and economic characteristics.1

1There are various aspects of child development, including physical development, cognitive development, and social and emotional development. Physical growth in stature and weight occurs over the 15–20 years following birth, as the individual changes from the average weight of 3.5 kg and length of 50 cm at full term birth to full adult size. As stature and weight increase, the individual's proportions also change, from the relatively large head and small torso

and limbs of the neonate, to the adult's relatively small head and long torso and limbs. The child's pattern of growth is in a head-to-toe direction, or cephalocaudal, and in an inward to outward pattern (center of the body to the peripheral) called proximodistal.2 Cognitive Development is primarily concerned with ways in which infants and children acquire, develop, and use internal mental capabilities such as problem solving, memory and language. The capacity to learn, remember, and symbolize information, and to solve problems, exists at a simple level in young infants, who can perform cognitive tasks such as discriminating animating and in animating beings or recognizing small numbers of objects. During childhood, learning and information-processing increase in speed, memory becomes increasingly longer, and symbol use and the capacity for abstraction develop until a near-adult level is reached by adolescence.

And when it comes to socio-emotional development, it has been noted that Newborn infants do not seem to experience fear or have preferences for contact with any specific people. In the first few months they only experience happiness, sadness, and anger. A baby's first smile usually occurs between 6 and 10 weeks. It is called a 'social smile' because it usually occurs during social interactions. By about 8–12 months, they go through a fairly rapid change and become fearful of perceived threats; they also begin to prefer familiar people and show anxiety and distress when separated from them or approached by strangers. Separation anxiety is a typical stage of development to an extent. Kicking, screaming, and throwing are temper tantrums that are perfectly typical symptoms of separation anxiety. Depending on the level of intensity, one may determine whether or not a child has separation anxiety disorder. This is when a child constantly refuses to separate from the parent, but in an intense manner. This can be given special treatment but the parent usually cannot do anything about the situation. The capacity for empathy and the understanding of social rules begin in the preschool period and continue to develop into adulthood. Middle childhood is characterized by friendships with age-mates, and adolescence is characterized by emotions connected with sexuality and the beginnings of romantic love. Anger seems most intense during the toddler and early preschool period and during adolescence.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:

Development does not end with childhood. It is a continuous process extending from birth through adolescence and adulthood to old age. After going through the period of childhood, the person enters adolescence.3 Adolescence is a transitional period in the human life span, linking childhood and adulthood.4The number of adolescents in the world is increasing. In 2009, the United

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Nation estimated that there were 1.2 billion adolescents in the world, comprising 18 per cent of the world's population (Unicef, 2011). Adolescents are a significant percentage of the world's population and a population with whom social worker often engage.5

Adolescence is an important period in the growth and development of an individual. This transient, stormy period of growth is vital in transforming a child into an adult. Ironically, in our society, this phase of life is often pathetically deal with both by parents and other adults, for example the extended family and teachers.6 Adolescent stage starts when the child enters his teenage years. This is the stage when children attain puberty and are full of energy. Gender-related anxiety, feelings of infatuation and a concern for looking good are the typical characteristics of adolescents.

The adolescent stage forms a bridge between childhood and the adult age. A person at this stage tends to be partly a child and partly a grown-up. Parents and teachers at this stage tend to slacken their control on the adolescents. They start telling them that they are now adults and should behave as such. That induces the 'I know-it-all' kind of feelings amongst many adolescents. Although, such feelings are premature and misconceived, they have a very powerful effect on the mind and actions of adolescents. So much so, that many turn rebellious in their thoughts and conduct.7

Adolescence is not a time of rebellion, crisis, pathology and deviance. A far more accurate vision of adolescence is of a time of evaluation, decision making, commitment, and carving out a place in the world. Most of the problems of today's youth are not with the youth themselves. What adolescents need is access to a range of legitimate opportunities and long term support from adults who care deeply about them.8

DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENCE:

The teenage years to their journey to adulthood have to go many physical and psychological changes. The era of adolescence go through the emotional and cognitive growth to sexual social awareness. These stages of development create challenges for both children and parents e many challenges.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:

During early adolescence form 11 to 13 years of age children develop body hairs, increased perspiration and oil production on the skin, often resulting in acne. Boys will begin rapid

growth, in height and weight. Show maturation of sexual organs. And their voice begins to deepen. In early adolescences most girls begin to develop wider hips and begin menstruation, in middle adolescent years, between 14 to 15 year of age, growth will typically slow for girls I they will become fully develop in the letter adolescent years of 19 to 21. Boys will continue to grow in height and weight through late adolescences, up until their early 20s, in some cases.9

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT:

According to the United States department of health and human services, during the early adolescent years children develop a growing capacity for abstract thought. The ability to use perspective reasoning increases and children develop a stronger capacity for morality. In the early adolescent years, most children will focus on the present, without giving the future much regard. During middle adolescence, children will start developing a greater interest in the future, setting goals as they begin to look inwards as they examine themselves. As teens enter late adolescent, they will develop a greater capacity for moral reasoning and an ability to postpone gratification, as they begin to understand the need to work towards future goals.10

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Erik Erikson's model of psychosocial development stated, the struggle of the children initiate by thin searches or sense of identity when enter to adolescence, in terms of relationships adolescents begin to examine the future of parents and pairs. Adolescence is the period in which the wish for privacy grows; teens will often want distance themselves from others. In late adolescence, teens often indulge themselves in serious relationship including deep romantic involvement.11

ISLAMIC POINT OF VIEW ABOUT ADOLESCENTS DEVELOPMENT:

The Islamic worldview is completely different to the Western worldview. In the Islamic worldview, man and everything in the universe are a creation of Allah. He created the universe alone and solely sustains and governs it. Man's life has a divine and inspiring purpose because he shall be restored to life in a Divine world (the Hereafter) and shall be made to account for his life in this world. A Muslim's life is governed and patterned along this worldview, just as the Western community is governed by its worldview. The modern developmental psychology is restrained to this earthly life only. The Qur'an focuses the life beyond this one. The Qur'an considers the present

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life as the foundation of another life that is permanent and everlasting. In many of the verses, Allah mentions the stages of human development; He links them directly with the life after death. It shall be a continuation of life in some sorts.12

A number of hadith have been reported in which the Prophet instructs Muslims to be very sensitive and careful with the upbringing of their children. Another equally considered period is the adolescence in which childhood is converted to adulthood. It has massive importance in turning an individual's life. The Prophet has specified this stage in a number of his traditions, which mention to its sensitivity and importance. One example is the hadith in which the Prophet specially mentions seven categories of people that shall be comforted under the shade of the Glorious Throne of Allah. One of them is a young (adolescent) man who grows up in devotion and commitment to the worship of Allah. Some other reasons that make the adolescence a critical and sensitive period in an individual's development are its transitional nature and the fact that it marks the beginning of legal responsibility. The individual gets to be responsible for all his deeds from the time he reaches puberty. If he commits any sin it shall be recorded against him. This is indicated in many Prophetic traditions, one of which is:The pen (which records deeds) has been suspended in respect of three people: the child until he attains puberty . . .

Heredity and environment are the two factors which fundamentally influence the growth and development of man. Numerous evidences from the Qur'an and Hadith establish the influence of hereditary and environmental forces on an individual's overall development. But it is essential to highlight here that the hereditary and environmental influences on the development of a person are subject to the will of God. In Islam, a man is one who is primarily governed, sustained, guided, and controlled by God's infinite power and will. The forces of heredity and environment are secondary mediums through which God disposes His Will on man's overall growth and development. The religious education of the child is the responsibility of the parents, with boys being educated by their fathers, and girls by their mothers. After the initial rituals at birth, the child is explained with the basic principles of the faith when the he starts talking.13

In the past, the boys were sent to the maktab (Qur'anic school), where they received their religious education. Girls frequently received their religious instruction at home from their mother and were taught household work. The daily prayers, which is one of the five pillars of Islam, do not become mandatory upon the child until she or he reaches his or her mainstream. Physical punishment is permitted for children who do not fulfill their religious obligations or who show signs of unacceptable traits or behavior.14

ADOLESCENCE IS A NORMAL STATE:

On contemplating in all of the above, we see adolescence as a normal state in the life of a person, being a condition to which one enters naturally. The process of physical growth begins with vague impulses, then places the person in an environment of rejection and revolution, propelling him to move from a stage of submissiveness and acquiescence to others, to one of realization of individuality and independence. This occurs without clear or proper guidelines for him to establish his individuality and independence.

The stage of adolescence is exactly like the balance between the waves of the sea. In the same manner, a person enters the second wave in a new being which prepares him to be another person, setting the rule for a new stage. The role of (adolescent) education is to prevent the person from being lost, because the influence of the instincts entails the awakening of revolution in the person, the examination of new horizons not yet understood. All this can cause the person to lose his balance of perspective, since he has not acquired the necessary experience on which he can rely to establish a balance.

THE ISLAMIC NURTURING OF THE ADOLESCENT:

Islam encourages child rearing in the manner described in the following hadith: "Leave him free for seven years... discipline him for seven… and be his companion for seven". Instruction between 7-14 years of age determines how the person will move towards the right guiding principles by focusing on the inner person, the natural elements of his personality, until adolescence comes along in the fourteenth year, or thereabouts. When it does, there is subjection to established controls. From 14 to 20 years of age, supervision over the adolescent tendencies of the individual personality continues until the person behaves in a normal manner that takes the futuristic developments into consideration.

I do not wish to downplay the dangers of the stage of adolescence in the personality of the youth, but I do not perceive the issue as being as dangerous as claimed by some, except that it is compulsory that the nurturing at this stage be done in a manner whereby the child does not mature with restrictions which strangle him within himself, wrapping his mind and he becomes psychologically sick. Nor should he be given such total liberty that he takes absolute license, distancing himself from the balanced principles of human activities. Nurturing then must take place

between the two extremes; there should be discipline without harshness and freedom without licentiousness.

ADOLESCENT MISBEHAVIOUR:

The stage of adolescence is marked by lack of experience and incomplete maturity. Hence, we see many aspects of misbehavior. Does Islam provide any guidelines to correct adolescent misconduct and to protect it from the pitfalls?

Islam wants the parents to shepherd the spiritual aspect in the character of the child before he gets to the stage of adolescence. This may be done by accustoming the child to worship and by creating situations where he gradually becomes conscious of God. Islam has imbued the child with self-confidence, be it male or female, by giving it the right to be an independent and legally recognized entity. When the child reaches the age of mental maturity, when he can conduct his own affairs, Islam relieves him from his guardianship: "And test the orphans until, at adulthood, if you see maturity in them, then give them their property" (al-Nisa, 4:6) i.e., the guardianship of the elders is removed from a mentally mature boy or girl.

Maturity is a mental state stemming from the intelligent examination and contemplation of things, so that the person is able to behave in a proper, balanced manner, in the normal way that people conduct their affairs and relations. This means that adolescence is not an unnatural stage, rather merely a state by which the person goes from a stage of development to the stage of maturity.

ADOLESCENCE AND MATURITY:

Islam makes a person legally liable at maturity, so that he has responsibilities both in negative and in positive conditions. This means that Islam does not treat the stage of adolescence as one where the person lets up on responsibilities and obligations. For adolescence may persist until the last stages of life. This implies that the workings of the instincts which influence the negative side of a person through internal or external factors remain forever with that person-from the time of puberty to the end of his life. We know that there are adolescents in their forties, fifties, or even sixties; maturity is not a clearly defined age, but rather a stage, the effects of which begin at puberty and the mental and physical influences of which continue with the progression in life of the person who undergoes the awakening of instincts, in one form or another.

COUNSEL AND GUIDANCE:

Therefore, we must begin the work of spiritual, mental, and social instruction and all the

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other forms before puberty, so that we could prevent the conflict which the

Youth faces when he is faced with any impulse which might arise at this stage. This nurturing must continue at every stage, and we must apply the principles of instruction and care in such a manner that this new person does not retain the concept of the former one with respect to the issues that will emerge later in life. We should not seek to constrain him within a closed mind, but rather to open his "thinking and spiritual" lungs to breathe the clear air of life.15

OBJECTIVES:

•   To examine the influence of socio-cultural factors on the personality development of adolescents.

•   To know about the attitude and behavior of family members and their influences in the development of adolescents.

•   To investigate the role of other family relationship of adolescents.

•   To study the role of peer in the development of adolescents.

METHODOLOGY:

The present study is an exploratory. In this study the researcher selected the private and public schools of district central Karachi as universe. The population of the study was students/adolescents in age bracket (12-14). The researcher obtained the list of private and public schools of District Central, Karachi from the website of City District Government and Director of Education Karachi. Out of the total of 1024 schools, every 19th school was selected as sample through systematic sampling. Therefore, total 53 schools were selected as sample for the research.

The population of students/adolescents (age 12-14) in private and public schools during the period of January to December 2014 was 7900. The sample size was determined by using a table of a random numbers, (S.Sarantakoz: 2005)16, which turned out to be 367. Then this sample of 367 students/adolescents was selected through random sampling. The survey method was used in the present study. The data was collected using a structured interview schedule. The method of interview involved reading and explaining questions to the respondents and recording their answer on the sheets. After collecting data researcher developed tally sheets and then used simple frequency distribution tables to obtain simple frequency and percentages.

FINDINGS:

TABLE NO. 1

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	179	48.7
Female	188	51.2
Total	367	100%

Findings:

The above table indicates that highest percentages 51.2% of respondents are female while 48.7% respondents are male.

TABLE No. 2

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
11-12	105	28.6
12-13	125	34.0
13-14	137	37.3
Total	367	100%

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Findings:

The above table shows the age of the respondents. It indicates that highest numbers of respondents under the age of 13-14 years which constitutes 37.3%. The second highest numbers of respondents' are 12-13 years of age which constitutes 34% and the lowest numbers of respondents' are 11-12 years of age which constitutes 28.6%.

TABLE NO. 3

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' relations with their parents

Respondents relation	Frequency	Percentage
Good	214	58.3
Bad	27	7.3
Average	126	34.3
Total	367	100%

Findings:

The above table indicates that the highest numbers of respondent's relations with their parents are good which constitutes 58.3%. The second highest numbers of respondents' relations with their parents are average which constitutes 34.3% while the lowest numbers of respondents' relations with their parents are bad which constitutes 7.3%.

TABLE NO. 4

Frequency and percentage distribution of type of behavior parents have with respondents

Respondents behavior	Frequency	Percentage
Strict	69	18.8
Soft	156	42.5
Normal	142	38.6
Total	367	100%

Findings:

The above table indicates that the highest numbers of respondent's parents have soft behavior with them which constitutes 42.5%. The second highest numbers of respondent's parents have normal behavior with them which constitutes 38.6% while the lowest numbers of respondent's parents have strict behavior with them which constitutes 18.8%.

TABLE NO. 5

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondent's have friendship in family

Friendship in their family	Frequency	Percentage
Sister	120	32.6
Brother	122	33.2
Aunt	65	17.7
Any other	60	16.3
Total	367	100%

Findings:

The above table indicates that highest numbers of respondents have friendship with their brothers which constitute 33.2%. The second highest numbers of respondents have friendship with their sisters which constitute 32.6%. The third highest numbers of respondents have friendship with their aunt which constitutes 17.7%, while the lowest numbers of respondents have friendship with any other in the family which constitutes 16.3%.

TABLE NO.6

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondent's parents apply unnecessary restrictions

Apply un necessary restrictions	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	133	36.2
No	234	63.7
Total	367	100%

Findings:

The above table indicates that highest numbers of respondents think parents do not apply unnecessary restrictions which constitute 63.7%, while the remaining 36.2% respondents answered in positive.

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TABLE NO. 7

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondent's are like to meet their relatives

Like to Meet their relatives	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	277	75.4
No	90	24.5
Total	367	100%

Findings:

The above table indicates that highest numbers of respondents like to meet their relatives which constitute 75.4%, while the remaining 24.5% respondents do not like.

TABLE NO. 8

Frequency and percentage distribution of whether respondents have friends of the same age groups as them

Friends of same age groups	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	268	73.0
No	99	26.9
Total	367	100%

Findings:

The above table indicates that highest numbers of respondents have friends of their own age group which constitute 73%, while the remaining 26.9% respondents do not have friends of their same age groups.

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TABLE NO. 9

Frequency and percentage distribution of whether respondents spend most of time with their friends

Spend time with their friends	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	167	45.5
No	200	54.4
Total	367	100%

Findings:

The above table indicates that highest numbers of respondent's do not spend most of time with their friends which constitute 54.4% while the remaining 45.5% of respondents spend most of time with their friends.

TABLE NO. 10

Frequency and percentage distribution of whether respondents' friends point out their bad habits

Friends point out their bad habits	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	214	58.3
No	153	41.6
Total	367	100%

Findings:

The above table indicates that highest numbers of respondent's friends point out their bad habits which constitute 58.3%, while the lowest numbers of respondent's friends do not point out their bad habits which constitute 41.6%.

TABLE NO. 11

Frequency and percentage distribution of whether respondents arrange to get together with their friends

Arrange to get together	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	204	55.5
No	163	44.4
Total	367	100%

Findings:

The above table indicates that highest numbers of respondent's arrange get together with their friends which constitute 55.5%, while the lowest numbers of respondent's do not arrange get together with their friends which constitute 44.4%.

CONCLUSION:

In this study, the researcher has tried her level best to highlight the issue of personality development of adolescents. Most of the parents always face the issue of personality development of their children. They often face problems in this regard and miss a number of important factors while guiding their children, which then result to some kind of negative impacts or gaps in the personalities of the children. This research study is a step forward in highlighting the socio-cultural issues of such children. The above mentioned findings make it clear that the socio-cultural factors have a great influence on the personality development of adolescents. Such influences and factors should be observed, realized and understood, and positive actions should be taken in order to overcome and decrease them. These may include introduction of new and positive factors by providing proper and much needed knowledge to the parents of the children. Different socio-cultural factors like education, family size, family structure, relatives, friends, peers, school, and many others should be determined by the parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

•   Education plays a vital role in the development of personality. So parents should give education to their children and they should understand the importance of education for children development.

•   Most importantly social and career counseling should start at school level because doing this work, all the student/ children concept will clear for

career and future.

•   It is our obligation and duty as parents to teach our children so that they grow up to believe, practicing Muslims. Sending the child to an Islamic weekend school or to a full time Islamic school is an important but minor part of their Islamic education. The major "institution of learning" for each child is his family and the major "professions "of this institution are the parents.

•   For the great benefit of child's development school of social work should be started in all Government & Private School.

•   Role of media is very important in adolescents development because teachers teaches to the children with the help of film, video, internet, games etc. it can help parents and teachers understand the impact media has in our children's lives, while offering tips on managing time spend with various media.

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