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**Positive Parental Interference in Adolescents' Lives**

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Adolescence is a critical period in the human's life since many behaviors, attitudes, and accomplishments changes take place during this period. Eventually, as the Moroccan children initiate into adolescence, they might start to think seriously about being independent and autonomous. They might even perceive parental interference differently as when they were children. Thus, they develop a willingness to be separated from their parents especially in case of parents who are over controlling their lives and imposing over them some choices concerning very intimate issues such as clothes style and career choice. Instead, they will search for other relationships such as friendships and intimate love relationships. However, parental interference in the adolescence has always been reported to have enormous positive impact concerning important issues. In fact, even though Moroccan adolescent perceives parental interference as controlling his or her life, positive interference of parents helps develop the adolescent's independency, encourages school success, and prevents him or her from being a delinquent teenager.

Moroccan adolescents refuse parental interference as a result of the psychological changes that occurs during early adolescence. As a matter of fact, adolescence may be defined, according to Britannica, as "that period within the life span when most of a person's characteristics are changing from what is typically considered childlike to what is typically considered adult like". Effectively, It is well-known that adolescence is a period of time characterized by greater turmoil than all the previous and subsequent stages of the human life. In fact, G. Stanly Hall (1904), who conducted a study on adolescence in terms of its psychological aspects, described adolescence as "a period of storm and stress of passion and rebellion against adult authority"( Gecas, Seff ,1990, p.942). Eventually, Moroccan children, as they become adolescent, experience these changes and go through this storm of rebellion against parental authority. The most spectacular one of these psychological changes are their tendency to spend more time far away from their families and their increased willingness to

be separated from the people around them, and to have their own private space. This could be explained by the fact that they want to enjoy their privacies and to spend more time thinking about their future, and even to withdraw from the pressures of social or family life. On the other hand, the rebellion aspect is embodied in their willingness to act against their parents, and to break the social rules imposed in the Moroccan context.

Furthermore, Moroccan adolescents refuse parental interventions in their lives due to peer pressure. As a matter of fact, as a result of the psychological changes that occurs during early adolescence, adolescents experience a need to belong and to be connected with people that share with them the same attitudes, thoughts, and interests. Also, adolescents may experience a need for support in case of shortage of parental support and their over control. Due to all the factors mentioned above, adolescents may search and choose friends of their ages that they like and see in a favorable light. With those friends called teens, adolescents break away from their parent's images of themselves and develop identities of their own. Those friends too, can make them change their way of thinking, the way they dress, act and talk, since they may value their points of view even more than they value the ones of their parents. So, obviously, adolescence is typically a time of diminishing parental influence and growing peer influence. Thus, they are likely to change their perceptions of parental interference and refuse to let them direct their lives.

However, since they believe that the adolescent needs to be independent, Moroccan parents want to help their adolescent children to realize their independency and autonomy. In fact, it is obvious that every father or mother across all the cultures wishes the best for his or her child, as for example an ideal identity and a high morality level. In addition, since independency assertion is one of the initial steps toward developing the adolescent identity, it is normal that parents believe that their adolescent child should become independent. Eventually, according to a study done on a group of parents, it has been reported that parents

agree that, “It is normal for adolescents to want to be independent of parental control”(Briggs, Schulz, 1955 , p.281). However, they agree that adolescent needs to establish connections in order to assert independence. This latter idea is supported by Gilligan’s claim that, “Relationships without independence become just as problematic as independence without relationships (Gilligan et, 1990: 85)”.(Muss, n.d , p.204) .Thus, Moroccan parents try to guide their children toward independency assertion using different strategies such as, according to Leiman and Strasberger (2001), “providing effective verbal communication, enhancing their teenager’s self–image, helping with decisions making, and using effective discipline”(p.664).

Effectively, Moroccan parents can help their adolescent child resolve the typical conflict “independence versus dependence” using effective verbal communication. Eventually, effective verbal communication consists of listening to adolescents and valuing their ideas as well as giving them advice in case they ask for one. Indeed, through effective verbal communication between the adolescent and his parents, they can discuss different issues that the adolescent faces such as independency issues, dating and schooling issues. Moreover, through effective verbal communication, the adolescent can understand ethical issues, and thus develops a sense of what is wrong and right as well as what is considered to be appropriate or inappropriate behavior under Moroccan society circumstances since his or he parents knows about it more then he or she does. Consequently, the Moroccan adolescent will be able to be morally developed and reach a high level of moral development that will positively contribute in the process of his or her independence assertion, and more generally in the process of his or her identity building.

Additionally, Moroccan parents can help their adolescent children overcome the issue of independency by enhancing their self-images. In point of fact, early Moroccan adolescents as any other adolescents experience many changes that are proven to have possible implications for their self-Images. Some of these spectacular changes, as mentioned before,

are the appearance of primary and secondary sexual characteristics which may certainly change the way adolescents see themselves. Besides, cognitive changes that take place during adolescence are likely to change the way adolescents think about themselves and people around them. As well, Moroccan adolescents can experience other type of changes which is the transition from a protective elementary environment to a larger and more complex secondary school environment. The last changes that take place in early adolescence have to do with the individual's relationships with others such as peers and parents. In fact, there may be some tremendous differences between what the early adolescents see to be important and what those people expect from them. Predictably, all these changes mentioned above can have a disturbance effect on the adolescents self- esteems, their self-images, and their self-concepts, thus, it is believed that, "because the adolescent is going through so many rapid changes, a restructuring of the concept of self is required in order that these changes may be integrated into the individual's personality"(Blyth, Traeger, 1983, p. 93). As a result, Moroccan parents can reduce the negative effect of these different changes on the adolescents' self-images by trying to avoid criticism as well as by recognizing their achievements and evaluating their works. In fact, according to Muus in discussing Erick Erickson's theory of identity development, "In order to acquire a strong and healthy ego-identity, the child must receive consistent and meaningful recognition for his or her achievement and accomplishment"(Muss, n.d. p.43). On the other hand, it is crucial that parent interfere to enhance the self-image of adolescents not only because of the probable negative effect of the changes occurring during early adolescence, but also because of the fact that adolescents are developing their self-concepts and self-images that contribute to their identities developments during this critical period of adolescence . Finally, it is now clear that parents must interfere in order to enhance the self-images of their adolescent children.

Parental Moroccan interference is important in helping to resolve the conflict of “independency versus dependency” through developing the adolescent’ decision making based on principles. Indeed, parents should teach their children how to make effective decisions concerning the issues that they may encounter in the Moroccan context rather than making their decisions instead of them as if it is their issues. However, this task is very difficult since it is too hard to balance between letting their adolescents make their own decisions and limiting their decisions at the same time. So, parents might think of letting their children learn to make decisions by starting from the ones concerning simple matters such as their clothing style, music style, and how to spend their free time. Besides, parent can enhance their children’ abilities to make individual decisions by encouraging them to think independently and to express their feelings as well as their thoughts. In this way, Moroccan adolescents can develop a healthy sense of self and a well enhanced ability to resist what is harmful for them such as negative peer pressure, premarital sexual relationships, smoking, and drug use.

Furthermore, it has always been reported that parental interference consisting of using effective discipline contributes positively in their realization of independency. In fact, it is noticeable that Moroccan parents raise their children under a relatively strict discipline compared to other cultures. This process helps in making the children as they initiate into adolescence to be more independent and self directed. This could be explained by the finding of a research conducted on American and Danish adolescents concerning their relationship with their parents. In fact, based on the findings of that research, the researchers suggest that “American parent fails to limit the behavior of the child adequately so as to lead him to acquire some self-discipline early in life, while the Danish parent exercises greater control in childhood leading to greater self-direction in adolescence”. (Kandel, Lesser, 1969, p. 352). Also, parents can eventually develop their child’s independency by maintaining discipline. In

fact, best discipline is maintained through positive reinforcement such that offering rewards if the adolescent behaves correctly. On the other hand, discipline is also maintained through punishment that will certainly help modify unpleasant behaviors.

However, some parents may contribute in arising this conflict of independence of their adolescent child by imposing over them some choices such as career choice, clothing style and selecting a husband or wife. In fact, Moroccan parents believe that their children have to conform to some culture and tradition roles in terms of clothing style. They think that girls should wear clothes that do not attract boys and that make them seem to be respectful and from a respected family. However, Moroccan adolescent may perceive this point of view as controlling their free choices of wearing whatever they want. What is more is that Moroccan parents believe that their children should not make important decisions that will affect their lives in the future since they are not mature enough. Instead, they start making those decisions such as university and career choice. This kind of decisions may arise the conflict between adolescent and their parents because of the fact they think it is nobody's decision but theirs. Besides, they may think that by accepting their parents' decisions they will be a real copy of them rather than being themselves, a fact that will consequently have big impact on their identity development. Another important issue that may arise the issue of "Dependence versus independence" is the parents' over control of their child's relationship. Eventually, parents may think that their adolescents are not able to choose good friends, so they may interfere and prohibit them from choosing the friends that they find themselves comfortable with. As a consequence, Moroccan adolescents feel unsatisfied and controlled by their parents and unable to choose their friends. Besides, Moroccan parents often do not agree on their children having relationships with the opposite sex since it is against the dominant religion in Morocco Islam, against Moroccan traditions, and against culture.

As mentioned earlier, as well as helping the Moroccan adolescent child overcome the typical conflict of “Dependency versus Independency”, parents encourage school success through high educational expectations. As Moroccan adolescents initiate to the intriguing stage of adolescence filled with the different changes, the increase in academic demands and the complexity of school structure makes school success even harder for them. As a result, one would expect that the involvement of their parents will have positive impacts on his academic success. First, parents can encourage continuously the educational achievement and collaboration of their adolescents in school through high educational expectations. As a matter of fact, Moroccan high-school students believe that they can do better at school if they were encouraged by their families and if they know their parents are interested in their schoolwork and want them to succeed. Eventually, the further parents believe their adolescents would go, the clearer they will perceive this expectation. Hence, adolescents will spend more time doing their homework and more generally they will feel motivated to attain the highest academic expectations. So, parent’s expectations continue to be powerful source of influence for the better achievement of their adolescent child.

On the other hand, Moroccan parents can encourage their adolescents to succeed at school by making them aware of the importance of education. In fact, Moroccan parents can show to their adolescents more concern in their education by encouraging them to do their homework rather than compelling them to do it, by encouraging them to read extra books, and to spend more time in the library. Besides, they can show the importance of their educations by knowing their teachers, their school colleges, and their school curriculum and policies since it is likely to lift some of the confusion that the complexity of school creates. Also, keeping open lines of communication concerning their post-secondary education planning will certainly sensibly Moroccan adolescents of the importance of their education and thus they will feel motivated to attain the highest school achievement. Thus, parent’s involvement

in the adolescents education can inspire them to do better at school and future life, according to a study conducted on American students who has different ethnic background, including African background, it has been shown that “parental involvement in particular – operationalized in terms of behaviors such as attending school programs, helping with the course selection, and monitoring student progress –accounts for the better school performance and stronger school engagement of adolescents”(Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbush, 1992, p.1279).

Furthermore, parents can help their adolescents achieve a high level of school success by helping them solve the problems that they face in school. In effect, due to school difficulties, some Moroccan adolescents face several problems that may last for weeks and more dangerously may cause a slide in their academic performance. Parents can simply help their adolescents get through this time by providing minimal assistance such as opening lines of communication, effectively listening to them and suggesting some coping strategies, and providing a warm and supportive environment at home, as well as encouraging them to participate in school activities. However, some problems persist overtime and consequently parents need to strongly intervene. In fact, parents have to interfere in order to help adolescents go through some identity problems that can threaten their academic success, such as lack of self-esteem, feelings of doubt and shame. In his famous chapter, “Eight Ages of Man” Erick Erickson mentioned that during the stage of autonomy versus doubt, “As his environment encourages him to stand on his feet, it must protect him against meaningless and arbitrary experiences of shame and of early doubt”(Erickson, 1950, p. 252). On the other hand, parents need to get aware of the indicators of some other serious problems that threaten adolescents’ academic success such as limited horizons for the future, and persistence of absenteeism and poor grades. So, instead of letting them assume their own responsibilities of learning, parents should intervene by trying to understand the fears of their adolescents, by

trying to limit the behaviors that influence negatively their school success such as absenteeism, and by encouraging them to volunteer and to participate in school activities. Also, Moroccan parents have to make them seriously think about their future career and provide them with important options for choice career that they think it matches their skills and abilities. Finally, parental intervention is very important in terms that it prevents the adolescent from school failure.

On the other hand, parents can prevent their adolescent child from delinquency generated by peer influence. As a matter of fact, it is obvious that parent will do their best in order to protect their children from delinquent acts, “parents, it seems, exhibit almost universal disapproval of delinquent behavior, and even parents who themselves violate the law evidently do not condone or encourage such behavior among their children”(Warr, 1993, p. 248). And since delinquent peers have always been reported to have negative effect on the adolescent behavior, Moroccan parents try to regulate their adolescent’s friends in order to screen out the undesirable ones. In fact, it has been shown that, “Both delinquency of companions and stakes in conformity are independently related to the commission of delinquent acts”( Warr, 1993, p. 249). So, Moroccan parents first try to prohibit their adolescent from the access to peers that seem to be delinquent and thus reduce the likelihood of delinquent behavior. This latter idea is best supported by the claim that, “Adolescents who are strongly attached to their parents may be less prone than others to acquire delinquent friends and hence may be less motivated to engage in delinquent behaviors”. (Warr, 1993, p. 248). Second, parents can protect their children from delinquency generated by peer influence by prohibiting them from the formation of delinquent friends. In fact, during childhood, Moroccan parents spend a lot of time explaining to their children that they should choose their friends according to some specific norms since they will affect their reputation and their behavior, as the Arabic proverb says “tell me who is your friend, I will you who you are”.

To conclude, adolescence is an intriguing stage of development filled with many physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes that make Moroccan adolescents perceive parental interference as controlling their lives rather than monitoring and guiding them. However, parental interference has always been proven to have various benefits in the adolescents' life especially in resolving the typical problem of dependency assertion, in encouraging school success, and in preventing from delinquency. A matter of fact, by following effective verbal communication, enhancing the self-image and decision making, and maintaining discipline, parents can help their children to resolve one of the most conflicting identity issues that they might face as they become adolescents. Also, parental interference is important since it encourages school success. Effectively, Moroccan adolescents can do better at school if they feel their parents expect them to succeed and to achieve a high level in their academic career. Parents can help their adolescents children succeed at school by sensibly telling them about the importance of their studies as well as by helping them overcome some serious problems that they encounter at school such as the persistence of poor grades and low level of self-esteem. On the other hand, parent's interference is very beneficial since it prevents Moroccan adolescents from falling in delinquency. Eventually, Moroccan parents do their best in order to prevent their children from having delinquent friends that are proven to have huge influence in making adolescents fall in delinquency. So, parents try to make their children aware about this fact in order to make them able to choose good friends, and thus preventing them from the negative influences of peer pressure. Though all these arguments, it is obvious that parental interference in adolescents' lives is essential since it helps them in many areas.

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