



Perceived Influence of Parental Control on Adolescents and Young Adults in Identity Formation

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Abstract: Identity formation is a key developmental task during adolescence and young adulthood and is influenced by various familial and social factors. The present study examined the relationship between perceived parental psychological control and identity development among urban adolescents and young adults. A quantitative correlational research design was employed, with a sample of 200 participants aged 18–25 years from urban areas, of which 199 valid responses were analysed. Data were collected using the Psychological Control Scale – Youth Self-Report (PCS–YSR; Barber, 1996) and the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS; Luyckx et al., 2008). Descriptive statistics, Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation, and Simple Linear Regression were used for data analysis. The results revealed a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between perceived parental psychological control and identity development ($r = .204, p = .004$). Regression analysis further indicated that perceived parental psychological control significantly predicted identity development, accounting for 4.2% of the variance. These findings suggest that although perceived parental psychological control has a measurable association with identity development, its influence is limited, indicating that identity formation is shaped by multiple interacting personal, social, and contextual factors.

Keywords: *Perceived Parental Control, Psychological Control, Identity Development, Adolescents, Young Adults*

1. Introduction

Adolescence and young adulthood are important stages of development marked by intense biological, cognitive, emotive, and social transformation. These are universally accepted as the critical stages of the development of the harmonious and consistent identity (Erikson, 1968; Steinberg, 2014). The identity formation is the process that is used to combine beliefs, values, goals, and roles to form a consistent sense of self that allow individuals to have psychological continuity and direction in their lives (Erikson, 1968). Effective identity negotiation in adolescence brings the basis of effective psychosocial functioning in adulthood.

Erikson (1968) conceptualized adolescence as the stage of Identity vs. Role Confusion, which argues that people need to clear the questions of Who am I? and "Where am I going?" so as to get a stable self. It is based on the processes of exploration and commitment that Marcia (1966) operationalized the identity development into four identity statuses - identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion - which she proposed that needs to be built further on Erikson work. Exploration is defined as the process of active inquiry and investigation of the options, and commitment is defined as the act of making decisions and following specified values, goals, and roles (Marcia, 1966). The two processes are regarded as the key to healthy identity development.

Although identity formation is an intrapsychic process, it is closely entrenched within the social settings, especially within the family set up (Meeus, 2011). Parents are the key agents of socialization and play a major role in determining the development of adolescents in autonomy, decision-making processes, and clarity of self-concept (Steinberg, 2014). Parental control has been found to be a critical influence on psychosocial development among other dimensions of parenting.

Parental control is generally understood to refer to actions wherein the parents endeavour to control, handle or otherwise affect the behavior and the psychological world of the child (Barber, 1996; Baumrind, 1991). Authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles of parenting were identified by Baumrind (1991) according to the two aspects of responsiveness and control. Although behavioral control (through monitoring and rule-setting) is typically attributed to positive developmental effects (Steinberg, 2001), psychological control (through guilt-induction, love withdrawal and intrusion in the emotional experiences of the child) has been related to maladaptive effects such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and poor autonomy (Barber, 1996; Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2010).

Notably, studies indicate that it is not the behavior of parents itself that influences the psychological effect, but rather the perception of the adolescents about parental control

(Grolnick and Pomerantz, 2009). Perceived parental control is a measure of how adolescents perceive parental actions to be restrictive, intrusive or autonomy-supportive. Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000) suggests that autonomy is a vital psychology need and a setting that frustrates autonomy by over-controlling the child will retard identity exploration and self-integration.

Autonomy-supportive type of parenting has been reported to lead to identity achievement and psychological well-being as compared to controlling parenting practices which lead to identity foreclosure or diffusion (Luyckx et al., 2007; Soenens et al., 2007). When the adolescents are not encouraged to make independent decisions or explore, they can adopt values that were enforced by parents without questioning them thus foreclosing (Marcia, 1966). On the other hand, over-control can bring confusion and instability to the self-definition that adds to the identity diffusion (Crocetti et al., 2008).

The concept of young adulthood is an extension and integration of the identity formation process especially in areas of career, relationships, and personal beliefs (Arnett, 2000). In this age, perceived parental control might still affect autonomy, self-efficacy and long-term commitments. Parental influence may still be pronounced in the young adulthood stage in collectivistic cultures such as India and therefore the perceived parental control may be of great interest (Kagitcibasi, 2007).

Since the central issue of identity formation to psychological adaptation and long-term well-being, it is necessary to understand the contextual circumstances, which can either promote or hamper this process of development. This research paper aims at discussing the perceived role of parental control on identity development among teenagers and young adults. This research will inform a subtle perspective on how family influences identity development processes across critical development phases because emphasis is on perception and not just parenting only-based behaviors.

1.1 Parental Control

Parental control is a multidimensional concept, meaning that it is the methods of parents in controlling, directing, and affecting the actions, ideas and the feelings of their children (Barber, 1996; Baumrind, 1991). It is one of the key parenting dimensions, which have received a lot of developmental psychology research because of its diverse implications on autonomy development, emotion regulation, and psychosocial adjustment.

In her typology of parenting styles Baumrind (1966 1991) conceptualized parental control, and differentiated authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting according to responsiveness and demandingness. Control in her context means the efforts of parents to

socialize and control the behaviour of children based on what the family has defined as the norm. Authoritative parenting incorporates high responsiveness with strict yet sensible control whereas authoritarian parenting has high control and low warmth. Studies have continuously proven that authoritative control is also related to positive developmental results such as low self-esteem and psychological distress as a result of authoritarian control (Steinberg, 2001; Lamborn et al., 1991).

Later scholars perfected the parental control concept by differentiating the behavioral and psychological control (Barber, 1996). Behavioral control is the act of monitoring, setting rules, supervision and controlling the activities of the children. It is said to be adaptive and it is related to fewer risk behavior and improved academic performance (Stattin and Kerr, 2000). Behavioral control offers patience, direction and could support the growth of competence and responsibility.

Psychological control on the other hand entails intrusive parenting behavior that distorts the emotional and cognitive world of children (Barber, 1996). Such behaviors that are involved in this kind of control are guilt induction, love withdrawal, shaming, and feeling invalidation. Psychological control is an autonomy-thwarting control since it suppresses the ability of the child to form personal thoughts and self-identification (Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2010). Studies have always attributed psychological control to anxiety, depression, low self-worth and poor identity development (Barber and Harmon, 2002, Soenens et al., 2007).

In relation to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), one of three fundamental psychological needs of healthy development is autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The use of controlling behaviors by parents where they limit autonomy frustrates this fundamental need, which may result in the internal conflict and the lack of clarity in self-concept. Young people brought up in very restrictive backgrounds might have difficulty in making their own choices and exploring their identity (Ryan and Deci, 2017).

Notably, current studies focus on the subjective perception of parental control as opposed to parental behaviors which are objective only (Grolnick and Pomerantz, 2009). Parents should be careful not to react in a similar way as adolescents to same actions within different contexts, cultural norms, and the quality of relationships. An example is that in one situation parental involvement can be seen as supportive whereas in another, it can be seen as intrusive. In this way, it makes perceived parental control a crucible to the psychological role of perceived parental control.

The context of culture also defines the meaning and the effect of parental control. Some societies such as South Asian cultures are collectivistic and, in this case, parental worry and

participation may continue into early adulthood and may be perceived as care and responsibility (Kagitcibasi, 2007). Nevertheless, it has been observed that too much psychological control has adverse effects on autonomy and identity development even in the collectivistic setting (Rudy and Grusec, 2006). Hence, it is paramount to comprehend the perception of control in the context of cultures.

In adolescence years and early adulthood, a person is becoming more and more independent and in need of self-identification (Arnett, 2000). Parental practices that emphasize too much limiting exploration can disturb the establishment of self-authorship and identity commitments. On the other hand, behavioral control in its rightful and well-constructed way can be a safe-place towards exploration (Steinberg, 2014).

Parental control is, therefore, not bad, its effects, however, are determined by its nature (behavioral vs. psychological) and its strength and how the adolescent may view it. Since identity is formed through exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1966), where there is high psychological control, exploration may be curtailed resulting in identity foreclosure or diffusion. This awareness of perceived parental control is thus key to the analysis of the effect of parental control in identity formation.

1.1.1 Theories of Parental Control

Control by parents has been conceptualized and studied using several theoretical perspectives in the developmental psychology. The theories present a background of explaining the impacts of controlling parenting practice on the autonomy, self-concept and identity establishment of adolescents.

1.1.1.1 Baumrind's Parenting Style Theory

The Parenting Style Theory put forward by Baumrind is one of the most powerful models of parental control (Baumrind, 1966; 1991). Parenting styles were determined by Baumrind on two basic dimensions namely the responsiveness (warmth) and demandingness (control). On the above dimensions, she suggested three major parenting styles, which are authoritative style, authoritarian style, and permissive style. Subsequent studies provided a fourth type of parenting, parenting without attention or involvement (Maccoby and Martin, 1983).

Authoritative parents are high responsiveness and firm control that is combined with rational control. This is a form of control which is organized and autonomy-supportive and has been uniformly linked with positive developmental consequences such as increased self-esteem, academic achievement and an achieved sense of identity (Steinberg, 2001).

Authoritarian parents on the other hand are highly controlled and low responsive. They have very strict, reprimanding, and less conversational control. It has been found that authoritarian parenting is correlated with less autonomy, anxiety and identity foreclosure (Lamborn et al., 1991).

Permissive parents are warm but have low control that can cause poor self-regulation and identity diffusion because they have not been guided (Baumrind, 1991).

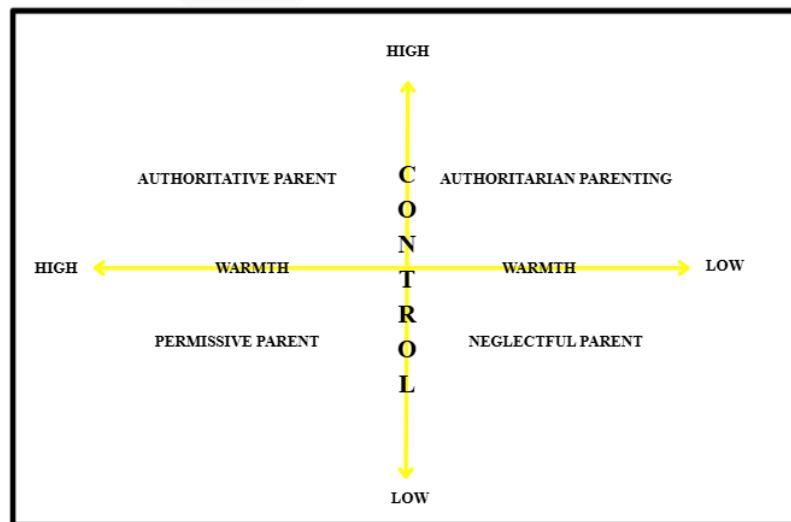


Fig 1.1: *Baumrind's Parenting Style Matrix*

1.1.1.2 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

To comprehend the psychological implications of parental control, a motivational framework can be used, which is the Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000). SDT assumes that human beings have three fundamental psychological needs which are autonomy, competence and relatedness. In case these needs are met, there are optimal development. In case of failure, mental anguish can ensue.

Psychological control by parents is believed to be autonomy-thwarting since this aspect disrupts independent thought and self-approved decision-making (Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2010). The high psychological control can cause adolescents to internalize the parental expectations without proper exploration which results in identity foreclosure (Luyckx et al., 2007).

By contrast, autonomy-supportive parenting encourages exploration on their own and helps children accomplish the identity (Ryan and Deci, 2017).

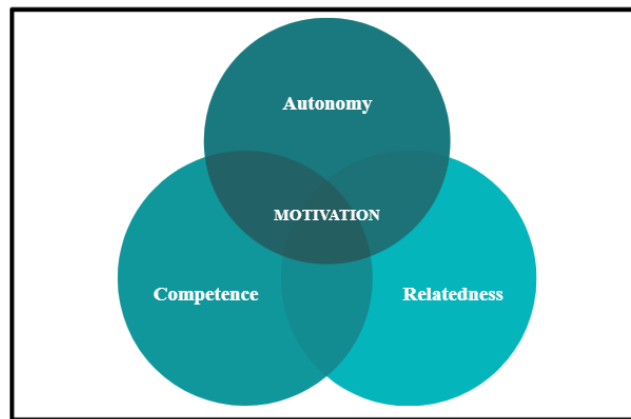


Fig 1.2: *Self-Determination Theory*

1.1.1.3 Family Systems Theory

The Family Systems Theory (Bowen, 1978) is a theory that views the family as an emotional system that is interdependent where the actions of each member affect other members. This theory states that too much parental control is a symptom of enmeshment, in which parent and child no longer separate.

The enmeshed family systems can inhibit differentiation of self - to be able to both have a sense of autonomy and be emotionally attached (Bowen, 1978). Lack of differentiation may hamper the formation of independent identity especially when the individual is in adolescence stage where individuation is developmentally required (Kerr and Bowen, 1988).

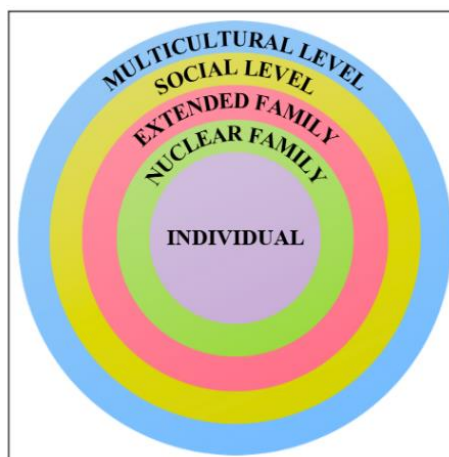


Fig 1.3: *Family Systems Theory*

1.1.1.4 Attachment Theory

Another theory that helps in the explanation of parental control is Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969). A stable attachment develops self-sufficiency in a protecting relational system, enabling teenagers to engage in identity domains with confidence (Allen and Tan, 2016).

Nevertheless, excessive control of parenting can also lead to anxious or avoidant attachment styles, which can interfere with identity coherence (Kroger and Marcia, 2011). The

insecurely attached adolescents can either over rely on parents' expectations (foreclosure) or evade commitments (diffusion).

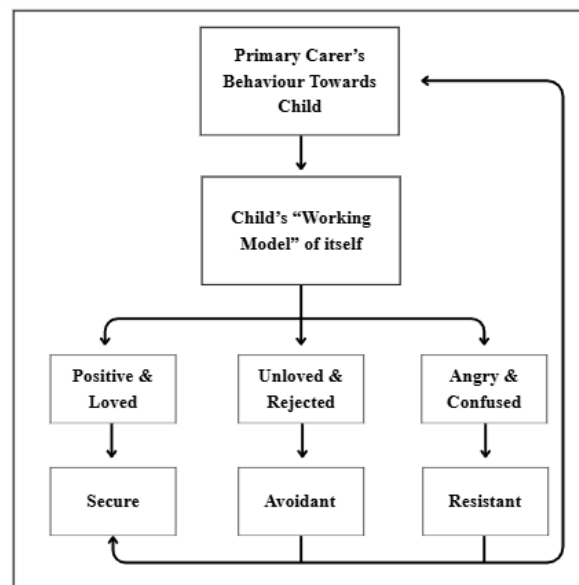


Fig 1.4: *Attachment Theory*

1.1.2 Types of Parental Control

The concept of parental control has taken two major forms that include both behavioral control and psychological control (Barber, 1996). These two forms are necessary to be differentiated because they imply significantly different things to the adolescent development and identity formation.

Behavioural control is the attempts made by parents to control and monitor the behavior of the children by supervising, establishing rules and ensuring that the children are punished on a regular basis (Stattin and Kerr, 2000). It entails activities like being aware of where the child is, curfews, being academic, and rules within the household. Behavioral control brings structure and predictability and this might encourage responsibility, competence and adaptive functioning (Steinberg, 2001). Studies indicate that proper behavioral management is also linked with reduced delinquent, substance use and risk-taking behaviors in adolescence (Dishion and McMahon, 1998).

Conversely, psychological control is intrusive parenting which finds a way into the emotional and cognitive world of children (Barber, 1996). The scope of this type of control will involve the induction of guilt, shaming, dismissal of feelings, withdrawal of love, and conditional approval. In contrast to behavioral control, psychological control disrupts the formation of the sense of autonomy and independent self-identification (Soenens &

Vansteenkiste, 2010). It limits the process of creating personal values and beliefs of the adolescent so that identity development is directly influenced.

The studies always show that psychological control has a negative correlation with identity exploration and a positive one with identity foreclosure and diffusion (Luyckx et al., 2007; Soenens et al., 2007). High-psychological control may also cause adolescents to take up parental expectations without proper exploration which results to foreclosure (Marcia, 1966). Alternatively, a prolonged limitation of autonomy can lead to ambiguity and inconsistency in self-definition, and this leads to identity diffusion (Crocetti et al., 2008).

Notably, the mediation of the developmental influence of control is based on the perception of the adolescent (Grolnick and Pomerantz, 2009). The same behavior of a parent can be viewed as an act of caring guidance or restraining intrusion based on the quality of relationships, communication styles, and culture. Objective control alone has been found to have less predictive power on lower self-esteem and more internalizing symptoms and poor identity coherence as opposed to perceived psychological control (Barber and Harmon, 2002).

Parental control is also difficult to interpret due to cultural factors. Parental inclusion and support can be considered normative in collectivistic societies and can be construed as caring and family duty (Kagitcibasi, 2007). It has been argued however, that, despite the fact that collectivistic backgrounds, psychological control is linked to the negative developmental consequences in cases where it weakens autonomy (Rudy and Grusec, 2006). Therefore, cultural standards might play a role in understanding of control, yet autonomy is an important element of a well-developed sense of identity.

The exploration-autonomous decision-making, in terms of identity formation is the developmental task during adolescence and young adulthood (Erikson, 1968; Arnett, 2000). The control of behavior could give have the required order of safe exploration, but psychological control can limit exploration and impair the development of coherent sense of self. Thus, it is necessary to draw the line between these two categories of parental control when discussing their perceived impact on identity development.

1.2 Identity Formation

It is argued that identity formation is among the main developmental activities of the adolescent stage and young adulthood (Erikson, 1968). It can be described as the process by which people construct a consistent, stable and unified sense of self between time and contexts. The concept of identity involves the values, beliefs, goals, roles, and commitments of the persons who give them a sense of continuity and direction in life (Kroger, 2007).

In his psychosocial approach to development, Erikson (1968) defined the period of adolescence as the Identity vs. Role Confusion. At this phase, people are facing questions that touch on their self-definition e.g. Who am I? and "What do I believe in?" The effective solution of this crisis will lead to identity achievement, and failure to do so could cause role confusion and insecurity in the self-concept. Erikson pointed out that identity needs both an exploration socially and internalization.

Marcia (1966) expanded on the theoretical conceptualizations of Erikson by coming up with identity statuses, which operationalized identity development. Marcia suggested that there are two key processes of identity formation, which are exploration and commitment. Exploration is a process of questioning and investigating in areas like career, relationships and ideology. Dedication involves decision making and following of certain beliefs, objectives or roles.

According to the availability or the unavailability of these processes, Marcia (1966) defined four identity statuses:

- Identity Achievement - This is marked by high exploration and great commitment. People have reviewed the options and taken self-recommended decisions.
- Moratorium- Characterised by exploration as well as low commitment. People are undertaking the search process, but they are yet to make concrete decisions.
- Foreclosure - This is characterized by commitment without exploring. Values or roles embrace by the individuals are those that are forced by the people of authority, who are usually the parents.
- Identity Diffusion - Identity diffusion is marked by low exploration as well as low commitment. People do not have a clear sense of direction and solid self-definition.

These identity statuses are not rigid categories but they are dynamic processes, which can change with time (Kroger and Marcia, 2011). It has been found that higher levels of psychological well-being, autonomy, and self-esteem are correlated with identity achievement, and emotional instability and maladjustment are connected with identity diffusion (Luyckx et al., 2008).

Adolescence is the first stage of identity exploration, which is however not concluded during the young adulthood (Arnett, 2000). The adulthood is emerging and offers more time to explore education, career, and relationships. At this period, people refreeze the commitments that they began in adolescence.

It is essential that the environment in which a family is brought up is critical in how identity is developed (Meeus, 2011). Parenting styles that are supportive and promote independence and free communication support exploration and identity realization (Soenens et al., 2007). On the other hand, exploration can be inhibited by controlling parenting or psychologically intrusive parenting and encouraged by foreclosure or diffusion (Luyckx et al., 2007).

Of particular interest to this research is the contribution of the perceived parental control in determining the course of exploration and commitment. When adolescents feel high levels on psychological control, there is a likelihood of internalization of parental expectations without genuine exploration thus foreclosure (Marcia, 1966). Alternatively, the excessive limitation of autonomy over a long period of time can create confusion and uncertainty, leading to identity diffusion (Crocetti et al., 2008). In such a way the process of identity formation is not only an individual cognition but is entrenched within the relational and family-based scenarios.

The study of identity formation on the context of perceived parental control can be used to better analyze the influence family processes have on the development pathways. Since identity coherence is closely related to the long-term psychological adaptation, it is of much importance to consider the factors which can help or prevent this process.

1.2.1 Theories of Identity Formation

Various perspectives on how persons develop a sense of identity exist in the current literature. These hypothesize a number of developmental, contextual, and intrapsychic processes involved in shaping identity.

1.2.1.1 Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

Erikson (1968) proposed that identity formation is the central developmental task of adolescence within his psychosocial stage of *Identity vs. Role Confusion*. According to Erikson, identity refers to a sense of sameness and continuity that persists across time and social contexts. Adolescents must integrate past identifications, personal aspirations, and societal expectations to form a stable identity.

Erikson emphasized that identity development involves both internal self-reflection and social interaction. The adolescent must reconcile personal desires with societal roles and cultural norms (Erikson, 1968). Successful resolution of this crisis leads to fidelity, the ability to commit to values and relationships. Failure to resolve this crisis may result in role confusion, instability, and fragmented self-concept.

Importantly, Erikson acknowledged the influence of family dynamics in shaping identity. Supportive environments that allow safe exploration promote healthy identity formation, whereas overly restrictive or controlling environments may hinder autonomy development (Erikson, 1968).

1.2.1.2 Marcia's Identity Status Model

A further step in the application of theory is that of Marcia (1966) who operationalised identity into categories measures that are based on two processes: exploration and commitment. His Identity Status Model offers a framework for identity:

Exploration, active questioning or reconsideration of chosen goals and values in important life domains: vocation, ideology, relationships. Commitment, investment and attachment to personally chosen goals and values in these life domains: vocation, ideology, relationships. (Marcia, 1966).

The interaction of these two dimensions produces four identity statuses:

- Identity Achievement (High exploration, high commitment)
- Moratorium (High exploration, low commitment)
- Foreclosure (Limited exploring, full commitment)
- ID Diffusion (Low exploration, low commitment)

While foreclosure is especially relevant to control, is also confounded with foreclosure. Adolescents who experience high levels of parental psychological control may simply internalize the parental beliefs without evaluating them independently, causing foreclosure (Soenens et al., 2007). Alternatively, individuals may go through identity diffusion, where they are confused and powerless in the self-definition process, if their self-definition is not autonomous (Crocetti et al., 2008).

The model proposed by Marcia is still being commonly used in empirical research because it allows for the measurement of the identity processes in each stage of development (Kroger & Marcia, 2011).

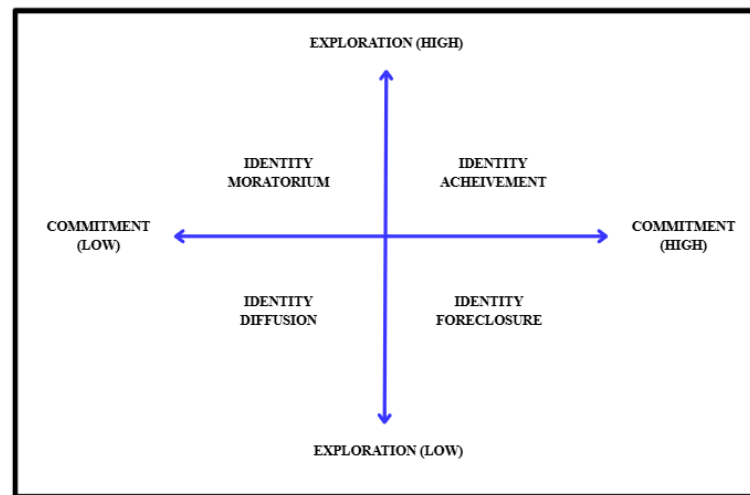


Fig 1.5: *Marcia's Identity Status Model*

1.2.1.3 Dual-Cycle Model of Identity Formation

Though Marcia's formulation depicted identity as a status, subsequent research pointed to its dynamic and cyclical qualities. For instance, Luyckx et al. (2008) presented the Dual-Cycle Model of Identity Formation, differentiating two congruent cycles:

- Formation Cycle-Exploration in breadth + involving making.
- Evaluation Cycle-Thorough Investigation and Identification with Dedication.

Exploration in breadth: exploration of alternatives; commitment making: making choices out of these alternatives; exploration in depth: consolidating current commitments; identification with commitment: integrating commitments into one's identity (Luyckx et al, 2008).

This model proposed that development of identity is a continuous process, through multiple iterations of searching and revising. Being under high level of psychological control could impair exploration in breadth. Too much parental pressure could block genuine commitment.

The Dual-Cycle Model offers an even more comprehensive perspective of ID processes, especially when ID revision often takes place, as seen in emerging adulthood (Luyckx et al., 2008).

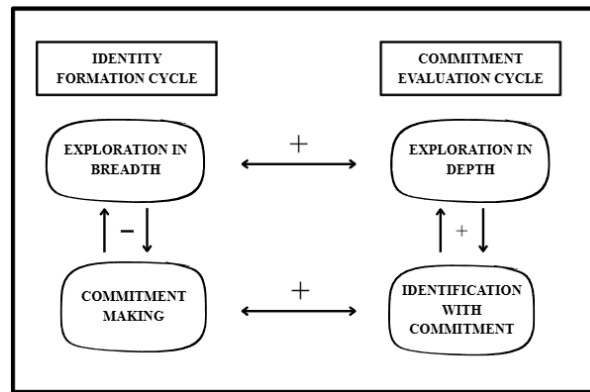


Fig 1.6: *Dual-Cycle Model of Identity Formation*

1.2.1.4 Narrative Identity Theory

Narrative Identity Theory states that ‘identity is constructed through personally held stories of one’s life that weave together the strands of the past, the present and the future’ (McAdams, 2001). Narrative Identity Theory argues that ‘people form their identities by constructing life stories’.

Family dynamics are central to the development of narrative identity. The way parents communicate, provide emotional support and allow independence can affect how adolescents interpret and incorporate their life events (McLean & Syed, 2015). Authoritarian parenting could inhibit the potential for self-authored stories, thus constraining self-coherence.

Narrative identity is especially relevant to young adulthood, because during this life stage, individuals think about their life paths and strengthen important, enduring commitments. (Mc Adams, 2001).

Within these theories, there is an overarching idea that identity development involves autonomy, exploration, and eventual integration of new knowledge. Too much parental behavioural and psychological control may inhibit these processes, into either foreclosed or diffused resolutions. On the other hand, appropriately structuring autonomy-supportive parenting may aid in identity achievement.

Therefore, “looking at perceived parental control in relation to identity formation has a theoretical basis in the developmental models that we have.” Knowing how adolescents and young adults view parental control helps to explain the relationship between family influences and identity development.

1.3 Perceived Parental Control

Whereas parental control has been studied as a behavioral construct, more recent studies have shown that what truly influences mental health is not really the parental behavior itself, but rather the subjective meaning children assign to that parental behavior (Grolnick &

Pomerantz, 2009). Perceived parental control captures youths' subjective understanding of, Assimilation of, and emotional responses to parental rules.

All forms of development are susceptible to this mediating variable of perception. According to the cognitive appraisal of stress paradigm, people respond to situations not in relationships of fact, but in relationships of meaning (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Often in parenting situations, two different adolescents may have various, but valid, interpretations of the same set of parental behaviors. This variable can create different emotional consequences and identity-based definitions.

Studies show that perceived psychological control is more strongly related to negative outcomes than objectively measured parental control (Barber & Harmon, 2002). Perceptions of high levels of perceived intrusiveness were associated with reduced autonomous functioning, lower self-esteem, and increased internalizing symptoms (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). At a developmental level, such perceptions may hinder development of self-authorship.

Autonomy is an essential psychological need in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Adolescents will integrate the values learned from autonomous support more successfully. Instead, perceived controlling parental behavior will result in external or introjected regulation of internalization, and will interfere with identity integration processes (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Overall, how the adolescent perceives parental behavior triggers these differing processes.

However, perceived parental control may be especially relevant for adolescents and emerging adults, as this time is characterized by increasing mental maturity and self-reflection (Steinberg, 2014). Adolescents' growing capacity to understand their parents' motives and separate control of behavior from intrusion of mind means that their perception of parental control is critical to the autoregulation process.

At the cultural level, context also moderates perceptions. In collectivistic cultures, where parental control and involvement are normative, they can be perceived as demonstrations of love and family obligation (Kagitcibasi, 2007). Even in these cultures, however, adolescents who perceive parents' actions as psychologically controlling report negative outcomes related to their identity (Rudy & Grusec, 2006). However, we can again see that even in this cultural context development of autonomy is a need.

Second, relational quality is a moderator of perception. Positive parent-child interactions and messages have the potential to prevent a control experience from being perceived negatively; control that occurs within a warm parent-child relationship may be

experienced as protective. The same control strategies may be experienced as oppressive when they occur within low warmth environments.

Because identity is dependent on exploration and its fulfilment through chosen commitments (Marcia, 1966; Luyckx et al., 2008), perceptions of parental control ought to be influential on the adolescent 's identity process. If control is viewed as thwarting exploration, then it is likely to suppress exploration and promote foreclosure or diffusion. If control is viewed as providing anchoring support, then it may serve as a secure base from which adolescents can explore and achieve their identity.

Hence, using perceived parental control instead of actual parental control is a better way of understanding the effect of family on identity development. Current research uses perceived parental control to directly tap into the subjective meaning of parental control in the development of adolescents and young adults.

1.4 Adolescence and Young Adulthood as Developmental Stages

Adolescence and young adulthood are separate, although related developmental stages defined by role and identity exploration, emerging autonomy, and changing relationships with family members. While the process of identity development commences in adolescence, there is evidence from studies showing that it persists into young adulthood (Erikson, 1968; Arnett, 2000), which makes these two stages relevant.

1.4.1 Adolescence

Adolescence is characterized by accelerated biological maturation, cognitive development and social reorientation (Steinberg, 2014). It is when emerging adults start to develop an abstract thinking capacity, which makes it possible for them to interrogate internalized values and belief structures (Piaget, 1972). Exploration in the areas of ideology, career and interpersonal relations is therefore possible.

During adolescence, as noted by Erikson (1968), the chief task is one of Identity and Role Confusion where the individual attempts to take charge of a concurrent tension between personal and familial independence. While other stages were characterized by this quest for independence, it is in adolescence that the need for independence becomes exacerbated by a reliance of parents both financially and emotionally.

Adolescence is a vulnerable period for parental influence, as parents continue to influence adolescent choices by exercising restrictions and instructing (Steinberg, 2001). However, hyper psychological control at this stage (6-12th grades) could hinder measures of autonomous functioning that reinforce identity achievement (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). When adolescents feel that parental actions are too intrusive, they may either need to

compromise by choosing between their own goals and their parents', resulting in identity foreclosure or diffusion (Marcia, 1966).

Therefore, adolescence is a developmental period during which perceptions of maternal control could be expected to have the most significant impact on the general course of identity development.

1.4.2 Young Adulthood

Young adulthood (or emerging adulthood from 18 to 25 years) is a time of increased independence, instability and experimentation with identity (Arnett, 2000). There is exploration of choices concerning education, career, work, romantic partnerships, and personal values during this time. Commitments to identity made through adolescent years may be reverted, adjusted, or confirmed.

Despite increased independence, young adults still may be subject to the influence of their parents where collectivistic cultures reinforce family ties (Kagitcibasi, 2007). Parental acceptance of financial dependence, cohabitation with parents and the requirements of cross-cultural adaptation can maintain the dependency.

Indeed, studies indicate that identity development continues to unfold in young adulthood especially in relationship and occupational domains (Luyckx et al., 2008). It is possible that young adults re-engage in cycles of exploration and commitment given fresh life circumstances. As such parental control perception at this age may continue to bear positive influences on identity consolidation.

Excessive control in young adulthood may hinder the process of establishing an independent sense of self, restricting choice and delaying achieving an adult identity. On the other hand, parents' encouragement of autonomy may provide support for feeling competent and efficacious leading to a coherent sense of self-identity (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The form of parental control may also alter, as the control may become more emotional or aspiration-based than behavior-based and thus may be more important to perceptions of control.

1.4.3 Developmental Continuity Between the Two Stages

Although identity exploration begins during adolescence, identity commitments are often established during young adulthood (Kroger, 2007). However, parental control could have an additive effect across adolescence and young adulthood. Adolescents who experience high levels of psychological control in childhood may bring few opportunities for development of independence to young adulthood, potentially impact identity development later in life.

By studying both adolescents and young adults, we have a wider developmental perspective. It provides an opportunity to explore both the potentially varying impact of

perceived parental control across developmental periods or stages, as well as the possibility that the effects of perceived parental control be constant across periods of transition.

As identity achievement takes place over a series of time courses instead of as a one-time event (Luyckx et al., 2008), both models provide a good picture to trace the influence of perceived parental control toward identity development from different angles.

2. Literature Review

This review surveys the current empirical literature on parenting styles, identity development, and psychosocial adjustment. It has been structured chronologically, taking in order of decreasing recency the most recent contemporary investigations, then those written earlier in the contemporary period.

2025: Contemporary Developments in Psychological Control and Identity

More recently, there has been a growing focus in the literature on exploring the ways in which various parental behaviors and parental effects impact identity development and emotional adjustment, such as through psychological mechanisms. For example, Zhou et al. (2025) studied parental burnout, and reported that tiredness in parents was significantly related to adolescents' perceptions of more psychological control and more internalizing symptoms.

In the same vein, Sihombing and Daulay (2025) elaborated on the role of excessively authoritarian/overprotective parenting as a dimension of the micro-social family context, reasoned that, excessive parental control and over-constraining hamper opportunities for autonomous exploration during adolescence, and thus constrain internal identity processes. Additionally, Motevalli and Baniyadi (2025) provided evidence that parental overprotection impacts negatively on young adults' autonomy through adversely affecting the internal self-efficacy. Similar findings by Altaf et al. (2025) demonstrated that the negative correlation between psychological control and adolescent anxiety was mediated by decreased self-esteem. These studies converge to reinforce the great importance of self-efficacy, self-esteem and autonomy on the link between parenting practices and identity and psychosocial variables.

2024–2021: Mediating Mechanisms and Longitudinal Evidence

From 2024 to 2021, research tended to explore these mediators and consequences of parental control in the long run. Sadoughi (2024) found helicopter parenting as a new type of intrusive parenting style that hampers the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness can cause emotion regulation problems and trait anxiety. Ding et al. (2024) proposed “involutionary attitudes” as the mediators affecting on parental rearing styles' influences on adolescent egocentricity development. Zhao et al. (2024) also confirmed

the mediating role of shyness and interpersonal self-support between high psychological control and lacking interpersonal trust.

Qian et al. (2022) further substantiated the mediating pathway through emotion regulation by showing that parental psychological control predicted social problems through diminished emotion regulation. Loeb et al. (2021) also presented the longitudinal evidence that perceived parental psychological control in early adolescence predict lower educational level and less supportive romantic relationships in middle adulthood.

2020–2015: Cultural, Digital, and Relational Contexts

During this time, the research broadened from a narrow focus solely on immediate psychological effects to investigating contextual factors and culture. Romm (2020) showed the significance of adolescents sociocognitive interpretations of parental control, showing that perceptions of the parental motivation provide an important factor of interaction as it altered the association of parental control to both depression and substance use. Here it is perception that was identified as an important moderating variable in developmental outcomes.

Following this, Zuhdi and Syauquillah (2020) considered the phenomenon of identity fusion, hypothesising that a high degree of similarity between individual and group identities might exacerbate the effects of family relations on identity. Pitti (2020) considered the effects of digital technologies and economic precarity, asserting that new struggles disrupt socialization in familiar ways and make the development of identities more complex.

Harker-van Heerden (2018) replicated the association between active modeling and instruction by parents about an informational identity style (reflecting, critiquing) in predicting a successful identity style. Hofer and Spengler (2018) further contributed to identity development in negative parenting and the subsequent outcomes; their study showed that negative parenting decreased feelings of a just world and increased aggression. Fadjukoff et al. (2016) approached identities from a lifespan perspective and scaled up some identity processes by asking whether parents'—or rather, emerging adults'—early achieved identities were associated with increased well-being, greater purpose, and more generativity that would contribute to a healthy developmental context for children. Manzi et al. (2015) identified the ongoing effect of intrusive parenting from the family of origin in negative effects on emerging adults' ability to form and adhere to a stable couple identity. Givertz and Segrin (2015) linked overinvolvement to inflated psychological entitlement and diminished sense of efficacy in emerging adults. These results imply that overinvolvement may impede competence and separate self-definition, which are at the heart of identity development.

Studies from 2016 onward maintain that parental psychological control and overprotection are related to psychological maladjustment, personal agency, and identity formation. Yet, recent reports highlight mediating mechanisms like global and relational self-worth, perceived competence, emotional regulation, trust, and innate sense of self. in the context of digital technologies and cultural norms of collecting societies.

While much of the literature on psychological control emphasizes its detrimental effects, the magnitude and even the nature of its relationship to identity seem to differ by context. These results highlight the need to consider perceived parental psychological control in a particular cultural and developmental context, serving as a precursor to the present study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Aim

The present study investigates the link between perceived parental psychological control and identity development among adolescents and young adults living in the city.

3.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are:

- The aim of our study is to investigate the relation between perceived parental psychological control and overall identity development among adolescents and young adults.
- To test if perceived parental psychological control reliably predicts the emergence of identity.

3.3 Rationale of the Study

The development of identity can be seen as one of the most vital developmental tasks during adolescence and young adulthood (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966). Although much work has been done researching the relationship between parenting styles and psychosocial adjustment, quite a few have researched the perceived psychological control of the parents and identity development. These have been studied especially from a western perspective.

While perceived parental psychological control (e.g. Guilt induction and emotional manipulation, Barber, 1996) has been linked to negative outcomes, including anxiety, low self-esteem and lack of autonomy (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010), the impact of perceived psychological control on identity development specifically (Luyckx et al., 2008), an integrated combination of exploration and commitment, has been less thoroughly investigated.

In addition, the bulk of the out existing literature has examined behavior or emotional adjustment, and paid relatively less attention to identity development as a central developmental task. Since identity development has been linked to long term psychological wellbeing, career stability and relational functioning (Kroger & Marcia, 2011), it is crucial to explore the impact of perceived parental psychological control has on the developmental process of identity formation.

In collectivistic culture where involvement of the parents may extend to adulthood (Kagitcibasi, 2007), perceptions of control may have different psychological connotations. To that extent, exploring the association between perceived parental psychological control and identity development will further inform on the processes within different cultural settings.

The current study aims to fulfil this missing link by investigating the association of perceived parental psychological control and overall identity development as measured by standardized, validated assessment tools. Using correlational and multiple regression analyses, this study will analyse whether perceived parental psychological control is a significant predictor of identity development.

3.4 Variables

- **Independent Variable (IV):** Perceived Parental Psychological Control
- **Dependent Variable (DV):** Overall Identity Development

3.5 Research Design

The current research employed a quantitative approach using a correlational research design. The association between perceived parental psychological control and identity development was statistically evaluated by a Pearson 's Product-Moment Correlation. Moreover, the predictive strength of perceived parental psychological control on identity development was analysed using a Simple Linear Regression.

3.6 Sample

The sample for the present study consisted of 200 participants residing in urban areas. The participants were between the ages of 18 and 25 years. The sample was selected using convenience sampling.

Inclusion Criteria

- Individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 years.
- Individuals residing in urban areas.
- Individuals who provided informed consent to participate in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals below 18 years or above 25 years of age.

- Individuals currently diagnosed with severe psychiatric disorders.
- Individuals who did not complete all the assessment tools fully.

3.7 Description of Tools Used

3.7.1 Psychological Control Scale - Youth Self-Report (PCS–YSR)

Barber (1996) created The Psychological Control Scale -Youth Self-Report (PCS-YSR) which measures adolescents' ideas of parental psychological control. The procedure was based on the means end conceptualization of behavioral control versus psychological control, measuring solely the intrusive, autonomy interfering behaviors.

3.7.1.1 Description

The PCS–YSR is an assessment of parental manipulation of a child 's psychological/emotional environments. It assesses:

- Guilt induction
- Love withdrawal
- Invalidation of feelings
- Personal attack
- Constraining verbal expression

There are 8 items in a scale. Respondents indicated their level of agreement. Items are related to parental actions.

3.7.1.2 Response Format

The items are rated on a 3-point Likert scale:

- 1 = Not like him/her
- 2 = Somewhat like him/her
- 3 = A lot like him/her

Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived parental psychological control.

3.7.1.3 Scoring

Scores are calculated by summing the responses across all items.

- Minimum possible score: 8
- Maximum possible score: 24

Higher total scores reflect greater perceived parental psychological control. No reverse scoring is required in the original version of the scale.

3.7.1.4 Reliability of PCS–YSR

Table 3.1 Reliability Coefficients of the Psychological Control Scale – Youth Self-Report

Measure	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Sample Type
Overall Psychological Control	0.80 – 0.85	Adolescent Samples

Note. Reliability coefficients reported by Barber (1996) and subsequent validation studies.

The PCS-YSR has good internal consistency, with Cronbach 's alpha usually reported to be in the .80 to .85 range

3.7.1.5 Validity of PCS–YSR

Table 3.2 Validity Evidence for the Psychological Control Scale - Youth Self-Report

Type of Validity	Evidence
Construct Validity	Positively correlated with anxiety, depression, and internalizing symptoms
Convergent Validity	Positively associated with measures of psychological distress
Discriminant Validity	Distinct from behavioural control constructs
External Validity	Replicated across cultural contexts

Note. Validity evidence based on Barber (1996) and Soenens & Vansteenkiste (2010).

The scales indicate good construct validity primarily in two respects - distinction between psychological control and behavioral control; and prediction of maladaptive psychosocial outcomes.

3.7.2 Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS)

Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) was in fact designed by Luyckx et al. (2008) to measure the processes of identity formation in the framework of the Dual Cycle Model of Identity Formation.

3.7.2.1 Description

The DIDS measures five dimensions of identity development:

1. Exploration in Breadth
2. Commitment Making
3. Exploration in Depth
4. Identification with Commitment
5. Ruminative Exploration

These dimensions are a reflection of both the identity development model creation and assessment loops. There are 25 items in the scale, five items for each of the dimensions.

3.7.2.2 Response Format

Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale:

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

3.7.2.3 Scoring

The score for each dimension is based on the summation of the scale points corresponding to the individual responses to the 5 items comprising that particular dimension. The total identity development score used in the current study was generated by summing across all 25 items.

- Minimum total achievable score: 25.
- Maximum attainable total score: 125

The higher the score, the greater the participation in the processes of identity development. Ruminative exploration indicates a chronic pattern of maladaptive exploration, but for total scoring in this study, all items were used to create a composite score of identity development.

3.7.2.4 Reliability of DIDS

Table 3.3 Reliability Coefficients of the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale

Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Exploration in Breadth	0.80 – 0.86
Commitment Making	0.82 – 0.88
Exploration in Depth	0.74 – 0.85
Identification with Commitment	0.83 – 0.90
Ruminative Exploration	0.70 – 0.80
Overall Scale	0.85 – 0.90

Note. Reliability coefficients reported by Luyckx et al. (2008) across adolescent and young adult samples.

The DIDS demonstrates strong internal consistency across subscales and overall scores.

3.7.2.5 Validity of DIDS

Table 3.4 Validity Evidence for the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale

Type of Validity	Evidence
Construct Validity	Supported by confirmatory factor analysis of five-factor structure
Convergent Validity	Positively associated with self-concept clarity and psychological well-being

Discriminant Validity	Distinguishes adaptive exploration from ruminative exploration
Criterion Validity	Predicts psychosocial adjustment outcomes

Note. Validity evidence based on Luyckx et al. (2008) and subsequent empirical research.

The scale has been widely validated across cultural contexts and age groups, demonstrating robust psychometric properties.

3.8 Procedure

Before the data collection, participants were explained the general purposes of the study and were reassured of the anonymity and confidentiality. All of the participants completed an informed consent form prior to the administration of the questionnaires.

The participants completed the Psychological Control Scale - Youth Self-Report and the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale. The instructions were explained carefully and the children were asked to answer all questions as honestly as possible. There was no specific time constraint.

When finished, the answer sheets were collected and scored based on the scoring manuals and then the data were entered into the statistical package.

3.9 Statistical Measures Used for Data Analysis

In order to process and analyze the data obtained from the experiment, descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were carried out.

Descriptive Statistics

- Mean
- Standard Deviation

These measures were used to describe the mean and standard deviation of perceived parental psychological control and the mean and standard deviation of identity development scores.

Inferential Statistics

- Pearson 's Product-Moment Correlation was conducted to analyse whether perceived parental psychological control was related to identity development.
- Simple Linear Regression was run to assess whether perceived parental psychological control significantly predicts identity development.

3.10 Hypotheses

Research Hypotheses

H₁: There is a strong correlation between perceived parental psychological control and overall development of identity in adolescents and young adults.

H₂: Parental psychological control will be a significant predictor of total identity development in adolescents and young adults.

Null Hypotheses

H₀₁: Perceived parental psychological control will not be significant correlated with general identity development in adolescents and young adults.

H₀₂: Perceived parental psychological control will not be significantly related to overall identity development in adolescents and young adults.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were calculated to explore the means and variability of the measures of perceived parental control and identity development.

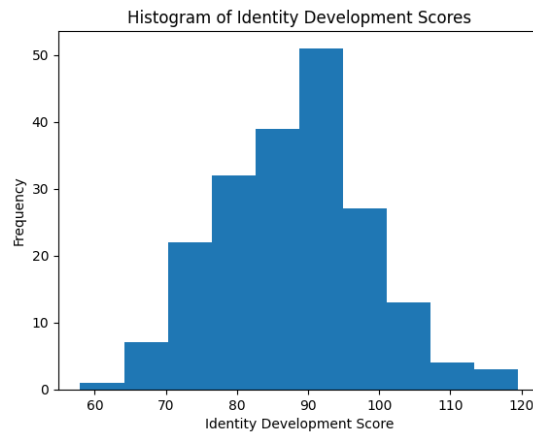
For the Dimensions of Identity Development (DID), total valid responses were N=199. The mean was 88.18 (SD=11.532), and the scores ranged from 40-125.

For the Psychological Control Scale, n = 199 valid responses were recorded (M = 14.03, SD = 4.702, Min-Max = 8-24)

From these descriptive statistics, we get an idea about the distribution of perceived parental psychological control scores and identity development scores of our sample.

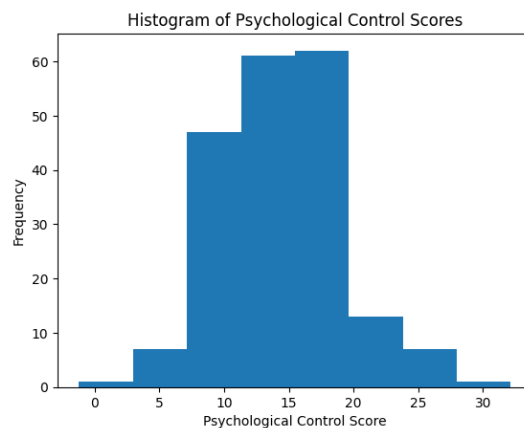
Table 4.1 *Descriptive Statistics for Identity Development and Psychological Control*

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Identity Development (DIDs)	199	88.18	11.532	40	125
Psychological Control (PCS)	199	14.03	4.702	8	24

**Figure 4.1**

Histogram Showing Distribution of Identity Development Scores

Figure 4.1 illustrates the distribution of identity development scores. The scores appear approximately normally distributed, with most participants scoring around the mean range.

**Figure 4.2**

Histogram Showing Distribution of Perceived Parental Psychological Control Scores

Figure 4.2 presents the distribution of perceived parental psychological control scores. The distribution shows moderate variability around the mean.

These descriptive statistics indicate the distribution of perceived parental psychological control and identity development scores among the sample.

4.2 Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation

The association between perceived parental psychological control and identity development was assessed through the use of a Pearson 's Product-Moment Correlation.

Results showed a weak positive relationship between perceived parental control and identity development, $r(197) = .204$, $p = .004$.

Since $p = .004$ which is less than .05, the relationship between perceived parental psychological control and identity development is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Thus, the null hypothesis (H) that there would be no significant relationship between perceived parental psychological control and identity development was rejected.

However, the correlation is weak for perceived parental psychological control ($r=.204$) showing that there is only a small relationship with identity formation in this sample.

Table 4.2 *Pearson's Correlation Between Psychological Control and Identity Development*

Variables	1	2
1.Identity Development (DID)	--	0.204**
2.Psychological Control (PCS)	0.204**	--

Variable	N	r	p
DID & PCS	199	0.204	0.004

Note. $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

4.3 Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Hierarchical simple linear regression was used to see if perceived parental psychological control was a significant predictor of identity development.

The regression model is statistically significant, $F(1, 197) = 8.546$, $p = .004$.

The model summary indicated:

- $R = .204$
- $R^2 = .042$
- Adjusted $R^2 = .037$

A small but statistically significant relationship was found between perceived parental psychological control and the indicator of identity development. The R^2 of .042 reveals that perceived parental psychological control explains 4.2% of the variance in scores of identity development.

Table 4.3 *Model Summary for Simple Linear Regression*

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.204	0.042	0.037	11.319

Table 4.4 ANOVA Table for Regression Model

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1094.902	1	109.902	8.546	0.004
Residual	25237.942	197	128.111		

Total	26332.844	198			
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Perceived parental psychological control showed had a standardized beta coefficients () was .204, $t = 2.923$, $p = .004$. This showed that perceived parental psychological control was a significant predictor of identity development.

Table 4.5 Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	81.161	2.530	--	32.078	0.000
Psychological Control (PCS)	0.500	0.171	0.204	2.923	0.004

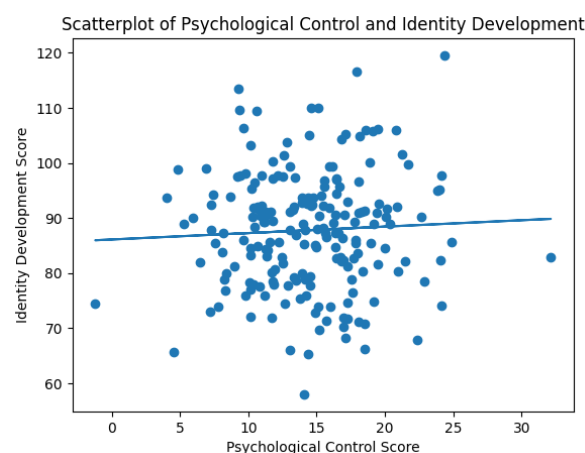


Figure 4.3

Scatterplot Showing Relationship Between Psychological Control and Identity Development
Figure 4.3 presents the scatterplot illustrating the relationship between perceived parental psychological control and identity development. The slight upward slope of the regression line indicates a weak positive association between the variables, consistent with the obtained correlation coefficient ($r = .204$).

4.4 Summary of Findings

The results of the study indicate that:

1. A statistically significant, but weak positive relationship exists between perceived parental psychological control and identity development.
2. Perceived parental psychological control is a significant predictor of identity development, but the amount of variance in identity development accounted for by perceived parental psychological control is only 4.2%.

These results would seem to indicate that certain dimensions or aspects of parental psychological control have some relation to identity achievement in terms of the amount of

variance accounted for, however, the effect is not very strong meaning that the inherent predictive power of perceived parental psychological control has a limit.

5. Discussion

The goal of this study was to explore the correlation and prediction of perceived parental psychological control on identity development of city adolescents and young adults. By running Pearson 's correlation and simple linear regression tests, the results provided weak but significant correlation between the two variables and weak significant prediction of perceived parental psychological control to identity development. It also explained 4.2% of the variance.

5.1 Interpretation of the Correlation

Results also showed a weak, positive correlation (. 204,. 004) between perceived parental psychological control and identity development, meaning that the more perceived parental psychological control was reported, the higher levels of identity development were reported by participants in the current sample.

The negative direction of this association is of particular interest. Models such as Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and Erikson's psychosocial theory (Erikson, 1968) tend to imply that psychological control suppresses autonomy and could inhibit identity exploration. Empirically, psychological control has been associated with maladaptive outcomes such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and foreclosure, Erikson's fifth stage of psychosocial development, identity crisis (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010).

Nevertheless, the weak positive relation found in this current study indicates that perceived psychological control does not universally hinder identity development. Perhaps the high degree of parental involvement (though perceived as controlling) offers structure, expectations, and guidance for some elements of identity formation, specifically commitment making. Within the structured environment of the urban setting, parental expectations for education and career might lead to greater decisiveness and consequently, higher overall identity development.

5.2 Predictive Role of Psychological Control

The regression analysis showed perceived parental psychological control was a significant predictor of identity development, $F(1, 197) = 8.546, p = .004$. However, the R^2 of .042 suggests that psychological control accounted for only 4.2% of the variance of identity development.

This result indicates that not only is there a significant effect of psychological control but that identity development is also shaped by many other factors—such as those introduced above between relationships with peers, school, personality, socio-economic status, and cultural values (Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Parental psychological control, then, is only one small part of the whole picture.

This small effect size suggests that identity development cannot be primarily driven by perceived psychological control. This is consistent with multidimensional approach to identity development, which takes into account the influence of personal and contextual factors (Luyckx et al., 2008).

5.3 Cultural Considerations

The cultural context may also shed light on the results. Parental involvement and control in collectivist and semi-collectivist cultures tend to be normative and may represent the realization of parental care and responsibility (Kagitcibasi, 2007). With regard to this, the level of autonomy thwarting may not be experienced often in the same way.

Especially urban young adults, may also adopt parent's aspirations for academic achievement and career success. Then, internalization may lead to stronger rather than confused identity commitments, which in turn may account for a positive relationship between perceived control and identity development.

Therefore, the perception of the controlling behavior of parents as expressing authority or caring behavior might be built on different premises in different cultures. Perception is the key to experiencing control—or not.

5.4 Possible Explanations for the Weak Strength

Several factors may explain the weak magnitude of the relationship:

1. The influence of other systems (peers, institutions, etc) present other systems such as family, peers and institutions is evident, their role diminishing the effect of parental control.
2. A general identity development score may have prevented the discovery of relevant sub-dimensions (e.g., ruminative exploration versus commitment).
3. Participants: 18–25. Growing independence might reduce reliance on parents.
4. Exposure to the urban environment can expose children to a variety of identities that are beyond their control, borne of opportunities, social resources, and social risks that exist in many urban situations.

Hence, even though statistically significant, the relationship was practically modest.

5.5 Implications of the Study

The results imply that perceived parental psychological control, despite its significance, may not have a profound impact on identity development among urban young adults. It emphasizes the need to explore identity development from an ecological perspective.

This study adds to the body of literature suggesting that psychological control does not always contribute to maladaptive identity development and that the association may be moderated by external factors.

5.6 Conclusion of Discussion

In sum, the current research revealed a weak positive relationship between perceived parental P.C and identity development. P.C was a significant predictor of identity development; however, it explained very little of the variance, suggesting the multidimensional nature of identity development.

These results highlight the need to examine not just the direct effect of parental control, but the role that perception, cultural context and developmental stage play in identity development.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the Study

In this study, we investigated the relationship between perceived parental psychological control and identity development among a sample of urban adolescents and young adults ages 18-25. We are guided in our study by developmental models of identity development (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966) and research on autonomy-thwarting parental behaviors (Barber, 1996).

The research method used was a quantitative, correlational design. A sample of 200 urban dwellers was used; 199 usable returned results. Data was gathered using The Psychological Control Scale – Youth Self-Report (Barber, 1996) and The Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (Luyckx et al., 2008).

Analysis involved Descriptive Statistics, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation and Simple Linear Regression. It was found that there was a slight, but statistically significant correlation between perceived parental psychological control and identity development ($r = .204$, $p = .004$). A regression determined that parental psychological control significantly predicted identity development and accounted for 4.2% of the variance.

6.2 Conclusion

Results of the current study suggest that perceived parental psychological control is related to identity development among urban youth; this relationship, however, is weak.

Although theories often propose that being psychologically controlled damages one's sense of autonomy and might inhibit exploration of identity, results in the current study indicate that the link between psychological control and identity development may be more complex. Authoritative control may be present in values that can be internalized or serve as a basis for guided exploration.

Despite this, the small effect size suggests that identity development is unlikely to be significantly accounted for by perceived parental psychological control exclusively. Identity development is a complex and multidimensional process, likely to be affected by many other variables such as peer groups, school experiences, individual differences, socio-economic status and the socio-cultural context.

Hence, while parental psychological control is measurable, it remains only an element of a larger developmental context of identity.

6.3 Relevance of the study

Theoretical Implications

This study adds to the present body of literature by indicating and identifying that the effects of parental psychological control on identity development may not always be overly negative or perceived in a deterministic way. The weak positive association in this study suggested that the effects of psychological control could differ in significant ways due to context, perceived effects, or development stage.

The results also support the multidimensional interactions view of identity development within the context of parenting. This view argues that no single parenting dimension explains identity development.

Practical Implications

The findings have implications for parents, educators, and mental health professionals:

- The lack of parental involvement might not be an obstacle for the development of identity formation.
- Awareness programs can facilitate parents in identifying whether their voices are instructive and validating or psychologically controlling.
- With support from literature counselors working with young adults may include family as one of many factors impacting with young adults.

Cultural Implications

In urban and semi-collectivistic settings, involvement may be seen as a responsibility rather than an intrusion. The authors highlight that one needs to explore parenting in a cultural context rather than apply Western definitions of autonomy.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations:

1. A correlational design was employed; thus, no causal inferences can be made. The study cannot show that psychological control causes or has an effect of identity development.
2. Only urban residents between the ages of 18 and 25 were sampled, so the results are not necessarily generalizable to members of the study population who are from other areas or age groups.
3. Convenience sampling was used which could affect the representativeness of the sample.
4. Use was made of self-report measures, which are subject to possible response bias or socially desirable responding.
5. Aggregating all subscales into a total identity development score might have obscured potential differences in effects among the specific subscales like exploration and commitment.
6. Psychological control accounted for a relatively small amount of variance so there are probably additional, unmeasured variables that have equal or greater impact on identity development.

6.5 Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies may:

- Look at individual parts of identity rather than a total score, for instance.
- Longitudinal designs should also be incorporated to explore the causal nature of relationships.
- Compare adolescents and young adults separately to look at developmental differences.
- Investigate possibly moderating variables like gender, socio-economic status or cultural orientation.
- Make cross-cultural comparisons to control for their effect.

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