Modernization of Parenting Styles in Turkey from Past to Present:

Adolescence and Adulthood

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to summarize the modernization of parenting styles in Turkey from the past to the present. The present review focuses on the reviewing parenting in Turkey with a focus on the traditional family structure of this country from past to present as well as comparing parenting in Turkey and other countries. In addition, *the Mother-Child Education Program* and *Father Enrichment Program* aimed to improve the parenting of Turkish mothers and fathers were also discussed in this paper. The research was based on the literature review analysis method. The data source of the research consists of articles published on adolescence and adulthood in Turkey. This review has contributions to the area that it summarizes present parent-adolescent and parent-adult relationships in Turkey by interpreting the general traditional structure of Turkish family from very early years to the present with cross-cultural studies. Because of how the Turkish parents caring their infants and children that were not clearly answered in this literature, further studies are suggested to concentrate on this area in detail.

Keywords: Parenting Styles in Turkey, Adolescence, Adulthood.

Introduction

In recent decades, numerous researchers are focusing on the importance of parenting for the development of children of different age groups and from different parts of the world. Developmental psychologists agree that if people have abundant parental support during childhood, they are likely to have a relatively good adjustment through adulthood. According to Harper (2004), "good parenting" may equal "good health" later in life. Harper also illustrates that children who got assistance and acceptance from their parents grew up with fewer psychological or physical problems in the future. Parenting style can be defined as a constellation of attitudes toward the child that create an emotional climate in which the parents' behaviors are expressed (Zumbach & Oster, 2020). Indeed, parenting style is a characteristic of the child's social environment, within which socialization occurs. Arıkan and Kumru, (2021) present 4 classifications of parenting behavior: (a) authoritative (high in both demandingness and responsiveness); (b) authoritarian (high in demandingness but low in responsiveness); (c) permissive or indulgent (high in responsiveness but low in demandingness); and (d) rejecting- neglecting (low in both responsiveness and demandingness) Which parenting style is appropriate for the Turkish society is the question Turkish researchers and psychologists are trying to answer. Although the number of the studies related to parenting in Turkey for different age groups has increased in the last fifty years, it can be said that the studies for infancy (Boztepe et al., 2020; Sieben &

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Yıldırır, 2020; Yavuz & Selcuk, 2018) and early childhood parenting (Acar et al., 2019; Aytac et al., 2019) are somewhat limited. Therefore, this review focuses predominantly on the relationships of Turkish adolescents and adults with their parents from past to present.

Purpose of the research

The present review has two purposes: (1) to review parenting in Turkey with a focus on the traditional family structure of this country from past to present, and to compare parenting in Turkey and other countries, and (2) to give examples of specific projects and programs for improving parenting Turkish mothers and fathers.

Method

Research design

The "systematic compilation" method was used in this study, which aims to determine the research on parenting styles for adolescence and adulthood from past to present in Turkey and the projects and programs designed to improve the parenting roles of Turkish families. A systematic review is a method used to identify and select relevant studies, and to collect and analyze data from studies included in the review (Millar, 2004, and Littell, Corcoran, & Pillai, 2008). For this purpose, the findings of 37 studies published between 1995 and 2021 were examined. These research studies were obtained from ERIC, ULAKBIM, Google Academic databases. While searching, the keywords "parenting styles in Turkey", "adolescence", "aduthood", "projects to improve parenting in Turkey", "programs to improve parenting in Turkey" were primarily preferred.

Findings

The articles examined within the scope of the review were presented in line with the aims of the research. First of all, studies on adolescence and parenting styles for adults in Turkey were determined. Secondly, it has been found out how the projects and programs carried out to improve parenting in Turkey in this age range affect parenting styles. The findings obtained as a result of this research are presented in detail under the main headings of; a) Family structure and relations in Turkey, b) The major traditional values of Turkish youth in the past, c) Adolescence, d) Adulthood in Turkey, and e) Special projects and programs for mothers and fathers in Turkey.

Family structure and relations in Turkey

Traditionally, Turkey is a country experiencing a rapid social change while maintaining close interpersonal and interdependent relationships (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2000). The individual has a network of close ties, including the nuclear family, relatives, and close neighbors (Manalel, & Antonucci, 2020).

Past studies (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2000) include the comparing the values of Turkish and American university students. Their findings have revealed that individualistic, or personal values are more prevalent among United States students, whereas loyalties to the family and to the society are predominant among the Turkish sample. In many instances, the Turkish people even displayed strong feelings of kinship and brotherhood with the larger world community (Carpi & Pinar Şenoğuz, 2019).

Children are highly valued in Turkey. Preschoolers are almost always cared for in the home by the mother, grandmother, or other female relatives. Family units are strong, and children defer to the authority of their parents. Children seem to be treated gently, but firmly. According to the survey that included 2000 parents in Tokyo, 500 parents in the United States, and 900 parents in Turkey, 79% of mothers in Turkey strongly felt that their children were their "treasure" which is higher than the percentage of Japanese and U.S. parents' answers (Goto et al., 2020).

The major traditional values of turkish youth in the past

Turkey has been going through a rapid social change within the past century. The Turkish republic was established as a secular democratic state in 1923 following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Since then, the country has undergone dramatic changes in almost every area of life- from the alphabet to numerous laws and regulations. When we look at the history of Turkey, this country changed after the revolutions of Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, and became dedicated to a vast program of industrialization, secularization, and Westernization to be superimposed on a traditional society that was rural, nonindustrialized, and Islamic in culture. In their very early studies, almost 50 years ago, Ata (2021) focused on Turkish university students to understand whether or not they represent old traditions, modern Turkey, a Western viewpoint, or some blending of all these patterns. At that time, they defined Turkish youth as "intensely nationalistic." The authors asked parents from different countries this question: "As a parent, what two specific lessons will you try hardest to teach your children?" 20 percent answered, "To be useful to the nation". On the other hand, for the United States and France, the percentages of this answer were only 3 percent and 6 percent.

Throughout Turkish society, there has been a strong emphasis on family loyalty. This finding is consistent with research findings emphasizing Japanese values as "permanent membership and ultimate loyalty" (Sümer et al., 2021). These researchers reported that ties to the local community were strong, and among the devout, Islam provided an otherworldly orientation. The same research findings indicate that in the peasant community the immediate, material interests of the extended family seem to have been paramount. But, according to these researchers, outside the peasant community, while loyalty to the nation is new, the Turk has usually been caught up in some loyalty that transcends his private self. According to Ataca (2009), who studied the university students of the 1970s, generation differences in the 1970s were found to be greater than they were in the 1950s; the students of the 1970s attributed more importance to individualistic values, whereas their parents considered socio-cultural normative values to be more important.

Adolescence

Parenting practices on adolescents in Turkey

Adolescence represents a transition period characterized by relative differentiation from family; increased importance of peers; increased demands for freedom, autonomy, and enjoyment; and less concern with traditional and communal values (Bakir et al., 2020). Although theorists and researchers might expect the parent-child relationship to be different in adolescence than in childhood, a supportive and warm parent-adolescent relationship is still an important resource for positive developmental outcomes (Arıkan & Kumru, 2021). Lansford et al., (2021) stress that in adolescence parental acceptance or warmth is one of the three specific components of authoritativeness that contributes to healthy psychological development and school success.

Adolescents aged 10-19 comprise almost one-quarter of Turkey's total population. Similar to Japanese adolescents, nearly 10-14 years old all adolescents in Turkey are living with both parents, and eight out of nine lived with both parents in 1993 (Population Council, 2002), whereas in the United States, adolescence symbolizes a second birth, a separation from one's past and one's parents (Rothbaum et al., 2000). Young adolescents behaved similarly to their age peers worldwide. They did seem to be more relaxed, friendly, and innocent than American teens of the 1990s (Lansford et al., 2021). Turkey tends to favor maintaining harmony among in-group members. Within a network of close bonds, the qualities of forgiveness, helpfulness, loyalty, love, and humility are crucial in maintaining harmonious relationships (Aygun & Imamoglu, 2002). This is parallel with the findings of Rothbaum (2000), who discussed the symbiotic harmony that stems from a concern with obligation and others' expectations among Japanese people.

In their study on a Turkish sample, Özcelik, (2017) studied high school students and their mothers. They found out that dimensions of mother attachment were also expected to directly predict the corresponding attachment dimensions of adolescents. Özcelik (2017), states that mothers reported higher levels of acceptance/involvement than strict control, which is consistent with traditional parenting roles in Turkish culture. According to her, this may be due to the fact that Turkey is a relationship-oriented culture, and within this context, attachment anxiety is a more expected pattern than attachment avoidance (2001).

In her doctoral dissertation, Kumru (2002) studied 436 Turkish early adolescents and examined the effects of parenting style, and parent attachment on prosocial behaviors as well as on perspective taking, prosocial moral reasoning, and empathy. The findings of this research indicated that girls were more prosocial toward all family members and showed more respectful behavior toward mothers and grandparents. Also, another finding of this research revealed that younger age groups showed more prosocial and respectful behaviors than older age groups. The same research findings also indicated that authoritative and indulgent parenting is the most frequently observed parenting style in Turkish culture. However, there has been no research exploring the relations between parenting styles and prosocial behaviors among Turkish early adolescents.

Peer groups

Peer relationships play an increasingly important role in socialization during adolescence. Forming and maintaining positive peer relationships are important social tasks for all individuals, especially for adolescents (Tarhan et al., 2020). The same researchers found that poor peer relationships were associated with unsatisfactory developmental outcomes such as feelings of loneliness, social anxiety, distress, and low academic achievement.

Many researchers agree that adolescence is a developmental period of high risk for loneliness and that loneliness occurs at a higher frequency among adolescents than among any other age group. Jackson and Goossens, (2020) point out those younger adolescents in Turkey spend most of their leisure time with their families, whereas older adolescents generally with peers. Because adolescents are beginning to expect more from their friends than just sharing activities, they tend to feel lonelier during these years than ever before.

The family provides three basic functions before, during, and after adolescence that is never fully replaced by the peer group or any other social structure throughout a lifetime (Allender & Allender,

2015). First, the family provides a sense of cohesion. Second, the family provides a model of adaptability. Finally, the family provides a network of communication experiences through which the individual learns the arts of speech, interaction, listening, and negotiation (Allender & Allender, 2015). Peers and families are the most important dimensions during adolescence. Probably, peer pressure was significantly, negatively correlated with loneliness. Family structure and communication were significantly correlated with loneliness. The researcher studied ninth-grade students from Turkey, and the results of her study showed that peer relations appear to be the best predictor of adolescent loneliness. In Turkish society, girls tend to have difficulty establishing relations with the opposite sex (Toker Gökçe & Dikme, 2020). That is, girls, seem to prefer establishing same-sex peer relations. Especially in Turkish society, families have tended to have a greater influence in the regulation of social conduct and the development of identity than do families in Western societies. In addition to it, family approval of peers is very important in Turkish society. In some cases, adolescents establish peer relations with the offspring of their parents' friends or with peers that their parents allow. Adolescents often have difficulty in meeting with their peers and establishing opposite-sex peers.

Most of the recent research related to late adolescents and young adults in Turkey generally focused on university students. The study of Gozu et al., (2020) examined the interplay between the perceived parenting styles of university students. The findings of this research state that authoritarian and permissive /indulgent parenting styles were found to be the most common child-rearing practices among Turkish parents. According to the same research findings, these types of parenting styles are likely to be associated with secure attachment, high levels of self–esteem and self-concept clarity, and low levels of trait anxiety.

Sexuality and relationships

Not only social beliefs, values, and attitudes, but also the dynamics and relativity of sexual norms change importantly in Turkey. There have been many changes in Turkey in the last 3-4 decades. The context of the values of traditional Turkish society plays a direct role in the vision of people about sexual normality and pathology, dynamics, and relativity of sexual norms. Consequently, talking about and discussing sexuality is still taboo in Turkey (Duyan et al., 2001). More specifically, in Turkey premarital female virginity is still considered an important indicator of a woman's purity and innocence (Aygunes, 2017), and although sexual activity before marriage is acceptable for men, it is strongly discouraged for women. Furthermore, the same researcher also mentions that women who have sex before marriage are viewed as less desirable marriage partners and may be seen as having stained their honor and the honor of their families. Traditionally, in Turkish culture, it was important for a woman to be a virgin at the time of her wedding.

In the majority of Turkish society, the choice of a partner, even for marriage, should be compatible with the values and statutes of the family. More importantly, sexual education of children and adolescents within the family is very poor, and sometimes it is forbidden to discuss sex in traditional Turkish families. As a result, Eşsizoğlu et al., (2011) report that the attitudes and expectations of Turkish society about sexuality and sex education differ according to their socioeconomic status, family roots, their sex, their knowledge about the meaning of sex education, their perception of sexual subjects, their first encounter with these subjects and their resources.

Adulthood

The attitudes of Turkish adults toward romanticism, and mate selection

Turkey is a society in transition. The concept of romantic love was introduced to Turkey around the middle of the nineteenth century as an accessory to the westernization movement. Currently, a modern whereby the prospective families introduce the young couple to each other is replacing the traditional arranged marriages, and western-style marriages are on the rise, especially among the young and educated Turkish adults (Medora et al., 2002). In the same research, the authors state that the cultural characteristics in the U.S. and Turkish cultures influence a person's definition, concept, and meaning of romanticism. These cultural attitudes and beliefs are also likely to influence the ideal qualities that young adults desire in a prospective partner.

Individualism is correlated with personal initiative, personal autonomy, self-reliance, and freedom. In more traditional societies, collectivism is related to family integrity and family unity. Collectivism is "a sense of harmony, interdependence, and concern for others" (Medora et al., 2002). In their cross-cultural studies, Medora, et al. report that Americans had the highest romanticism mean score, followed by the Turkish students. The Indian participants had the lowest romanticism score. The findings of this research seem to be parallel to the findings of Rothbaum et al., (2000) which emphasize that in the United States, there is relatively more emphasis on relationships in which romantic love continues to bind mates even after marriage and children than in Japan. Consistent with predictions and the long history of romantic beliefs in Turkey, Turkish youth expressed more romantic beliefs than Indian youth. The differences between the two-collectivist cultures concerning romanticism are also consistent with research on marriage and family. Turkey seems to have marriages based on spousal love and takes into consideration parents' and family members' wishes. One reason for this dependence of the newlyweds on the extended family could be due to the economic conditions in Turkey where families fulfill many of the needs which are typically executed by social service agencies in western industrialized cultures.

Marriage practices

Marriage practices are also changing from traditional to more modern in Turkey. In a traditional union, the father says whom the daughter will marry and may arrange the marriage. Very traditional couples will go to live with their husbands' families. This result seems to parallel the results of Rothbaum et al., (2000). In that study, the authors mentioned that in Japan, three-generation households are still more common than in the United States, and almost twice as many elderly persons live with their adult children. On the other hand, in less traditional relationships, marriages are planned, paid for, and conducted by the couple with varying degrees of involvement by the couple's families. Ivy (1998) emphasizes that the average age for a bride in Turkey is 17-18 in more traditional areas; in the cities and among educated women, the average age is mid-twenties.

Divorce is uncommon and not easy to obtain in Turkey just like in many other traditional countries such as Japan, China, Korea, etc. According to the same research findings, a judge must be convinced that the marriage cannot succeed, and life for divorced women remains generally more difficult than for divorced men (Ivy, 1998). In the same research, it was stated that treatment of the elderly in Turkey is also somewhat reminiscent of earlier times in America. There were generally no nursing or retirement homes, since almost exclusively their family care for older Turks. The expectations and child-rearing practices of the traditional Turkish culture seem to result in respect for tradition, religiosity, obedience, politeness, honor for parents and elders, adherence to social expectations and normative patterns, and behavior following the expectations of one's close social network (Aygun & Imamoglu, 2002).

Uleman et al., (2000) compared the closeness types, emotional, support, identity, reputation, similarity, and harmony, among family, relatives, and friends for Euro-Americans, Asian-Americans, Dutch, Turks, and Japanese societies in their studies. They found that there was a high reputational and emotional closeness to family among Turks. Moreover, after they looked at how these cultures compared to each other in terms of the types of closeness, the authors also pointed out that, they saw Euro-Americans and Dutch as most distant, Japanese and Turks closest, and Asian Americans in between. All these findings would seem to be quite similar to the findings of Rothbaum et al., (2000). They mentioned the symbiotic harmony in Japanese society from very different points of view.

Special projects and programs for mothers and fathers in Turkey

The mother-child education program

In Turkey, The Mother-Child Education Program (MCEP) has introduced a new approach to early childhood education, which targets and has many positive benefits for both the mother and the child (Kagitcibasi et al., 1995). According to the same researchers, the goal is to offer children and mothers enrichment, by providing support for their already existing strengths and building on them at both the individual and family levels. The project not only did not have effects on the child but also have effects on the mother. Trained mothers were more verbal, less punitive, and more responsive to their children and had greater interaction with their children. A great deal of research and theory in developmental psychology has stressed the importance of the orientations in childrearing and discipline for the cognitive, moral, and personality development of the child. The adolescents whose mothers had been trained reported more positive retrospective memories of their mothers (from childhood). They remembered their mothers as talking to them, being more appreciative of them, more consoling, and less likely to use physical punishment. This is important, considering that Turkey is a country that does not have a widespread system of early childhood education, although it has a very large number of children who are at risk of developmental deficits because of socioeconomic disadvantage (Kagitcibasi et al., 1995).

Father enrichment program

It is well known that mothers as the primary caregivers have a significant impact on children's development. However, in addition to this somewhat traditional view, it is also now accepted that fathers, like mothers, have a significant impact on children's development and that they, therefore, need to take an active role in their children's life. This program has been developed to support fathers in the development of their children 3-9 years of age. The program also aimed to support fathers in their relationships with their children by teaching them positive disciplinary methods, such as offering explanations, instead of negative ones, such as punishment, beating, etc. The participants themselves have tried to express the need for others within the union to benefit from the program. In the patriarchal society of Turkey, all the outcomes of this program are positive in terms of parenting in this country (World Bank, 1999).

Conclusion

The main contribution of this review was to present parent-adolescent and parent-adult relationships in Turkey by interpreting the general traditional structure of the Turkish family from very early years to the present with cross-cultural studies. Due to Turkey's unique characteristics, this country has been going through a rapid social change within the past century. Since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkey has undergone dramatic changes in almost every area of life. It was mentioned that interpresonal relationships and loyalty to the family are predominant among the Turkish people.

The cross-cultural studies would seem to indicate that Turkish society is more emotionally closer to their family than any other individualist societies such as American society, Dutch, and Asian- Americans, etc. Because Turkish and Japanese people have both traditional cultures, some similarities were found in terms of adolescent and adult relations with their parents. All these similarities suggest that they both may represent collectivism but not individualism. But the recent studies related to Turkish adolescents show that modern Turkish youth prefer "interrelated individuation" characterized by a trend toward both integrative interrelatedness and differentiated individuation (Aygun & Imamoglu, 2002).

We can easily infer from the recent studies that Turkish people tended to prefer the newly arising, selfenhancing social power, achievement-related individualistic values, and universal values together with preferences for traditional group loyalties, benevolence, and interrelatedness (Aygun & Imamoglu, 2002). Despite the fact that Turkish younger adolescents prefer to spend their time with their families, older adolescents prefer their peers rather than their families (Uruk, 2003). This research finding would seem to parallel with the results of Rothbaum et al. (2000)' in which it is mentioned that the Japanese adolescents typically prefer to spend most of their time with their families too.

Although the sexual norms have also changed importantly in Turkey, talking about sexuality continues to be a taboo in Turkey (Duyan et al., 2001). Therefore, it is not surprising that most Turkish adolescents especially girls, cannot live their sexual life actively because of the traditional values of Turkey. In contrast, many adolescents in Western countries such as Unites States, Germany, England, etc, and even some other traditional countries feel much more relaxed in terms of their sexual needs. Turkish adults are found less romantic than Americans (Medora et al., 2002).

Marriage practices of Turkish adults are also changing. Especially in the West part of Turkey, the couples and their families plan marriages and the average age of the bride may change from place to place. Their children at home generally care for elder people. In addition to the modernization trends of parenting practices in Turkey, special projects and programs for mothers and fathers have played an important role in terms of modernization in Turkey. The outcomes of these studies would seem to indicate that they are quite important for children and also for the parents themselves.

The limitation of this literature review is that it only focused on Turkish adolescent and adult relationships with their parents. Although it was mentioned that according to Kumru (2002) authoritative and indulgent parenting is the most observed parenting style in Turkey, this point does not seem to clear enough. To evaluate parenting practices in Turkey objectively, beginning from infancy to adulthood, all the developmental stages should have concentrated on much more in detail. How Turkish parents caring their infants and children is a question that was not answered in this literature review. Further study may specifically need to focus on them.

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