

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE FORMATION OF ADOLESCENT IDENTITY IN HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract. Adolescence is a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, where the search for self-identity becomes significant. One of the factors that influence adolescent identity formation is the social environment, which includes family, peers, teachers and the school community. This study aims to determine the influence of the social environment on the identity formation of high school adolescents. This study used a qualitative approach involving five participants from several high schools in Kupang City. The results showed that three of the five participants felt that peers had a major influence on their identity formation. When entering high school, they tend to imitate their friends' style of dressing and speaking. Peers are considered a dominant factor in shaping lifestyle and behavior, where adolescents try to conform to the social norms prevailing in the environment.

Keywords: Adolescents, Social Environment, Peers, High School, Self Identity.

INTRODUCTION

Self-identity is the process of becoming a unique individual with an important role in life (Papalia, 2008), an awareness of personal unity and continuity, and beliefs that are relatively stable throughout the life span (Desmita, 2008), and is the organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and experiences into a consistent image of self that includes the ability to choose and make decisions, both regarding work, sexual orientation, and philosophy of life (Woolfolk, in Yusuf, 2011). When a person has acquired an identity, he will realize the distinctive features of his personality, such as his tribalism or untribalism, aspirations, anticipated future goals, the feeling that he can and must regulate his life orientation (Desmita, 2008). Erickson (Desmita, 2008) also argues that the biggest challenge faced by adolescents is the identity crisis, so that adolescents are expected to be able to achieve identity stability so that adolescents themselves can understand all forms of potential in themselves and be able to distinguish themselves from others and be able to make decisions in their own lives.

Adolescence is a period of individual life where psychological exploration occurs to find self-identity (Indriyati, Susanti, and PH, 2016: 54). This period is characterized by various changes that occur, including changes in the cognitive domain, social domain, and emotional (Sarouphim & Issa in Mahmudin, 2018). When individuals successfully go through the identity crisis they experience in adolescence, that is when self-identity begins to form. Adolescents who successfully complete their tasks in facing the identity crisis will form a stable self-identity in late adolescence (Erikson in Hakim, Mardhiyah, Irham, Nurkholifah, Ramdani, & Amri, 2021: 19).

The formation of adolescent identity can be influenced by various interacting factors, in this case social environmental factors (parents, peers, teachers). Parents or family is the first place where a person is formed and nurtured which will later form his own personality and identity or characteristics. But over time, a person will grow and develop and be able to mingle with the surrounding environment so that his identity is not only influenced by family or parents but can also be influenced by peers, the surrounding community and the school environment, namely the influence of teachers. When adolescents begin to enter high school, adolescents begin to interact more actively with diverse social environments that can open up opportunities for them to absorb various values, norms, and habits that are usually displayed by peers and teachers, be it how to speak, how to dress and how to act and behave.

According to Myers (2012: 252) adolescents who make changes in behavior or beliefs to be in harmony with others, to show their identity in order to be accepted and recognized by a group (Pratiwi in Sarmin, 2017: 103), it is said that the teenager experiences peer conformity. Therefore, it is important for parents, teachers, and society to create a positive and supportive environment for adolescent identity development. Parents can provide consistent guidance and open communication so that adolescents feel comfortable discussing the values they learn from the outside environment. Teachers at school also need to be good role models and build an atmosphere conducive to positive character building. In addition, adolescents need to be directed to choose peers who provide good influences and encourage them to develop their potential positively without losing their authentic identity

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was concentrated in Kupang City, NTT. In this study, we chose one house that we had agreed with the respondents to conduct the interview activities due to the limited time for us to meet with the respondents during school hours. The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of the social environment, including family, peers, teachers and community, in the identity formation of high school adolescents. This study also aims to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors of the social environment, explain the dynamics of adolescent identity formation, and provide insights to support positive adolescent identity development. This is an issue that often occurs among adolescents in Kupang City due to a lack of understanding that these social environments such as family, peers, and teachers specifically influence adolescent identity formation.

This research uses a quantitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews and questionnaires. The choice of this method was based on the limited time we had to meet with the respondents. For two respondents, data was collected through interviews because distance and time allowed us to meet directly. Meanwhile, for the other three respondents, we used questionnaires because we could not find a suitable time for a face-to-face meeting. Through our research methods, it is hoped that we can still produce information that supports the research objectives despite the limitations of time and distance. The results of this study are expected to provide in-depth insights into how social environments, such as family, peers and teachers can influence adolescents' identity formation process. By understanding more about this research, it can provide guidance to parents on ways they can support adolescents' identity development. Parents can act as a safe place for adolescents to talk and pour out their feelings. With open communication, adolescents do not feel the need to seek other unhealthy channels to channel their feelings, such as engaging in negative behaviors or seeking influence from bad peers.

This study was conducted with five high school adolescents who attend different high schools in Kupang City. All respondents' answers will be used as data for our research. The five respondents were aged 14 to 17 years old and agreed to give their time to be interviewed and to fill in our questionnaire. The purposive sampling we used was (a) respondents are teenagers who are currently in high school education, (b) respondents live in Kupang City. Further information can be found in the table below.

Name	Age	Class
Vischa	17 Years	Class 12
Mishel	16 Years	Class 10
Itin	15 Years	Class 10
Joe	15 Years	Class 11
Alexa	14 Years	Class 10

Both authors are active students of the first semester of the psychology study program of the faculty of public health studying at Nusa Cendana University. The authors made this research in order to fulfill the UAS assignment for the basic developmental psychology course. This research began on November 18, 2024, with the initial step in the form of an agreement between the researchers to meet with respondents at a predetermined location. However, in reality, the first respondent who had been contacted refused to be interviewed for certain reasons and did not have free time to meet. Faced with this situation, we decided to find another respondent who was willing to be interviewed. After some time searching, we found another respondent who happened to live close to one of the researchers, so the coordination process became easier.

We then arranged a mutually agreed-upon schedule and meeting place with the respondents. On the appointed day, we went directly to collect data using in-depth interview techniques with the first two respondents. During the interviews, we tried to explore information relevant to this research in a systematic and in-depth manner. After the interviews were completed, we again tried to find additional respondents to complement the data that had been obtained previously. However, in the process, we faced obstacles as most respondents refused to meet us in person for various reasons, such as time constraints or convenience. Therefore, we decided to change our data collection strategy by using a technique that did not require face-to-face meetings, namely through questionnaires distributed online. This technique allows us to still collect the required data despite not being able to meet face-to-face with the respondents, thus ensuring the completeness of the research data is maintained. Data were obtained by interviewing and distributing questionnaires where researchers listened, recorded and copied all the answers given by respondents and then examined further. Through this research, the author wants to reveal that the role of the social environment in the formation of adolescent identity is very important where parents have a big role from various other factors because with the teachings and upbringing of parents can make adolescents wiser in filtering various influences from the surrounding environment, especially from peers on the formation of adolescent identity itself.

However, some respondents admitted that the influence of the social environment, especially from peers, not only has a negative impact such as doing various actions (smoking) that adolescents of their age should not do but can also have a positive impact on them such as learning to respect each other, control emotions, build caring attitudes among friends, and friends can be present to support various activities and school assignments. It can be concluded that peers not only have a bad influence on adolescents themselves but can also have a positive impact and can be beneficial to themselves depending on how the teenager absorbs the various influences that exist from friends around.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

From the results of interviews and questionnaires, it was found that adolescents when entering high school education feel that the challenges they face are in the form of impolite attitudes from peers and difficulty adapting to new environments, for example at school there are rules not to operate cellphones during KBM hours but many children actually violate these rules because they feel the habit of using gadgets wherever and whenever. However, other respondents admitted that they did not experience severe challenges when entering high school life, such as Joe and Mishel.

Joe: I think there are no challenges at all in my friendship environment when I go to school because I think many of my friends we already know each other except with friends "who come from outside Kupang City such as from Rote, Soe, Atambua, and many more.

Mishel: So far, when I was in the high school environment, I did not have any challenges because my teachers and friends supported each other.

It can be concluded that the challenges faced by adolescents when entering high school, some feel that they face certain challenges as mentioned, but there are also those who feel they face no

challenges at all because they feel familiar with the existing friendship environment and also feel that the environment is always supportive.

1.1 Influence of Peer and Parent Interaction)

From the results of interviews and questionnaires, it was found that adolescents entering high school admitted that in making decisions they listened to various suggestions from everyone but in making decisions it still depended on their own decisions. However, there are also those who listen to the advice and opinions of their friends in making decisions related to their behavior. In our research, one of the respondents who claimed to behave in this way was Alexa.

Alexa: It's gone that far, I used to be a quiet person when I first entered a new class in high school and I decided to be a quiet child but instead my classmates disagreed with my decision, with the opinions and suggestions of my friends not to be quiet and invite me to make friends with them finally now I am an active child.

From some of the respondents' answers above, it can be concluded that the influence of advice from friends in decision making is that there are types of adolescents who listen to all existing suggestions and make decisions based on their own opinions and there are also adolescents who follow the advice of their friends in their daily behavior

1.2 Choice of Safe Place to Tell

From the results of interviews and questionnaires, it was found that adolescents entering high school admitted that they were more comfortable talking to friends than parents, such as respondents Itin and Vischa.

Itin: I am more comfortable talking to my parents because I feel I am closer to them and they know me better than anyone else.

Vischa: I am more comfortable confiding in my parents, because I think the only people who can keep secrets and be understanding are my parents.

In addition, other respondents also claimed to be more comfortable and feel safe to tell their friends for various reasons, such as respondents on behalf of Mishel and Alexa.

Mishel: I prefer to talk to my friends, because if I talk to my parents, I might feel that I am being judged.

Alexa: I am more comfortable telling my friends. Because when I tell them about my personal problems and even though they reply with laughter, it makes me forget about my problems and laugh with them. But they don't always reply with laughter, sometimes they also reply with advice, etc.

From some of the answers given by the respondents, it can be concluded that teenagers have different preferences in sharing their stories. Some, such as Itin and Vischa, feel more comfortable confiding in their parents due to emotional closeness, trust, and greater understanding from their parents. Meanwhile, others, such as Mishel and Alexa, chose friends as a place to share because they felt non-judgmental, entertained, and received light yet helpful emotional support. This suggests that factors such as comfort, safety, and communication style influence teens' choice of sharing

1.3 Negative and Positive Impacts of Peers

From the results of interviews and questionnaires, it was found that adolescents entering high school admitted that the influence of peers can have its own positive and negative effects. From the various answers, we as the author chose three answers from the five respondents, namely the answers from Itin, Vischa and Mishel.

Mishel: *The positive impact is that I can feel more helped by the tasks given by the teacher, my friends will help me to do the task. the negative impact is that I often listen to dirty words that come out of my friends' mouths.*

Itin : *the positive impact that I get is that my friends always remind and help each other when there is an assignment from the teacher and the negative impact that I experience is sometimes among friends gossiping with each other which can affect my mood.*

Vischa : *the positive impact, I am more able to make decisions with a cool head, I always lower my tone without getting emotional, I can lower my ego and can accept suggestions and opinions from my friends. the negative impact, I more often harbor emotions that eventually make me sick.*

Our findings on the role of the social environment on the identity formation of high school adolescents in Kupang City show that the influence of the social environment of the adolescent environment, especially in this case peers and parents, has a very important role in the formation of adolescent identity itself. Where there is a type of teenager who will absorb all the actions, behaviors and habits that are around him so that he will practice which will then form the identity or characteristics of the teenager himself. In this case, parents play a very important role as a means of control and reminder for adolescents so that they do not fall too far into the negative influences that exist in the surrounding environment, especially the friendship environment.

In fact, some teenagers feel that they are more comfortable and feel safe if they talk about their personal matters to their friends because they think that their friends can better understand and provide good advice related to the problems they are facing. In this case, parents must be able to become friends as well as parents so that children are comfortable and feel not judged when they tell their personal problems so that parents are able to provide wiser and better advice based on their experience and also people can always control the development of the teenage friendship environment at school through various certia that the teenager tells. However, there are also adolescents who feel safer and more comfortable sharing their personal problems with their parents because they think that there is no one else but their parents who understand them better and are closer to them than their own parents.

From the results of this study, it can be proven that the role of parents is very important and greater than various other influences because it is with parents that adolescents grow and develop and parents are the first teachers who teach children about various things in this world so that the upbringing and role of parents can determine how the teenager absorbs and filters various influences from outside that can be a factor in shaping the identity of the teenager himself

CONCLUSION

Based on this study, it can be concluded that the social environment, especially interactions with peers and parents, has a significant influence on adolescent identity formation. Interactions with peers often influence adolescents' behavior, especially in decision-making, where some adolescents tend to follow the advice of their friends, while others choose to listen to various parties but still rely on personal decisions. In contrast, interactions with parents have a different influence, with some adolescents feeling more influenced by relationships with family in shaping their behavior.

In terms of choosing a safe place to share their stories, there were different preferences among adolescents. Some felt more comfortable talking to parents because they were perceived as closer and more understanding, while others preferred peers because they felt more understood and less judged. Peers can also have positive impacts, such as increasing self-confidence and social skills, but on the other hand can also bring negative impacts, such as deviant behavior if they are in an unhealthy social environment. Thus, both parents and peers have important and complementary roles in helping adolescents form their identity. There needs to be a balance in the influence of both parties so that the identity formation process runs positively and constructively.

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