

Parental guidance and identity construction among daughter-mothers of the Kéra people in the Dargala district

Fangamla Tapmo Benjamin*

Doctoral student, Faculty of Arts, Letters and Humanities, Child and adolescent psychology, University of Maroua, Cameroon.

Correspondence: Fangamla Tapmo Benjamin, Doctoral student, Faculty of Arts, Letters and Humanities, Child and adolescent psychology, University of Maroua, Cameroon.

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Abstract

This study examines the correlation between parental guidance and the construction of identity among daughter-mothers in the Dargala district. A sample of three hundred and fifty-seven (357) girl-mothers aged 16 to 24 was selected using simple random sampling. The data collected was subjected to a simple linear regression test. The results show that there is a correlation between parental guidance and the construction of identity among the girl-mothers. After analysing the data collected, the hypotheses formulated on the different parenting styles: authoritarian style (93.3%), democratic style (41%), and disengaging style (48%), which stipulate that the parenting style has an impact on the construction of identity, were confirmed. In light of this study, it has been established that the type of parental guidance style experienced by girl-mothers in the family setting has a decisive impact on the construction of their identity, and consequently on their social integration.

Keywords: Parental guidance, Identity construction, Daughter-mother, Parental style

Introduction

The supervision of girls in the African context seems to be a sensitive subject, as they are watched over by the whole community. Everyone is concerned about their education. The girl is not the daughter of her biological or religious family, but of the whole community. The woman she will be tomorrow will bear the name of the community to which she belongs. So among the Kéra people of the world, and particularly in the Dargala district, a young girl's education is a matter of honour, because when she is well educated, it is the honour not only of the whole family, but also of her community. So the education of the girl is taken apart, it is psychologically and physically violent. As Lehalle

and Mellier¹ point out, education is an undertaking that consists of guiding a person towards wisdom. In other words, leading them towards the right path, which has already been established by the community. This guidance towards wisdom is not done with the will of the individual but against his will, and even worse in the case of the daughter. She is not educated to earn a living or to be happy, but to be a 'good wife' capable of meeting the many expectations of the community. It should be noted that she was not the daughter of her biological family, nor should she be the family of her husband, but the wife of the whole community in the right of social service, and she is the wife of every family.

The family is the first educational and social environment for every child. They learn the first rules of society from their parents and siblings. They understand solidarity by doing favours for others and asking for favours too. Education is never mixed; it differs according to gender. The girl is educated by her mother, aunt or grandmother under the supervision of the head of the family, who is usually a man (father, grandbrother, grandfather...). This education is often violent, because as Abdou² says, the young girl must be violated to prevent her from being seduced by men. This thought betrays the unconscious state of many families. Young girls do not seem to have rights, only duties. When the African Charter on the Rights of the Child stresses the rights of the child, it's a figment of the Kéra community's imagination. The family is the first environment for the education and socialisation of any child. They learn the first rules of society from their parents and siblings. They understand solidarity by doing favours for others and asking for favours too. Education is never mixed; it differs according to gender. The girl is educated by her mother, aunt or grandmother under the supervision of the head of the family, who is usually a man (father, grandbrother, grandfather...). This education is often violent, because as Abdou² says, the young girl must be violated to prevent her from being seduced by men. This thought betrays the unconscious state of many families. Young girls do not seem to have rights, only duties. When the African Charter on the Rights of the Child stresses the rights of the child, it is a figment of the imagination for the Kéra community.

In most cases, parenting depends on the type of family. Baumrind³ defined three parental styles (authoritarian, democratic and disengaging), later adding the disengaging style. Thus each girl is educated according to parental style. Among the Kéra people, the authoritarian style is the most widespread because the 'baton of command' is held solely by the father, who reigns as absolute master over the other members of the family (wives, children, etc.). This is the realm of one-track thinking. The father's behaviour is often a source of frustration for all family members. No member of the family has the slightest freedom to express their suffering and expectations. The family system seems to become a jungle, with only the father as predator. This family climate is not conducive to the girl's development and, above all, her identity.

During her adolescence, the young girl is searching for her identity, she needs a secure framework, a place and active ears to listen and respond to these concerns within the family. The framework depends in most cases on the type of family. Baumrind³ defined three parenting styles (authoritarian, democratic and disengaging), later adding the disengaging style. Thus each girl is educated according to her parental style. Among the Kéra people, the authoritarian style is the most common, as the 'baton of command' is held solely by the father, who reigns as absolute master over the other members of the family (wives, children, etc.). This is the realm of one-track thinking. The father's behaviour is often a source of frustration for all family members. No member of the family has the slightest freedom to express their suffering and expectations. The family system seems to become a jungle, with only the father as predator. This family climate is not conducive to the girl's development and, above all, her identity. During her adolescence, the young girl is searching for her identity, she needs a secure framework, a place and active ears to listen and respond to these concerns within the family.

The construction of identity, which is the subject of this study, has already been the subject of investigation by several researchers, particularly in the field of developmental psychology.^{4,5} At the heart of these concerns is the problem of the subject's interactions with his or her immediate environment in everything that concerns his or her development as a parent. The aim is therefore to see whether parental guidance has a real impact on the construction of identity in girl-mothers. The construction of identity, which is the subject of this study, has already been investigated by several researchers, particularly in the field of developmental psychology.^{4,5} At the heart of these concerns is the problem of the subject's interactions with his or her immediate environment with regard to his or her development as a parent. The aim is therefore to see whether parental guidance has a real impact on the construction of identity in girl-mothers.

In other words, can the parenting styles adopted by parents be linked to the construction of identity in girl-mothers? This question is important because the construction of identity, which begins in childhood, depends on the family environment, and more specifically on the type of parental guidance provided. Does the quality of family relationships in general,

and the type of parental guidance in particular, lead to a successful construction of identity? With this in mind, Delion⁶ asserts that: parenting must bring together pain, discipline, parental control, dialogue, love, the presence of parents, the ability to suspend violence, a sense of cooperation and solidarity, but from very diverse family cultures and individual itineraries, certainly several other environments such as school constitute a reference point for socialisation and identity-building from early childhood, some people come to have their own horizon. In other words, can the parenting styles adopted by parents be linked to the construction of identity in girl-mothers? This question is important because the construction of identity that begins in childhood depends on the family environment, and more specifically the type of parental guidance provided. Does the quality of family relationships in general, and the type of parental guidance in particular, lead to a successful construction of identity? With this in mind, Delion⁶ asserts that: parenting must bring together pain, discipline, parental control, dialogue, love, the presence of parents, the ability to suspend violence, a sense of cooperation and solidarity, but from very diverse family cultures and individual itineraries, certainly several other environments such as school constitute a reference point for socialisation and identity-building from early childhood, some people come to have their own horizon.

The results of the exploratory survey carried out in the Mémère and Gaïgaï neighbourhoods of the Dargala district show that out of seventy-eight (78) girl-mothers, only forty-one (41) were satisfied with their various responses concerning the expression of their identity, i.e. a percentage of around 52.57%. The results of the exploratory survey carried out in the Mémère and Gaïgaï neighbourhoods of the Dargala district show that out of seventy-eight (78) girl-mothers, only forty-one (41) were satisfied with their various responses concerning the expression of their identity, i.e. a percentage of around 52.57%. The thirty-seven (37) other girl-mothers were unfavourable with regard to the expression of their identity construction, i.e. a percentage of approximately 47.43%.

In a way, this category of girl-mothers represents those who are experiencing difficulties. In the light of these results, the Kéra girl-mothers of the Dargala

district present an identity construction fraught with enormous difficulties, which hinder their social integration and consequently a stable town. They seem to be abandoned by the community. Having a child before marriage is considered an unforgivable sin. Many girls have been thrown out of the family home with a pregnancy of two (02) months, and more often than not, they have nowhere to go, as in most cases the father disappears as soon as the pregnancy is announced. While under other skies, having a child in the family home is a sign of fertility and a chance to get married, among the Kéra people, it is a form of disappointment for the family. A young girl is a source of income; she is married for several oxen. Having a child at home means losing all those oxen. And as a result, no matter how old the girl is, she has to leave home immediately, which has a huge impact on her identity, which is still in the making. The girl is frustrated, disorientated, stressed, abandoned, rejected by the whole community. She becomes an unwanted person. What could possibly explain this situation? Are these attitudes linked to culture? Is it the girl's status? Given this observation, we need to look at parental guidance and its impact on the construction of the identity of girl-mothers. To this end, the following hypothesis was formulated: the style of parental guidance influences the construction of the identity of girl-mothers; this category of girl-mothers represents, as it were, those who are experiencing difficulties. In the light of these results, the Kéra girl-mothers in the Dargala district present an identity construction fraught with enormous difficulties, which hinder their social integration and consequently a stable town. They seem to be abandoned by the community. Having a child before marriage is considered an unforgivable sin. Many girls have been thrown out of the family home with a pregnancy of two (02) months, and more often than not, they have nowhere to go, as in most cases the father disappears as soon as the pregnancy is announced. While under other skies, having a child in the family home is a sign of fertility and a chance to get married, among the Kéra people, it is a form of disappointment for the family. A young girl is a source of income; she is married for several oxen. Having a child at home means losing all those oxen. And as a result, no matter how old the girl is, she has to leave home immediately, which has a huge impact on her identity, which is still in the

making. The girl is frustrated, disorientated, stressed, abandoned, rejected by the whole community. She becomes an unwanted person. What could possibly explain this situation? Are these attitudes linked to culture? Is it the girl's status? Given this observation, we need to look at parental guidance and its impact on the construction of the identity of girl-mothers. To this end, the following hypothesis was formulated: the style of parental guidance influences the construction of identity in girl-mothers.

Methodology

This research is exploratory in nature because we based our hypotheses on our daily observations of local girl-mothers, as well as on the realities of the literature. The study took a quantitative approach. The variables 'maternal supervision' and 'identity construction', although they relate to identity construction, seem less quantifiable. We chose the quantitative approach because of the data collection tool and the type of study. We used a questionnaire administered to the girl-mothers to gather information that would be processed using SPSS 2.0 software.

Study site

The study was carried out in the Dargala district, which is located in the Diamare department of Cameroon's Far North region. It is located 37 kilometres to the east of the department. It is bordered to the east by the Moulvoudaye district, to the north by the Bogo district, to the west by the Maroua 3 district and to the south by the Mindif district. It covers an area of 442 km². It has an estimated population of 3,3142. The population is made up of Kéra, Peulh and Massa people, who live in 117 neighbourhoods or villages. Activities include farming, commerce, livestock rearing and public services. It was created in 1992 as a district and established as an arrondissement in 2010. The increase in the number of girl mothers in this locality meant that we had to ask some questions.

Mother population

This study focused on girl mothers in the arrondissement of Dargala, more specifically those from the Kéra community. We carried out this research in several neighbourhoods in the village, including Meméré with 81 girl mothers, Gaïgai with 92 girl mothers,

Danbaï with 101 girl mothers and Lamordé with 83 girl mothers. Danbaï 101 girl-mothers and Lamordé 83 girl-mothers. The total population is 357, made up of girls from the Kéra community. All these girls live in the Dargala district.

Sample

Once the study location and population had been chosen. Once the study location and population had been chosen, it was essential to organise the data collection according to the status and age group of the girl-mothers. This is because not all individuals in a population can take part in research. After a pre-survey of the girl-mothers, we realised that the age range concerned varied from [16-18 ans], [19-21ans] and [22-24 ans]. In order to collect the data more effectively, it was necessary for us to work with the available girl-mothers. It was from them that we gathered information relating to what was observed. This age group corresponds to the girl-mothers who still live with their parents in the presence of their biological child. Also living with the child. Within this mother population, we selected a sample of one hundred and ten girl-mothers of different ages and from different villages, who were easily accessible and available.

Data collection instrument

The questionnaire used consisted of a series of firm questions addressed directly to the girl-mothers in line with the various hypotheses. The choice of this instrument is justified by the fact that it is inexpensive and allows respondents to answer freely. It also saved time because the data were collected at the same time. This questionnaire was used mainly by the girl-mothers in the Dargala district.

Data analysis instrument

Since the research data were collected quantitatively using a questionnaire, we processed them using the statistical package for social science (SPSS 2.0) software, which is important because it enables us to carry out a clearly reliable analysis. It enabled us to verify our hypotheses.

Procedure

Once we had validated our data collection tool, we

proceeded to collect data in the field. We began by briefly explaining the questionnaires to the research participants and answering a number of questions. The data was collected only from girls in the Dargala district. To make the task easier, we grouped the girl-mothers by neighbourhood and in a confidential location.

Ethics

Before participating in the research, we explained the purpose of the research to the girl-mothers. We voluntarily asked them to sign an informed consent form to explain their decision to take part in the research. They were given the option of refusing to answer the questionnaire, suspending their answers or simply asking for the questionnaire to be destroyed at the end. They felt no fear and were not paid to respond. They responded voluntarily.

Results

The results of our research come from data collected in the field and analysed using the SPSS 2.0 tool. We have several tables that clearly explain the different variables. The first table explains the distribution of girl-mothers by age group.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by age group

| Age | Number | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| [16-18] | 183 | 51,26 |
| [19-21] | 95 | 26,62 |
| 22-24] | 79 | 22,12 |
| Total | 357 | 100 |

It should be noted that the 16-18 age group is the most densely populated. We have 183 teenage girl mothers (51.26%), a situation that seems obvious because this is a delicate period in a girl's development. Puberty is at its peak, with changes to the girl's body. It's a time for romantic relationships and ignorance of the consequences of unprotected sex, which in most cases leads to unwanted pregnancies. The 19-21 age group represents 26.62% or 95 adolescents of the general population. The number is low compared with the 16-18 age group. Here they are gradually becoming aware of the danger of contracting a pregnancy. Finally, the 22-24 age group is the lowest, as the individual

is already almost an adult and is becoming more and more concerned about protecting herself.

The simple regression test was used to establish whether there was a significant relationship between the different variables in the study (independent and dependent). It was noted that the 16-18 age group was the most densely populated. There were 183 teenage girl mothers (51.26%), a situation that seems obvious because this is a delicate period in a girl's development. Puberty is at its peak, with changes to the girl's body. It's a time for romantic relationships and ignorance of the consequences of unprotected sex, which in most cases leads to unwanted pregnancies. The 19-21 age group represents 26.62% or 95 adolescents of the general population. The number is low compared with the 16-18 age group. Here they are gradually becoming aware of the danger of contracting a pregnancy. Finally, the 22-24 age group is the lowest, as the individual is already almost an adult and is becoming more and more concerned about protecting herself.

The simple regression test was used to establish whether there was a significant relationship between the different variables in the study (independent and dependent).

A. Verification of the first research hypothesis (H.R.1)

- HR1: Authoritarian management style influences the construction of identity in daughter-mothers.
- Ha: There is a significant link between authoritarian management style and the construction of identity in daughter-mothers.
- H0: there is no significant relationship between authoritarian style and identity construction in daughter-mothers.
- The simple regression analysis on the first research hypothesis shows that the R² value = .041, which means that the relationship is weak. This means that 41% of the variance in identity construction among daughter-mothers is explained by the authoritarian style and 93.9% is explained by other variables not included in the present model. $F(1,248) = 11.157$ with $\alpha = 0.0005 < 0.05$. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the

alternative hypothesis accepted. Consequently, the first research hypothesis is confirmed, especially as the Beta value of 20.7% shows that the authoritarian management style is positively linked to the construction of identity.

B. Verification of the second research hypothesis (H.R.2)

- HR2: Democratic management style influences the construction of identity in daughter-mothers.
- Ha: there is a significant link between democratic management style and the construction of identity in daughter-mothers.
- H0: there is no significant relationship between the democratic management style and the construction of identity in the daughter-mothers.
- The simple regression analysis on the second research hypothesis reveals that $R^2=.41$ is relatively very low, which means that 41% of the variance in identity construction among the daughter-mothers is explained by the democratic management style. The remaining variance of 59% is explained by other variables not included in the model. $F(1,248) = 9.202$ with $\alpha = 0.003 < 0.05$ therefore implies confirmation of the second research hypothesis. We are even more convinced that the democratic style has a positive influence on emotional regulation, since $\text{Beta} = 18.9\%$.

X. Verification of the third research hypothesis (HR3)

- HR3: Disengaging/neglectful management style influences the construction of identity in daughter-mothers.
- Ha: There is a significant link between disengaging coaching style and identity construction in daughter-mothers.
- H0: there was no significant relationship between the disengaging coaching style and the identity construction of the daughter-mothers.
- A simple regression analysis of the third research hypothesis showed that $R^2=0.48$ established the existence of a relatively moderate relationship

between disengaging coaching style and identity construction among girl-mothers. We therefore understand that 48% of the variance in identity construction is explained by the disengage style and the remaining 52% of this variance is explained by other predictors not included in the present model. $F(1,148) = 12.488$, $\alpha = 0.005 < 0.05$. $\text{Beta}=21.9\%$ with the significance level always below 0.05.

Discussion

Previous research has sought to examine the impact of parental guidance on the overall development of children and adolescents. Some studies have focused on the construction of identity.^{4,5} According to parenting styles in relation to identity construction. It focuses on expressions such as rejection, misunderstanding and neglect. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between parental guidance and the construction of identity in girl-mothers. First, we showed that the value of $R^2=.043$ means that there is a relationship between authoritarian supervision style and identity construction, and we found that $F(1,248)=11.157$ with $\alpha=0.0005 < 0.05$, which leads us to conclude that the positive value of r^2 implies a positive link between the independent variable and the dependent variable. These results are congruent with the findings of previous research examining the link between authoritarian parenting style and the cognitive development of adolescents.⁷

Finally, with regard to the link between authoritarian parenting style and identity construction, the regression analysis showed that authoritarian parenting style explained 4.1% of identity construction. The authoritarian management style enabled us to see how it is linked to the construction of identity in the daughter-mothers. The regression test shows that 93.9% of the variance in identity construction is explained by the authoritarian coaching style. These results contradict the findings of previous research showing that the authoritarian style of supervision does not contribute to the construction of identity in daughter-mothers.⁸

We also analysed regression models to determine the impact of the impact of democratic parenting style on the construction of identity in daughter-mothers. The results of these analyses show that the democratic

parenting style has no significant impact on the identity construction of the daughter-mothers. This result may be explained by the fact that these girl-mothers did not grow up in an environment where girls are given the opportunity to express themselves on issues that concern them or the community. Similar work had already been reported in research on adolescent well-being.^{2,5,10}

As for the disengaging coaching style, it was assumed that this was linked to the construction of identity in girl-mothers, and the results of regression analysis showed that the disengaging coaching style was linked to the construction of identity in girl-mothers. Regression analysis showed that the disengaging style explained 48% of the variance in identity construction among the daughter-mothers. This is in line with the findings on the supervision of adolescents in the town of Maroua,¹¹ and several other previous studies.^{2,12}

Although the results of this research provide a relevant source of information and contribute to a better understanding of the link between parental guidance and the construction of identity among girl-mothers, a few limitations deserve to be highlighted. The first relates to the exploratory nature of the research is based on a kind of observation reported by the respondents, who are the girl-mothers. The second has to do with the approach: a study looking at the longitudinal aspect of the data would open up an instructive perspective for examining changes in parental behaviour with regard to various aspects of parenting parental behaviour with regard to the various aspects of the construction of girl-mothers. We know that each child constructs his or her identity differently and according to his or her personality.¹²⁻¹⁴

Conclusion

At the end of this work, we acknowledge that identity construction has been studied for decades,⁴ yet few studies mention girl-mothers specifically in relation to identity construction. Yet this is an essential point for developing effective parenting or family education programmes for girl-mothers around the world, and more specifically for girl-mothers in the arrondissement. In fact, a better knowledge of these parameters will enable a more detailed understanding of the relationship between parents and girl-mothers.

The aim of this study was to see whether there is a relationship between parental guidance and the construction of identity among girl-mothers. In other words, the construction of identity is supposed to depend on the quality of the guidance provided by the parents. Laxity or harshness in parental supervision has been attributed as the cause of problems linked to identity construction. From the results obtained, it is clear that the construction of identity in girl-mothers is strongly linked to parental guidance through different parenting styles. This research gave us the opportunity to make suggestions to parents, who are the first educators, and the family, which is the immediate ecological environment that favours, either negatively or positively. In short, it is clear that human development depends to a large extent on the nature of social interactions, and when these are flawed, tortuous or frustrating, they have a negative impact on the construction of the individual's identity, and in this case the affective domain. This leaves the individual vulnerable to any of life's complex situations and unable to rise to any challenge (unable to regulate their emotions). The results of this study therefore call on parents to take greater responsibility for their children's socialisation. It is hoped that further research can be carried out in the same context with another population in order to gain a better understanding of the link between parental guidance and the construction of identity, with the aim of gaining a broader understanding of the situation and providing psychosocial support for girl mothers.

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Conflict of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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