



# Probable Causes And Strategies to Address The Issue of High Rate of Debauchery Among The Youth: With Reference to Erik Erikson's Fifth Stage of Psychosocial Theory of Personality Development

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**Abstract:** Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development posits that individuals advance through eight different stages of life, each marked by a crisis that must be resolved in order to successfully move on to the next stage. According to Erikson's theory, successfully resolving these crises leads to the development of a healthy psychosocial identity, while a failure to resolve these crises can result in a less healthy identity or even identity confusion. The youth of today shows a lot of misconduct in the society and this is attributed to the fact that they fail to resolve the conflict at the fifth stage (identity vs role confusion) of psychosocial theory of personality development. The study reveals some of the probable causes of debauchery among others as mass media, bad peer influence, dysfunctional homes, poor parenting styles and lack of education. The study however suggested some strategies to address the issue of high rate of debauchery; education, building strong relationship with the youth, building confidence and self-compassion and good peer influence. It was therefore concluded that teenagers at this time investigate numerous facets of identity and either acquire a coherent sense of who they are or stay confused about who they are and what they want out of life. Parents, on the other hand, are supposed to provide a good parenting style that will not damage the child in terms of identifying himself or herself. It was recommended among others that school authorities and lecturers in higher institutions should intensify efforts in educating the youth on moral values that will enable them acquire a set of beliefs and values on what is right and wrong which will make them excel. Again, institutions can establish policies and procedures for addressing misconduct, including reporting and investigation protocols, as well as consequences for violating standards of behavior.

**Keywords:** Psychosocial theory of personality development; debauchery; causes; strategies; youth.

## I. Introduction

One of the most well-known theories of personality in psychology is Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. Erikson shared Sigmund Freud's belief that personality changes throughout time. Erikson's theory analyzes the effects of social experience across the whole lifespan, in contrast to Freud's conception of psychosexual phases.

In 1950 and 1968, Erik Erikson (1902–1994) put out what he called a “psychosocial theory of personal development.” This idea makes it clear that social context has a role in how people grow as individuals. Erikson's idea, which acknowledged that development is a lifetime process rather than merely a process that ends in early adulthood, was rare at the time.

Erikson's theory is a stage theory, just as Piaget's theory of cognitive development. There are eight phases in it. One aspect of psychosocial development is brought to the fore at

each stage of a person's growth. Erikson defined these problems as developmental crises, which are opportunities for a person to make a substantial developmental leap.

According to Erikson's theory, each stage is defined in terms of what will happen if the crisis at that stage is resolved successfully or ineffectively. Even though each stage only concentrates on one specific aspect of development, actions performed in earlier stages can nevertheless have an impact on a person's ongoing growth. A person's later growth may be badly impacted by a prior stage's unsuccessful resolution, but later stages may also give a person the chance to solve past issues. The person may go back and forth between phases while going through any stage, such as between autonomy and shame and doubt.

The person may go back and forth between phases at any time, such as between autonomy and guilt and doubt on opposite ends of the spectrum. Most people do not completely resolve a crisis, so they may continue to battle emotions of shame and doubt throughout their lives. The eight stages of Erikson's theory can be summarized as follows:

1. Trust vs mistrust
2. Autonomy vs shame and doubt
3. Initiative vs guilt
4. Industry vs inferiority
5. Identity vs role confusion
6. Intimacy vs isolation
7. Generativity vs stagnation
8. Integrity vs despair

Erikson's theory has stages that each focus on developing competence in a certain aspect of life. The individual will have a sense of mastery if the stage is managed correctly, which he occasionally referred to as ego strength or ego quality. The person will leave the stage feeling inadequate if the stage is handled improperly.

Erikson thought that at each stage, humans go through a conflict that marks a turning point in their growth. These conflicts, in Erikson's opinion, are primarily caused by either attaining or failing to attain a particular psychological trait. Both the possibility for failure and the possibilities for personal progress are great at this moment.

Since stage five is the Identity versus Role Confusion, our discussions aim to define or elaborate on the immoral behaviors of the youth. This paper draws focus on the fifth stage (Identity versus Role Confusion) and a brief discussion on this stage is given below.

As a result, the struggle during the identity vs role confusion stage is focused on forging a unique personal identity. When this stage is successfully completed, a strong sense of self that will last throughout life results. Teenagers may experience confusion or insecurity about who they are as individuals and how they fit into society as they make the journey from childhood to adulthood. Teenagers may experiment with numerous roles, hobbies, and behaviors as they try to develop a sense of self. This is crucial, in Erikson's opinion, for the process of creating a solid identity and a feeling of purpose in life.

Adolescence is a time of significant change, including the maturation of the body and the sexual organs, the onset of new social and academic demands with the transfer to middle school, a decline in self-esteem that is common, and the possibility of intense stress, particularly in the early stages of the transition process.

The main goal at this time is to distance oneself from one's parents, particularly the same-sex parent, and to develop one's own identity. The latter is an extremely challenging endeavor, and many individuals nowadays do not fully succeed in it until they are far into their adolescent years. In accordance with Freud, Oedipal conflicts recur with full intensity, but the kid who is no longer a child must now learn to project his or her sexual impulses for his or her opposite sex parents onto others. This is done in part via ceremonial courting behaviors known as “dating” in our society during the latter phases.

Teens need to learn to define and invent themselves as well as discovering “who they are”. Identity is tested, much like new clothing. Parents, educators, coaches, athletes, movie stars, and “outlaws” may all serve as role models. Parents are right to assume that the latter may be a nightmare. However, parents' impressions of their children's behavior can also be skewed; while adolescent rebellion occasionally takes a “dark” turn, this does not always indicate that the child has abandoned their underlying morals.

Although tattoos are permanent, “metallic” or “Goth” looks and piercings are often merely temporary phases, and anxious parents can generally get through them by repeating the phrase "this, too, shall pass!" However, there are times when a wise parent needs to step in and take on a more authoritarian role. Teenagers, like young children, occasionally need to have rules and limits imposed on them, especially when their actions put them in danger, as in the case of drug experimentation, permissive sexual behavior, or hanging out with the "wrong crowd." The dilemma for the parent is how much control to exercise over the young person who is both a kid and an adult and how much independence to offer. The secret is to encourage respect for one another and appreciation for one other's viewpoints.

The teen years are indeed a time of identity crisis, or in Erikson's terms “a turning point of increased vulnerability and heightened potential” (1968, p. 96). Erikson defined the fundamental task as having trust in one's beliefs or being faithful to one's essential self. The rejection of the premise of a healthy role formation is the basic disease. Defiance of authority or diffidence, as described by Erikson, are two ways that someone might be rejected.

Teen conduct frequently appears erratic and impetuous, yet all of this is a result of trying to define one's own identity. Teens' self-perceptions are still influenced by their parents, siblings, and other family members, but external factors also take on greater significance at this time. An identity is shaped and formed by friends, social groups, classmates, cultural trends, and even popular culture.

Through personal discovery, those who are properly encouraged and reinforced will leave this stage with a strong sense of self, a sense of independence, and a sense of power. Those who are still unsure about their views and desires will continue to feel uneasy and uncertain about the future. At this stage of growth, adhering to a certain identity is necessary to overcome the problem. This might entail choosing a job route, selecting which social circles to join, or simply creating a sense of personal style.

Success fosters integrity, a psychological characteristic characterized by the capacity to connect with people and create sincere bonds. This skill is crucial in the subsequent phase known as intimacy versus isolation.

What then happens to people who are unsuccessful in developing an identity at this stage of development is that, children who are not permitted to experiment with their identities run the risk of developing role confusion, as described by Erik Erikson. These people are unsure of their identities and preferences. Since they are frequently unsure of what they want to accomplish with their life, they frequently flit from one profession or relationship to another. They are left feeling disillusioned and uncertain about their role in life rather than experiencing a sense of personal cohesion. This paper therefore seeks to outline some probable causes and strategies to address the issue of high rate of debauchery among the youth.

## **II. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Mass media (print and electronic)**

One of the major causes of debauchery among the youth is mass media (Ngwokabuenui, 2015; Ofori, Tordzro, Asamoah, & Achiaa, 2018). Mass media is a significant contributor to the reckless behavior of adolescents. This includes, but is not limited to, radio, print media, the internet, and television. These mass media outlets' material might not be suitable for minors to consume. These media sources' depictions of violence, prostitution, drug usage, fighting, and murder have a harmful impact on young boys and girls. A confused youngster imitates the behaviors or actions that are displayed in the media and subsequently discovers that they are engaging in behaviors that are against society.

### **2.2 Bad Peer influence**

According to Ofori, et, al. (2018); Balogun, Uyanne, and Badamas (2021), many factors have been attributed to the misconduct of the youth of which peer influence is a major factor. Peer influence is when one does something he or she would not otherwise do because he or she want to feel accepted and valued by others. The influence of peers is another factor contributing to the reckless behavior of adolescents. Some teenagers are adept at imitating what their peers do. Because their pals smoke, they too smoke. They consume alcohol because their pals do. They just act a certain way because their pals are acting the same way. They are drawn into risky adolescent behavior by their copycat mentality. Some teenagers find it difficult to reject the bad counsel their peers give them because they are unsure of who they are. Some people are persuaded to think this even when they don't engage in sexual promiscuity by their pals.

### **2.3 Dysfunctional Homes**

The family is where a child initially interacts with the outside world. As a result, the youngster receives his or her first education and socialization from parents and other important family members. The family lays the groundwork for the child's whole psychological, moral, and spiritual development. The household or residences are either structurally damaged or intact. In this sense, a dysfunctional household is one that is not fundamentally solid due to a divorce, a separation, the passing of one parent, or illegitimacy. This confirms Ofori, et, al. (2018) that dysfunctional home is one of the major causes of debauchery among the youth.

It therefore, follows that dysfunctional households are to blame for the predominance of immoral behavior among the youth. It is without a doubt the biggest societal concern, comparable to a delicate cancer in a pregnant woman's reproductive system. As such, it urgently requires a full surgical procedure to eliminate the problem. This is due to the axiom

that the family is the foundation of society, and if it disintegrates, society will typically go into a social and cultural decline.

According to Erikson's theory of personality development, the fifth stage, which discusses identity and role confusion, children are always in conflict at every point/stage of life, and their ability to overcome these conflicts leads to the development of mastery, which is referred to as ego-quality, and failure at this stage likewise leads to role confusion; children must therefore be guided through this stage in order to overcome the conflict of failure to develop.

Regardless of the aforementioned, children from dysfunctional homes are more likely to engage in scandalous activities such as thievery, drug use, and illicit sexual activities as a result of dysfunctional homes because a single parent cannot provide the necessary guidance to these children at this stage, resulting in their inability to identify who they are and their self-worth. The consequence of their incapacity to identify themselves is the development of role confusion. Because youngsters are unable to define who they are and where they are heading, they seek consolation among their classmates, which leads them into a variety of malicious and wanton behaviors because they have formed a poor sense of self.

#### **2.4 Poor parenting styles**

Poor parenting styles are a chain of events that invariably impair the child's attitude and psyche. Your parenting style can influence anything from your child's weight to her self-esteem. It is critical to ensure that your parenting style promotes healthy growth and development since how you connect with your kid and punish her will have an impact on her for the rest of her life. There are four types of parenting styles. These parenting styles are neglectful, *laisse faire*, autocratic, and democratic.

The democratic parenting approach is the most suited for assisting youngsters in identifying themselves. When a kid is ignored or the household does not give the essential assistance, he or she is forced to fend for himself or herself. As a result, in order to live, the youngster engages in behaviors such as sexual promiscuity, robbery, and drug selling. Where the kid's parents are uneducated, the youngster learns the majority of his or her behaviors from his or her parents because the house is the primary agency of socialization. Another factor is the way teenagers are socialized. A youngster who has not been properly socialized may grow up to be impolite and disrespectful.

#### **2.5 Lack of education**

If a teenager understands the repercussions of their aberrant behavior, they will never indulge in it. The lack of sexual education, instruction on illegal drug usage, and so on makes it difficult for the youngster to understand the consequences of their actions and the things they do.

### **III. Discussion**

#### **3.1 Strategies to Address the Issue of Debauchery among The Youth**

The problem of debauchery among the youth is not new, and each generation has struggled with how to deal with it. It is constantly reported that new strategies for dealing with these bad behaviors are being developed, ranging from extreme behavior management methods to somewhat lax strategies (Pelini, 2021). The following are some suggested strategies for dealing with the problem of debauchery among the youth.

### **a. Education**

Education is critical in addressing the issue of debauchery among youth, particularly when it comes to misconduct, such as sexual misconduct. Most young people are unaware of the consequences of the activities in which they engage. Youth can be trained and educated on topics such as consent, healthy relationships, and ethical behavior in schools and other educational institutions. This education will assist individuals in understanding the impact their actions may have on others, as well as strategies for confronting and preventing such misconduct. Educating the youth on such topics will assist them in recognizing their identity and avoiding role confusion.

### **b. Building strong relationship with the youth**

Several research studies suggest that the majority of youth behavioral issues are the result of a strained parent-child relationship. They contend that the more positive your relationship with your child is, the easier it is to correct disruptive behavior. This is because if you have a strong parent-child relationship, the child is more likely to value positive feedback (Pelini, 2021).

One of the most effective ways to form strong bonds with your adolescent is to be a sensitive parent or guardian. It simply entails being aware of your child's emotional and physical needs and knowing how to respond appropriately to them. Sensitive parenting also entails being empathetic and accepting in order to see things from your child's point of view.

### **c. Build confidence and self-compassion**

Building confidence helps young people resist negative peer pressure. This is due to the fact that self-assured teenagers can make safe, informed decisions and avoid people and situations that are not appropriate for them. According to Goel and Malik (2017), building youth confidence is accomplished by encouraging them to try new things that give them a chance of success, and to keep trying even when things are difficult. Praise the youth for their efforts in order to boost their confidence. Parents and other elders in our society can also serve as role models for confidence, showing young people how to act confident as the first step toward feeling confident.

Self-compassion, which is also an excellent method, must be prioritized. The youth must be encouraged to treat themselves with the same warmth, care, and understanding that they would offer to someone they care about. When youth develop self-compassion, they are better able to deal with stress and anxiety caused by peer influence (Goel & Malik, 2017).

### **d. Good Peer Influence**

When someone acts in a way they would not normally have acted because they want to be accepted and respected by others, this is known as peer pressure. It's not always about being forced to do something; it can sometimes have a positive outcome. Although the phrase "peer pressure" is frequently used, it is actually a better way to describe how teenagers' behavior is influenced by their desire to feel like they are a part of a group of friends or peers.

Good communication and a positive relationship with the youth will encourage them to talk to you if they are feeling negative influence from peers (Egger, Nicolay, Huber, & Muller, 2021). The youth must be encouraged to have friends over and give them space in the homes of their guardians or parents. This will help the guardian or parent to know the kind of association he or she belongs to. This also gives you the chance to check on whether negative peer pressure and influence is an issue for your child.

In a case where there is change in behaviour of the adolescent which is as a result of the kind of peers he or she has associated himself with, the guardian have the prospect to talk to the adolescent about the behavior instead of the peers. This will however communicate it to adolescent in a way of changing his peers. For example, the guardian can say, 'when you are with these kind of people, you often get into trouble'. This can be better than saying, 'you need to get new friends'. With respect to that, the guardian can therefore suggest to the adolescent the kind of peers that can help him or her behave well in the society.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In concluding, teenagers at this time investigate numerous facets of identity and either acquire a coherent sense of who they are or stay confused about who they are and what they want out of life. Adolescent teachers can offer reassurance and examples of the normality of identification inquiries. Parents, on the other hand, are supposed to provide a good parenting style that will not damage the child in terms of identifying himself or herself. The media must exercise prudence when it comes to the kind of programs that are broadcast on TVs and other audio-visual aids.

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