Similarities and Differences in Adolescent Development

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**Introduction**

Adolescence refers to one of the stages in one’s life. It is of developmental significance to every human being as it is the period between childhood and adulthood. It provides the transitional connection between the two stages. It is also referred to as puberty. It is during this time that certain changes take place to facilitate this transition. The changes that take place are not only physical but also cover psychological and behavioral aspects (Steinberg & Pine, 2015). They all factor in cumulatively in the process. It is a very significant stage in one’s life as it determines how the resultant outcome in adulthood. It is a stage of susceptibility and growth (Hagedorn & Riccio, 2017). In the same light, adolescent development may vary depending on various factors. Such factors involved are gender, the time periods involved and even the cultural or social groups.

Understanding adolescent development demands a look at the similarities and differences that the given factors provide. It is in comparing how individuals of different genders, historical times and cultural or social groups have gone through adolescence and how the adult outcomes relate. This paper, therefore, aims at looking into the similarities and differences in adolescent development through the eye of the aforementioned aspects.

**Gender**

Gender simply refers to the classification of human beings into male and female. Therefore, this aspect looks into the fact that there are significant similarities and differences in the way males and females experience adolescent development. A few differences and similarities are as shortly elaborated below.

Some of the similarities to be noted are as below. The first similarity is on the physical aspect. Evidently, both males and females go through certain physical changes. This can be seen as both a similarity and a difference. This is because in as much as the physical changes are different for each gender they are albeit all signs of physical growth. For the female gender, the mammary glands are seen to enlarge as the hips widen. There is also an alteration in the vocal chords as the voice is seen to soften. As for the male gender, the vocal chords also change but in the opposite manner as the voice tends to deepen at this stage. Their shoulders also broaden as they become more muscular. It is no hidden fact that at this stage boys tend to develop muscles more easily than girls. The growth of pubic hair is also another common denominator when it comes to physical growth for the two groups.

There are also a number of differences to note from a gender perspective in adolescent development. One difference is in the rate of maturity. Many like pointing out the fact that females have a higher rate of maturity than males. That is why many say that for marriages or relationships to work out one needs to couple a gentleman with a younger lady. To some, this has just been a misconception but the statistical logistics provide a counter-argument. This maturity rate logic can as well be argued against. This is on a stance of the motion that maturity rates are different with different individuals after all different individuals have different hormone levels and cognitive responses.

There is also a difference to be seen in the psychological and behavioral development (Steinberg & Pine, 2015). During the adolescent stage, aside from physical development, there is also cognitive growth that takes place. This cognitive growth goes a long way in determining the behavioral development of an individual. The females are seen to come off as shy and leaning toward introversion. This is as they become more aware of their bodies and this tends to cause an alarm for embarrassment. Whereas the males tend to extrovert themselves. This is as it’s a stage in which they want to assert dominance and appear strong and buff. This leads to a common theory of lower emotional quotient in males as compared to females.

Another similarity to consider in gender during adolescent development is the susceptibility factor (Hagedorn & Riccio, 2017). Despite the motion as regards emotional quotient, at this stage, both males and females are susceptible to the development of insecurities and psychological issues. It is at this stage that they can easily engage in peer influenced activities such as drug abuse. In the same manner, there is also the risk of falling into psychological issues such as depression, anti-social personality disorders. It is also important to highlight that, it is not only a stage of susceptibility to negative traits but also the positive development.

**Time**

There is also the aspect of historical time differences when it comes to adolescent development. Different historical times prove to have both similarities and differences in adolescent development albeit the differences tramping over the similarities. One remarkable difference is the openness to the whole idea. Adolescence Contrary to contemporary times, the whole adolescent developmental stage was a topic to be shyed away from. It was not something to be discussed so openly to the extent that information on the subject was only provided at schools or academic institutions. This is as opposed to the current times in which sex-ed is a well-embraced idea and topic of discussion and perhaps at times too much.

**Cultural groups**

This aspect refers to how individuals from different cultural and social groups have developed in the adolescent stage. These groups are either due to social stratification from financial classes, geographical differences or even values and interests. For example, an adolescent born from a rather struggling family ends up growing in a negatively charged environment. This, in turn, may lead to either developing negative traits or creating a tough counter-active exterior. The adolescents in such a cultural group are left to fend for themselves as opposed to those from a rather well-off society whereby they are paid to more attention and exposed to a friendlier environment as it would be put.

**Conclusion**

Adolescent development is evidently a crucial stage in every individual’s life. It is a stage that gets to determine a lot in a person’s life. In that light, there are many determinant factors that create the similarities and differences in adolescent development. All these factors are quintessential in determining the adult life of many. The adolescent must be given attention depending on their developing milestone to help them grow well behaved and knowledgeable about stages of life. Therefore counseling is important and should be done in many session as possible to help the children learn about their body changes and the environment they live in.

References

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