

PARENTS, PEERS, AND ADOLESCENT ALCOHOL
USE AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS

By

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Bachelor of Science in Human Development

and Family Science

Oklahoma State University

Stillwater, Oklahoma

2006

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
May, 2009

UMI Number: 1465200

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are several individuals who have been involved in the process of the work on my thesis. First and foremost, I must express my gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Michael Merten. Without his tremendous and valuable efforts, my journey through the graduate process and work on this thesis project would not have been successful. He has given such substantial and vital information, guidance, and tools to accomplish my graduate studies here at Oklahoma State University. I would also like to recognize and thank the other members of my graduate committee, Dr. Amanda Morris and Dr. Michael Criss. These two individuals have provided me with a wealth of information and availability during my endeavors as a graduate student and for the work on this thesis project.

I would also like to recognize and thank those responsible for the collection and my use of the Add Health Data. This research uses data from Add Health, a program project designed by J. Richard Udry, Peter S. Bearman, and Kathleen Mullan Harris, and funded by a grant P01-HD31921 from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, with cooperative funding from 17 other agencies. Special acknowledgment is due Ronald R. Rindfuss and Barbara Entwisle for assistance in the original design. Persons interested in obtaining data files from Add Health should contact Add Health, Carolina Population Center, 123 W. Franklin Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27516-2524 (addhealth@unc.edu). No direct support was received from grant P01

HD31921 for this analysis.

Finally, I must recognize the following people for their most valuable contributions in my graduate studies journey. Mumbe Kithakye, Ben Houlberg, Aesha John, Amanda Williams, and Kim Whitty have provided me with tremendous support and knowledge that made my graduate journey a smoother course. Also, most importantly, I must thank my family for their support in all aspects of my graduate trials and tribulations.

PREVIEW

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PREVIEW

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a time of significant change and growth emotionally, cognitively, and socially. During this time, adolescents begin to form their own identity, establish group affiliation, and gain independence from parental authority as they progress through adolescence. There are various environmental factors that have an impact on adolescents' behaviors and outcomes such as parent/child relationships, neighborhoods, parental economic status, sibling relationships, and victimization by peers (Pendry & Adam, 2007; Strohschein, 2005; Sullivan, Farrell, Kliewer, Vulin-Reynolds, & Valois, 2007; Reitz, Prinzie, Delovic, & Buist, 2007).

In addition, biological factors such as heritability and hormonal levels have been linked to subsequent adolescent behaviors and outcomes (Haynie & Piquero, 2006). Even though most changes in behavior and outcomes during adolescence are viewed as positive, the degree to which these factors can influence adolescents' behaviors and outcomes positively is based on the positivity of the factors measured. This research will turn its focus on how adolescents can experience negative behaviors and outcomes which have been enhanced by negative behaviors of parents and peers. In the next section, terms for this research will be defined.

This study intends to display a pathway of adolescent behaviors in the areas of alcohol use and depressive symptoms. The goal of this study is to expose how parent behaviors in the adolescent's original environment set the stage for future adolescent behaviors and peer associations and behaviors. This study intends to provide an examination of concrete parental involvement behaviors. Concrete parental involvement behaviors are parents' physical involvement in activities with adolescents, and the effect on adolescents' behaviors. This study focuses on mutuality in conversation between parents and adolescents. For Wave 1 and Wave 2, this study will establish a foundation within the family systems theory.

Definitions

For this research, parent behaviors within the parent-adolescent relationship will be explored in the areas of involvement and communication. Parent involvement behaviors will be defined as parent physical participation in activities with adolescents. Parental communication behaviors will be defined as conversations of mutuality or inclusion of the adolescents.

Problem Statement

Parental involvement has been consistently associated with adolescent behaviors; however, the gap in research is to operationalize parental involvement with more direct or concrete constructs. The current study will identify and document actual parental involvement behaviors which to date have been conceptualized with abstract terms such as trust, warmth and responsiveness, alienation, parental negativity, support, and understanding (Feinberg, Button, Neiderhiser, Reiss, & Hetherington, 2007; McElhaney, Porter, Thompson, & Allen, 2008; Button, Scourfield, Martin, Purcell, & McGuffin,

2005). Also, a gap can be found by way of research design. A great deal of research on parental involvement is comprised of cross-sectional studies (Williams & Kelly, 2005; Finley, Mira, & Schwartz, 2008; Phares, Fields, & Kamboukos, 2009). Cross-sectional research is a wonderful opportunity to gather information on present associations between variables but this type of research does not allow any future predictors to be examined.

This research will examine the particular parent behaviors of involvement as actual physical involvement in activities with the adolescent along with communication of mutuality and their influence on adolescent alcohol use and depressive symptoms. This study will take a longitudinal look exposing a continuous pathway from parent behaviors to adolescent behaviors on into behaviors with other adolescents.

Purpose of the Study

The present study will provide necessary research documenting adolescent report of parent communication and involvement behaviors by asking specific questions of the adolescent. This research will also examine peer behaviors based on information provided by the adolescents. In addition, this study will also contribute new and useful information regarding the linkage between parent and peer behaviors and adolescent alcohol use and depressive symptoms.

This study will utilize a longitudinal design in that data was collected during both 1995 (Wave 1) and 1996 (Wave 2). A significant amount of research has been conducted using cross-sectional data on the interactions that occur in parent-child relationships and adolescent alcohol use and depressive symptoms. This longitudinal study will further enhance research by establishing a pattern of outcomes over a period of time. Brody,

Murry, McNair, Chen, Gibbons, Gerrard, and Wills (2005) found the more parents are involved with their adolescents the less their adolescents will express alcohol use. Wave 1 data will be used for the first portion of this research. The focus will be on parent behaviors found within involvement and communication that may be associated with adolescents' vulnerability to participate in alcohol use and display depressive symptoms (path 1). Next, this study will look at the relationship between parent behaviors of involvement and communication (Wave 1) and peer alcohol use (Wave 2) (path 2).

Also, this research examines how the adolescents' behaviors assessed in Wave 1 are related to increased negative peer behaviors in Wave 2 (path 3). This current study will examine peer alcohol use and the connection to increased adolescent alcohol use and depressive symptoms (path 4). Also, the relationship between parent behaviors in Wave 1 and adolescent behaviors in Wave 2 (path 5) will be assessed. Finally, this research will examine the relationship between adolescent behaviors in Wave 1 and adolescent behaviors in Wave 2 (path 6).

This can be seen in the hypothesized model 1.

Insert Figure 1 Here

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

For this research, a family systems theory approach will be used. Family systems theory states a family system is more than just the basic individuality of its family members but the behaviors and beliefs that are and have become transactional (Infante, Rancer, & Womack, 1990). According to Madden-Derdich and Herzog (2005), each family unit has its own individualistic characteristics and behaviors that are specific and different from other families. Within the whole system, subsystems are organized which are smaller sets of family members who have a special “function” aside from but within the family system (Madden-Derdich, Estrada, Updegraff, & Leonard, 2002). In other words, each individual member of a family system brings more than just individual differences and behaviors that are displayed during interactions such as peers. These individual differences and behaviors are influenced by each other as well as being influenced by other systems. This can be seen in the area of Isomorphism.

Isomorphism states that when looking at the characteristics of two different systems, such as parent/adolescent and adolescent/peer, the characteristics of each system are found to correspond with each other (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). The adolescent likely associates with peers who engage in the same types of behaviors present

in the family system. Nash, McQueen, and Bray (2005) found even though peers have significant influence on adolescent drinking behaviors positive parenting behaviors such as supervision and known expectations have a significant impact on the reduction in the adolescents' alcohol use and associations with peers who drink alcohol. The previously mentioned literature reinforces the impact a positive family environment has for encouraging adolescents' confidence not to engage in risk behaviors such as alcohol and maintain the family norms for behavior.

Therefore, this reveals how both systems the adolescent participates in are more akin than different keeping a balance in the boundaries or openness to change established by the two systems. Boundaries can be appropriate and productive or they can become skewed and represent a pattern of negative interaction. This can be seen in an intergenerational patchwork of behavior where the family system is not working for the beneficial development of its members and will likely be reflected in all systems in which the members participate (Macfie, McElwain, Houts, & Cox, 2005).

The important concept within a family system of the openness to change from outside influence sets the framework for additional systems membership for the adolescent as well as other family members (Massey, 1986). The degree to which a family is open to change depends on behaviors within the family system such as cohesiveness, involvement, and the emotional connectedness (Constantine, 1986; Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979). Within the realm of open and closed aspects of a family's operating system, the idea of family functioning is important as long as it is not too enmeshed—no differentiation between members—or disconnected—too much differentiation between members. The degree of openness allows for the development of

the identity and autonomy of the individual family members (Manzi, Vignoles, Regalia, & Scabini, 2006). This degree of allowance for change will be reflected in the adolescent/peer system as well. The experiences of the family system between parent and child set the stage for a process in a child's development called individuation which begins during adolescence.

The path of individuation is reliant on the parent/child behaviors and interactions established early and influence how the individuation process progresses during adolescence (Bray, Adams, Getz, & Baer, 2001). According to Glynn and Haenlein (1988), an adolescent's travel through the individuation process productively hinges on the particular parent behaviors—nurturing, attachment, and conflict resolution—a child is exposed to during parent/child interactions within the family system. The two most significant elements of the individuation process are the risk element and the protective element. The risk element is the outcome of separation—emotional and physical—from parents, and the protective element is how the adolescent's autonomy develops within the family system—intergenerational individuation (Baer & Bray, 1999). According to Bray, Getz, and Baer (2000), positive family processes within the family system such as parent-adolescent communication and less family negativity have a profound impact on whether or not the adolescent chooses to engage in risk behavior such as drinking alcohol alone and with peers during separation. This environment of origin—the family system—enhances the adolescent's confidence to make more positive choices.

Therefore, the early foundation of behavior and interaction patterns between parent and child within the family system influence the adolescent's individuation process. The process of this early foundation into future behaviors of the adolescent can

be examined using the hypothesized model (figure 1). These early behaviors and interactions within the family system set the stage for the degree of change an adolescent will allow in regard to the behaviors and interactions within the adolescent/peer system.

Parenting behaviors and adolescent behaviors

There are various avenues in which parents' influence the degree of positive or negative behaviors that an adolescent engages. Parenting behaviors in the area of coercion, manipulation, psychological control, and lack of affection and warmth are all examples of parenting behaviors that likely influence an adolescent's behavior (Brendgen, Dione, Girard, Boivin, Virtaro, & Perusse, 2005). Adolescents who are subjected to depressed parents are also more likely to engage in adverse behaviors and reflect a diminished mental health state (Garber & Flynn, 2001; Capaldi, DeGarmo, Patterson, & Forgatch, 2001). The extent to which an adolescent perceives the effectiveness of parental supervision/monitoring in their social life is associated with an adolescent's likelihood to participate in risk-taking behaviors (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Minke & Anderson, 2005).

Hair, Moore, Garrett, Ling, and Cleveland (2008) found adolescents who experience positive parent behaviors have more positive outcomes into adulthood and experience less negative behaviors during adolescence into adulthood. Wang, Peterson, and Morpheu (2007) found parent behaviors are more important than peer behaviors for life-time effects and influence as reported by adolescents. This is reflective of the family systems framework in which a correspondence between the parent/adolescent system and the adolescent/peer system would be found. Also, this previous study found those same

adolescents reported peer behavior influence was significant for short-term outcomes and choices.

Antognoli-Toland (2001) using Add Health data with a sample size of 5,201 found parent behaviors of connectedness, presence, and involvement in activities are negatively associated with adolescents' feelings of loneliness and have more positive outcomes than those whose parents did not display such parenting behaviors. When parents use positive behaviors such as mutuality; cooperation; awareness; and attentiveness, parents likely encourage positive outcomes and behaviors for their adolescents (Loukas & Roalson, 2006). This can be reflected in adolescents' degree of self-regulation or self-control in reference to emotional and behavioral states which may be traced back to parental behaviors (Hill, 2002). Parents who are not warm and receptive to their adolescents create a negative affect which may stimulate a lack of self-control and encourage delinquent behaviors (Brody, McBride-Murry, McNair, Chen, Gibbons, Gerrard, & Wills, 2005).

Adolescents who experience such negative parent behaviors as inconsistency, coercion, non-acceptance, and being ignored are more likely to display antisocial behavior and depressive symptoms (Capaldi, Pears, Patterson, & Owen, 2003).

Adolescents who are subjected to negative parenting behaviors are more susceptible to risk taking and may not have the tools or skills necessary to contemplate the present or future effects of such risk behaviors. Adolescents' motivation towards participating in deviant behaviors is developed through negative parent behaviors which do not encourage emotion- or self-regulation within the adolescents (Sharp, Caldwell, Graham, & Ridenour, 2006).