INTERRELATIONS OF ADOLESCENT'S IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT, DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF AND PARENTING STYLE

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Relationship with parents and quality of this relationship take an essential role in the process of an adolescent's identity development, yet the pathways linking parenting styles to adolescent's identity development are not well understood. This study aims to investigate the interrelations between parenting styles, differentiation of self and adolescent identity development. In total, 804 adolescents took part in this study and filled the questionnaire. The age of participants ranges from 14 to 18 years old. The study explores whether the links from parenting style to adolescent's identity diffusion operate through the differentiation of self. Results of a sequential mediation model revealed significant indirect effects of parenting style on adolescent's identity diffusion operating through the differentiation of self for boys. Parenting style also had a direct effect on identity diffusion for girls. Implications of these findings for understanding the processes through which parenting styles determine adolescent's identity development and gender differences of these relationships are discussed.

Key words: *adolescents, identity, parenting styles, differentiation of self.*

Introduction

The main task for an adolescent is to construct a sense of a personal identity and find a place where he/she could belong to his/her social environment by forging meaningful relationships with other people (Chen, Lay, Wu, & Yao, 2007). Various theories exist that try to define the concept of identity. For example, Waterman (1993; as cited in Guardia, 2009) believed that identity reflects a person's best potentials which is self-realizing. Identity is expresed through self-realizing activities which person feels as self-defining or fitting, engaging, energizing, purposeful, and helpful in fulfilling his/her goals of life. According to Berzonsky's social-cognitive theory of identity styles (1988; as cited in Guardia, 2009), identity is the cognitive model of how a person processes and examines identity-relevant information. Epistemological Identity Theory claims that people construct their identities through language in order to sustain a sense of meaningfulness, and the more meaningfulness a particular identity provides, the more committed they are to it (Demerath, 2006). Others think that identity, in general, is nothing other than the answer to the question: who

am I? (Motyl, 2010). Identity theory developed by Stryker (1968; as cited in Adamsons & Pasley, 2013) focuses on the individual's integration of societal expectations regarding the meaning of occupying particular social positions or statuses (e.g., parent, spouse, employee) and the behavioural expectations associated with such statuses. Identity theory (Stryker, 1968, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000; as cited in Adamsons & Pasley, 2013) also proposes that individuals assign meaning and importance to different identities, which are expressed there via identity-related behaviours.

The most general and broad concept of identity is proposed by Erikson (1968). He described identity as a fundamental organising principal, which develops constantly throughout the lifespan and provides a sense of continuity within the self and in inter-action with others ("self-sameness") as well as a frame to differentiate between self and others ("uniqueness"), which allows the individual to function autonomously from others. Erikson's concept of identity includes a person's itrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of self, such as perception of one's attributes, emotions, identification with social roles, autonomy, stability in relationships and commitment to them (Erikson, 1968). Moreover, Erikson's concept of identity was particularly focused on adolescents' development, for these reasons, the identity definition of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development will be used in this study. It is also important to mention that Erikson's concept of identity is most widely used in researches of adolescents' identity (van Hoof, Raaijmakers, Van Beek, Hale, & Aleva, 2008; Schwartz, Pantin, Prado, Sullivan, & Szapocznik, 2005; Ļubenko & Sebre, 2007; Yousefi, 2012; Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013; Faber, Edwards, Bauer, & Wetchler, 2003; Mullis R., Graf, & Mullis A., 2009). Erikson (1968) described the consolidation of identity as a central task in normal adolescent development, when previous identifications had to be transformed during the process that is called an identity crisis. In contrast, identity diffusion is viewed as a lack of integration of the concept of self and significant others. This results in a loss of capacity for self-definition and commitment to values, goals, or relationships, and a painful sense of incoherence. This is often observed as "unreflective, chaotic and contradictory descriptions of the patient about himself and others" and the "inability to integrate or even perceive contradictions" (Clarkin, Yeomans, & Kernberg, 1999; as cited in Goth et al., 2012). A positively solved adolescent's identity achievement/identity confusion crisis allows an individual to integrate all self-perception images into a single personal identity and strengthens the performance of its various roles (Erikson, 1963), therefore, the achieved identity is associated with a lower expression of adolescents' neurotic and psychosomatic symptoms (Chen et al., 2007), better self-esteem (Kutkienė, 2008) and mental and emotional health (Dumas, Lawford, Tieu, & Pratt, 2009; Ramgoon, Bachoo, Patel, & Paruk, 2006; Sandhu, Singh, Tung, & Kundra, 2012). In contrast, identity diffusion is associated with mental health problems, such as various personality disorders and depression (Jung, Pick, Schlüter-Müller, Schmeck, & Goth, 2013). Kalpokienė (2005) noted that various mental illness disorders, such as schizophrenia, depres-

sion or personality disorders most often begin in adolescence or early years of youth, and this is more or less related with ego identity development in adolescence.

According to Erikson (1968) and the authors of other research, family takes an important role in adolescents' identity development (Dwairy et al., 2010; Malekpour, 2007; Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013; Faber et al., 2003; Mullis et al., 2009; Dumas et al., 2009). The important aspects of family life related with adolescent's identity development were found in previous studies. According to Bubnys & Rudnickaitė (2010), adolescents who live in cohesive families reach higher states of identity. Therefore, it is very important to understand parent-child relationships during the transitional period of adolescence. Other research has also shown that a positive parental attitude towards an adolescent, his/her acceptance (Sandhu et al., 2012), good and warm family relations, family cohesion (van Hoof et al., 2008) as well as secure attachment to one's parents (Nawaz, 2011) are positively related to adolescent's identity development. Yablonska (2013) found that the most favourable conditions for children's identity development during adolescence in families are determined by optimal levels of family cohesion and adaptability, democratic parenting style, acceptance of own children, reasonable autonomy and a high degree of parents' consistency during upbringing.

However, other authors are more likely to present conflicting results (Faber et al., 2003; Mullis et al., 2009; Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013). Identity achievement status is not statistically significant when linked with a family relations climate (Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013), attachment to mother and marital relationship between parents (Faber et al., 2003), adolescents' emotional dependence on parents or fostering of their authonomy (Mullis et al., 2009), as well as the attachment to parents in a boy's sample (Nawaz, 2011). It means that a consistent relationship between adolescents' identity development and family factors is still not clear. This could be related to a fact that the attention of researchers was paid only to several separate, often poorly interrelated aspects of family life. For this reason, it would be useful to examine broader and more complex constructs that involve the most important aspects of parent-child relationship. The most common and complex concept used in scientific literature that defines parent relationship with the child is the concept of parenting style.

Parenting style can be understood from different theoretical perspectives. Parenting is a challenging and complex activity that involves many aspects of the behaviour of the child, affecting his/her development (Clark, Yang, McClernon, & Fuemmeler, 2015; Cruz, Linares, & Arias, 2013; Gera & Kaur, 2015; Kerr, Stattin, & Özdemir, 2012). This includes such aspects as parental beliefs, approach to the child, values, expectations, objectives, and, of course, behaviour (Carlo, McGinley, Hayes, Batenhorst, & Wilkinson, 2007). Ventura and Birch (2008; as cited in Fuemmeler et al., 2012) suggested parenting styles reflect a "typology of attitudes and behaviours that characterize how a parent will interact with a child across domains of parenting" (p. 441) and refer to general acceptance, warmth, or typical interaction with the child or children as examples of parenting style. According to Glasgow,

Dornbusch, Troyer, Steinberg and Ritter (1997), parenting styles are a compendium of attitudes, behaviours and non-verbal expressions that characterize the nature of relations between parents and children in different scenarios. Parenting styles can also be referred to simply as constellations of warmth, control, and democracy dimensions (e.g., Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992; as cited in Kerr et al., 2012). The differences between the definition of parenting of these authors, first of all, are related with the aspects of parent-child relation that are involved into the concept of parenting style. The concept of parenting style defined by Baumrind (1966), whose definition was chosen to be used in this study, includes common features of parent-child relation defined by all previously discussed authors. According to her, parenting style is defined as parental behaviour with a child, comprising control and warmth aspects (Baumrind, 1966). Parental control aspect reflect the extent to which parents lead their children's behaviour: from a very strict and controlling to a cooperating and establishing just a few rules and regulations. The level of parents' emotional degree indicates how much the parents adopt the child and respond to his/her needs. Regarding these issues of parents' behaviour with their children, three parenting styles can be defined, which are described in Table 1.

A few studies of links between parenting style and adolescents' identity development have already been done. Researches have shown that parenting style is significantly related to adolescents' identity development. The identity foreclosure status is positively related with a democratic parenting style (Yousefi, 2012). Although some of the authors found quite a complicated picture. For example, Cakir & Aydin (2005) results have shown that both authoritative and permissive parenting style were associated with the adolescent identity foreclosure status, and no significant links were found between authoritative and democratic parenting styles and other identity status. Another study found that identity achievement was only weakly

Table 1. ***Description of parenting styles (according to Baumrind, 1966)***

Parenting Style	Warmth	Control
Democratic	Response to the needs of the child, encouraging, respecting the child's wishes and opinions, considering, cooperating.	Directing child's activities, discussing with children, establishing clear behavioral boundaries and rules.
Authoritarian	Gives little emotional support, not responsive to the child's emotional needs.	Very controlling, gives lot of rules and requiring unconditional obedience.
Permissive	Supporting, encouraging and accepting child.	Does not seek to control child's behavior, do not impose limits and rules, tolerates innapropiate child's behavior.

correlated with maternal acceptance and unrelated to firm vs. lax control and psychological autonomy vs. control for both parents, although parental rejection, lax control, and psychological control were all found to be associated with identity diffusion (Romano, 2004). With regards to the results of discussed studies, we could come to a conclusion that these contradictions between the links of relationship with parents in the family and parenting style and adolescents' identity development could be explained by various external and internal factors, such as family socioeconomic status, age, ethnicity or gender of adolescents and their parents, or character traits, lifestyle, communication skills, emotionality or other personality related factors that may mediate relationship between parenting style and adolescents' identity development.

To conclude, there is a lack of studies investigating the relationships between family factors (parenting styles) and adolescents' identity development. Condradictory results in this area also highlight the importance of new empirical research in this area, especially in Lithuania where studies about adolescents' relationships with parents and identity development from Eriksonian perspective hardly exist. In Lithuanian context, only the links of adolescent's gender identity and parenting styles were investigated (Malinauskienė, Vosylis, Erentaitė, & Žukauskienė, 2010), and links of identity development (from Eriksonian perspective) and learning motivation (Bukšnytė & Pukelytė, 2009) or self-esteem (Kutkienė, 2008). This also specifies the importance and novelty of this study where links of adolescent identity development and parenting styles in Lithuanian context will be explored. When results of different studies in the discussed area are incongruent, the most probable explanation is that a more complicated theoretical model is necessary. We can believe that our current model does not include one or more interim factors, mediating the relationship of the parenting style on adolescent's identity. In this study, the possible role of one of such probable factors – the personality differentiation of self – is investigated. There are several reasons to suspect that the latter plays an especially important role in mediating family effect to adolescents' identity development.

Differentiation of self is associated with a person's adaptive functioning in the environment (Jenkins, Buboltz, Schwartz, & Johnson, 2005) and higher levels of psychological well-being (Skowron, Stanley, & Shapiro, 2009). The term of differentiation of self was originally developed by Bowen (1978) and describes a person's ability to distinguish itself as a separate autonomous individuality from other people and to distinguish one's thinking and feelings between each other. According to Bowen (1978), differentiation of self is transmitted from parents to children through a multigenerational process. A person having a high level of differentiation of self is able to share their experiences, feelings, opinions, and at the same time respect the uniqueness of other people, to recognize the differences that exist between each other, to accept them and to not seek to change the other person. Such a person is aware of their autonomy and control limits and is able to take a responsibility for his/her behaviour (Bowen,

1978). This is important in the context of interpersonal communication where differentiation of self takes important place in order to create and maintain satisfying relationships with other people. Adolescent's identity integration (positively resolved identity crisis) based on Erikson's (1968) theory, can be described by such aspects as the apprehension of consistency and autonomy of one's personality, traits, thinking, and feelings (Goth et al., 2012). The ability to understand and differentiate one's thoughts and feelings, to understand the limits of autonomy are also the aspects of differentiation of self. Although concepts of integrated identity and differentiation of self are not the same. Identity is more of how person feels about himself/herself, the sense of coherence and continuity of his/her personality, knowing "who you are" and "where you belong" in life and differentiation of self is manifested in interpersonal relationships when a person is able or not to separate self psychologically and emotionally from other individuals.

The most important reason to suggest that differentiation of self could take a key role in mediating the family's effect on the development of adolescent's identity is the general adaptive function of differentiation of self in any interpersonal relationship, determining the person's ability to adapt in social environment and communicate effectively and, in turn, experience less anxiety and maintain one's mental health (Bowen, 1978). Thus, it is possible to assume that perhaps differentiation of self could be one of the mediators between parenting style and adolescent's identity development, because it might determine how adaptive the parenting style will be to adolescents' identity development. Parenting style determines how parents communicate with their child, the flexible or rigid boundaries and rules which they develop (or not) in the communication process. It was hypothesized that democratic parenting style would be associated with higher differentiation of self and higher differentiation of self would predict lower adolescents' identity diffusion and permissive and authoritative parenting styles vice versa.

The Current Study

The current study aims to strengthen the understanding of the pathways through which parenting style shapes adolescent's identity development by addressing two aims. First, it considers whether parenting style is related to adolescent's identity development. Second, it examines whether differentiation of self mediate the links between parenting style and identity development. It was hypothesized that democratic parenting style would be negatively associated with identity diffusion and authoritarian and permissive parenting styles would be associated with elevated levels of identity diffusion. Further, it was hypothesized that in a sequential mediation model, democratic parenting style would be related with higher level of differentiation of self and this would be negatively linked to identity diffusion. And contrary, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles would be associated with lower levels of differentiation of self and this would be positively related with adolescent's identity diffusion. The model of investigated paths is shown in Figure 1.

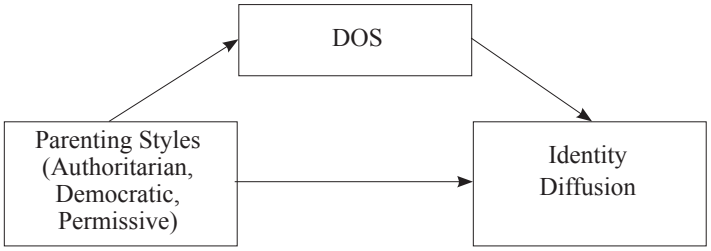

Figure 1. ***Theoretical model of indirect effect of differentiation of self on identity diffusion***
*DOS – Differentiation of Self

Methods

Participants

Student participants were drawn from 4 high schools in the administrative region of Vilnius and Kaunas, Lithuania. Participants were selected from typical public schools using double-stage randomization method. In the first stage, using expert advice, the 4 typical schools, representing the modern Lithuanian schools, of the two biggest Lithuanian cities have been selected. In the second stage, the students were selected randomly by using systemic selection. Families residing in the neighbourhoods in which these schools are located have a broad range of income levels and are relatively homogeneous in terms of their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. There were 900 students who were invited to take part in the study. There were 804 participants who voluntarily agreed to fill in the questionnaire. In total, there were 349 boys and 455 girls. Participants' age varied between 14–18 years of age (M = 15.79, SD = 0.93). All respondents were born in Europe, Lithuania and spoke Lithuanian at home.

Procedure

Each school was visited before the assessment took place in order to inform school administration and prospective participants about the date and time of the assessment. During the introductory meeting, adolescents were informed that participation is voluntary. Parents were informed about the study by the letter. Parents were asked to contact the school or investigators if they did not want their children to participate. Questionnaires were administered by the researcher at the schools, after obtaining the informed consent of school authorities and students' parents. Questionnaires were completed in class during regular class hours. The questionnaire was administered in one class session and it took from 35 to 45 minutes to complete. Sociodemographic questions about family's monthly incomes and education of the participants' parents were also included into the questionnaires.

Measures

Parenting styles questionnaire. Buri's (1991) PAQ (Parental Authority Questionnaire) was used in order to measure the parenting styles according to Baumrind's (1966) conceptualization (permissive, authoritarian and democratic). Buri's questionnaire consists of 30 items, 10 dedicated to each parenting style. The parental authority scale was based on Likert scale,

ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). In Buri's (1991) study, the internal consistency ranged from 0.74 to 0.87. In this study, the internal consistency coefficient Cronbach α was: 0.86 for democratic style, 0.83 for authoritarian style and 0.76 for permissive style. Permission to use this questionnaire for scientific reasons was obtained from the author of the questionnaire. Back translation from English to Lithuanian language was performed for all questionnaires used in this study.

Adolescent's Differentiation of Self. Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI) (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998) was used in order to evaluate an adolescent's differentiation of self. DSI originally was created to measure the adult's level of differentiation of self and was adopted to adolescent's by Knauth and Skowron (2004). In this research, a short form of DSI inventory adopted and validated by Drake (2011) was used in order to measure the adolescent's differentiation of self. Differentiation of self inventory short form (Drake, 2011; Knauth & Skowron, 2004) is a 20-item self-report measure that focuses on adolescents, their relationships with significant other, and their current relations with family of origin. Participants respond to items on a six-point Likert-type scale, ranging from one (not at all true for me) to six (very true for me). The DSI contains four subscales: emotional reactivity (ER; 6 items), I position (IP; 6 items), emotional cut-off (EC; 3 items) and fusion with others (FO; 5 items). The DSI full-scale score was calculated by reversing raw scores on all items on the ER, EC, IP and FO subscales and totalling them, so that higher scores reflected greater differentiation (less emotional reactivity, less difficulty in maintaining I-positions, less emotional cut-off and less fusion). The original study by Knauth and Skowron (2004) reported internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) as follows: DSI full-scale = 0.84, ER = 0.82, IP = 0.64, EC = 0.73 and FO = 0.60. In this study, only DSI full-scale was used. Its internal consistency reliability for the Lithuanian version was 0.82. Confirmatory factor analysis has shown good validity of DSI scale in Lithuanian sample: RMSEA – 0.048, GFI – 0.948, CFI – 0.910. Permission to use this questionnaire for scientific reasons was obtained from the questionnaire authors.

Adolescent's identity development. The adolescent's identity development was measured by Assessment of Identity Development in Adolescence (AIDA) questionnaire (Goth et al., 2012). AIDA is a self-report questionnaire for adolescents from 12 to 18 years old to assess identity development. AIDA is constructed of 58 5-step Likert-type items that were coded towards pathology and add up to a total score ranging from "identity integration to identity diffusion" (a higher score shows bigger pathology). Construct validity could be shown by high intercorrelations between the scales, also supporting the subdifferentiation as the sub-summed total score. High levels of Discontinuity and Incoherence were associated with low levels in Self Directedness (JTCI 12–18 R) an indicator of maladaptive personality functioning. Criterion validity could be demonstrated with both AIDA scales differentiating between patients with a personality disorder (N = 20) and controls with remarkable effect sizes (d) of 2.17 and 1.94 standard deviations (Goth et al.,

2012). In the Lithuanian sample, AIDA showed good reliability and validity characteristics: identity diffusion scale Cronbach $\alpha = 0.89$. Results of confirmatory factor analysis were also good: CFI = 0.990; TLI = 0.983; RMSEA = 0.049. Permission to use this questionnaire for scientific reasons was obtained from the questionnaire authors.

Analytic Strategy

T-tests were used to test for significant group mean differences on study variables (e.g., adolescent's gender); one-way analysis of variances (ANOVAs) was used to test for age group mean differences on study variables using SPSS 19 for Windows. The hypothesized model was tested using AMOS 20. The missing values of used scales were replaced with means values. The hypothesized model was also tested for gender moderation by constraining all paths to be equal across genders, and comparing the constrained versus the unconstrained models using the pairwise parameter comparisons of critical ratios for differences between parameters comparison method (Wang, Jackson, Gaskin, & Wang, 2014). The mediation effect in the model was tested by using bootstrap Maximum Likelihood (ML) method and percentile confidence interval method.

Results

Significant gender and age differences occur during adolescence. Boys and girls differ in various relational aspects with peers and other people (Perez, 2012; Pauriyal, Sharma, & Gulati, 2011), parenting experiences in their families (Tam, Lee, Kumarasuriar, & Har, 2012), abilities to be empathetic (Garaigordobil, 2009), expression of emotions (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013) and features of identity development (Yunus, Kamal, Jusoff, & Zakaria, 2010). For this reason, variables of this study were analysed with respect to age and gender of the participants and the age and gender factor was involved into further statistical analysis. Descriptive information by gender on the sample and study variables is reported in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, 43.4% of the sample was boys and 56.61% of the sample was girls. Significant differences between differentiation of self and authoritarian parenting style were found between genders. T-test showed that boys scored higher in differentiation of self and authoritarian parenting style compared to girls. Girls scored higher only in democratic parenting style compared with boys. There were no significant differences found in identity diffusion and permissive parenting style across genders (see Table 2).

Table 2. ***Means, SDs, and t-values for study variables by gender***

	Boys (N = 349)	**Girls (N = 455)**	**t-value**	**p-value**
Identity diffusion	91.09 (32.11)	91.87 (33.51)	–0.333	.739
Differentiation of self	3.88 (0.69)	3.54 (0.75)	6.662	.0001
Democratic parenting style	3.32 (0.67)	3.47 (0.71)	–2.973	.003
Authoritarian parenting style	2.78 (0.62)	2.60 (0.67)	3.799	.0001
Permissive parenting style	2.93 (0.55)	2.98 (0.59)	–1.205	.228

In order to check if there are significant differences between the means of study variables by the age group, One-Way ANOVA test was performed. Results showed no significant differences in age (first gr. 14–15 years (boys N = 136, girls N = 199); second gr. 15.1 – 16 years (boys N = 130, girls N = 131), third group 16.1–18 years (boys N = 83, girls N = 124)) groups between the means of adolescent's identity diffusion (F = 0.242, p = .915), differentiation of self (F = 0.395, p = .813) and parenting styles (F = 1.471, p = .209; F = 2.077, p = .082; F = 0.544, p = .703). Most variables of interest were significantly correlated (see Table 3). As expected, identity diffusion was negatively associated with adolescent's differentiation of self and democratic parenting style and positively with authoritarian parenting style but only for boys (see Table 3 for bivariate correlations by gender).

To test for moderation by gender, the pairwise parameter comparisons of critical ratios for differences between parameters comparison method was used. Significant moderation was found between permissive parenting style and differentiation of self suggesting the relationship between these two variables is stronger for boys than girls. The path between democratic parenting style to identity diffusion was also significantly moderated by gender. Relationship between democratic parenting style and identity diffusion is more likely to be stronger for girls than boys. The other paths were similar for boys and girls (see Table 4).

As shown in Table 5, across the genders, authoritarian parenting style was significantly associated with lower differentiation of self, which was in turn, significantly associated with greater identity diffusion. Authoritarian parenting style was significantly related with greater level of identity diffusion only for girls but not for boys. It means that differentiation of self partially mediated relationship between authoritarian parenting styles and adolescent's identity diffusion for girls and fully mediated this relationship for boys. Permissive parenting style was significantly related with lower differentiation of self and democratic parenting style vice versa, but only for boys, which in turn was related to a greater level of identity diffusion. Permissive parenting style is not significantly associated with a greater level of identity diffusion for boys, but it is significantly associated with greater identity diffusion for

Table 3. ***Correlations between identity diffusion, differentiation of self and parenting styles between genders***

	Identity diffusion	**Differentiation of self**	**Democratic**	**Authoritarian**	**Permissive**
Identity diffusion	1	–.597**	–.236**	.238	.029
Differentiation of self	–.575**	1	.114*	–.188**	.050
Democratic	–.132*	.178**	1	–.306**	.261**
Authoritarian	.173**	–.219**	–.238**	1	–.236**
Permissive	.059	–.075	.208**	–.112*	1

Note. Correlations for boys are reported below the diagonal and correlations for girls are reported above the diagonal. * p-value significant at .05, ** p-value significant at .01

Table 4. ***Moderation across genders in SEM model of adolescent's identity diffusion. differentiation of self and parenting style***

			Boys		Girls		
			Estimate	**p**	**Estimate**	**p**	**z-score**
Democratic	--->	DOS	0.163	.003	0.066	.201	–1.272
Permissive	--->	DOS	–0.166	.014	–0.009	.883	1.729*
Authoritarian	--->	DOS	–0.217	< .001	–0.189	< .001	0.349
Authoritarian	--->	Diffusion	2.430	.293	5.596	.004	1.051
Permissive	--->	Diffusion	1.866	.477	7.286	< .001	1.603
Democratic	--->	Diffusion	–0.312	.886	–6.922	< .001	–2.303**
DOS	--->	Diffusion	–25.713	< .001	–25.946	< .001	–0.088

Notes: *** p-value < .01; ** p-value < .05; * p-value < .10

Table 5. ***Standartized Parameter Estimates for Path Model***

	Boys (n = 349)		**Girls (n = 455)**	
	Estimate (SE)	**p**	**Estimate (SE)**	**p**
Authoritarian --> Diffusion	.050 (2.33)	.275	.109 (1.94)	**.005**
Permissive --> Diffusion	.030 (2.64)	.507	.130 (2.15)	**< .001**
Democratic --> Diffusion	–.007 (2.19)	.716	–.164 (1.84)	**< .001**
Authoritarian --> DOS	–.196 (.059)	< **.001**	–.171 (.054)	**< .001**
Permissive --> DOS	–.130 (.067)	**.014**	–.007 (.061)	.883
Democratic --> DOS	.158 (.055)	**.003**	.063 (.052)	.200
DOS --> Diffusion	–.558 (2.09)	**< .001**	–.568 (1.65)	**< .001**

girls, which means there is a direct effect of permissive parenting style on greater identity diffusion for girls. Previously done model of parenting style and identity diffusion was used to count assumptions for possible mediation effect (see Apendix 1, Table 7). It showed no significant direct effect between permissive parenting style and identity diffusion for boys. It means that differentiation of self did not mediate relationship between permissive parenting style and identity diffusion for boys and there was no mediation effect for girls also. Democratic parenting style was significantly associated with greater differentiation of self, which in turn was related with lower identity diffusion for boys only and the democratic parenting style was not significantly related with greater differentiation of self for girls. There was only a direct effect between democratic parenting style and lower identity diffusion for girls, and differentiation of self fully mediated relationship between democratic parenting style and lower identity diffusion for boys.

In Table 6, total, direct and indirect effects for parenting styles to identity diffusion of analysed SEM model are present-

Table 6. ***Total, Direct and Indirect Effects for parenting styles to identity diffusion of SEM model (standartized estimates)***

	Boys (n = 349)		**Girls (n = 455)**	
	Estimate	**p-value**	**Estimate**	**p-value**
Total effect Democratic	–.115	.070	–.207	**.001**
Total effect Auhoritarian	.157	**.009**	.206	**.001**
Total effect Permissive	.100	.087	.131	**.012**
Total direct Democratic	–.027	.646	–.171	**.001**
Total direct Authoritarian	.048	.352	.110	**.007**
Total direct Permissive	.028	.599	.127	**.003**
Total indirect Democratic	–.088	**.008**	–.036	.214
Total indirect Authoritarian	.109	**.002**	.096	**.001**
Total indirect Permissive	.073	**.015**	.004	.906

ed. The indirect effect from authoritarian parenting style to identity diffusion was significant for girls and indirect effect from all parenting styles to identity diffusion was significant for boys. Permissive parenting style had significant indirect effect for boys only. There was no significant direct effect indicated between parenting styles and identity diffusion for boys, but all parenting styles had a significant direct effect on identity diffusion for girls. Significant total effect of all parenting styles on identity diffusion was found in girls' group and only authoritarian parenting style had significant total effect in boys' group.

Discussion

During this study, it was found that adolescent differentiation of self fully mediates the relationship between authoritarian and democratic parenting style and identity diffusion in the sample of boys. The democratic parenting style positively predicts differentiation of self for boys, while authoritarian parenting style negatively predicts this relationship for both genders. In this case, differentiation of self negatively predicts the identity diffusion of adolescents of both genders. In the sample of girls, differentiation of self only partially mediates the relation between authoritarian parenting style and identity diffusion.

The fact that differentiation of self fully mediates the relationship between the authoritarian parenting style and identity diffusion in the sample of boys, and partially mediates the relationship in the sample of girls can be explained by the fact that parents with lower differentiation of self are more likely to use authoritarian parenting style (Kriščiūnaitė & Pakrosnis, 2013), and since, according to Bowen (1978), the level of differentiation of self can be transferred from parents to children, it is likely that lower parental differentiation of self may not only determine their preferable parenting style, but also the differentiation of self level of their adolescent. Parents who use authoritarian parenting style tend to require full obedience from their child, strict compliance with their rules, they are poorly responsive to the child's emotional needs, scarcely giving them support or age-appropriate freedom to make autonomous decisions (Lin & Billingham, 2014). These features are similar and could be

associated with a person having low differentiation of self characteristics: inability to understand the needs of the child, to distinguish them from their own needs or desires in respect of the child, accept and understand the child's feelings, thoughts as different from his own, and to consider them when communicating or inability to be flexible and to adjust the rules to the child's needs and a particular social context or situation. All this, in turn, can complicate the adolescent's search of his/her own self as well as development of personal identity. Therefore, authoritarian parenting style is especially ineffective in adolescence, when adolescents are seeking greater autonomy from their parents (Chen-Gaddini, 2012), trying to understand and define their own personality and reply to the vital question of 'who am I?' (Ghorbani, Abdullah, & Jomenia, 2012). Another explanation could be that parents with lower differentiation of self have less interpersonal communication skills and tend to settle their arguments through more destructive ways than parents who have higher differentiation of self (Kriščiūnaitė & Pakrosnis, 2013), and that is in line with the results of other authors' where worse marital relationships and the expression of hostility and disagreements of the partners also has a negative link with adolescent's psychosocial functioning and positive link with adolescents' emotional difficulties (Buehler, Lange, & Franck, 2007). In fact, it is also worth mentioning that these consequences are associated with reduced self-esteem of adolescents and tendency to blame themselves for their parents' disagreements (Buehler et al., 2007; Nelson, Padilla-Walker, Christensen, Evans, & Carroll, 2011) and this, in turn, could also worsen the identity formation of adolescents. The fact that authoritarian parenting style (as well as permissive and democratic parenting styles) has a direct link with identity diffusion for girls but not for boys, could be related to the fact that social relationships and communication with other people is more important for girls rather than boys (Ang, 2006; Flook, 2011). The identity and self-image of girls is more affected by relations with important people for them, since girls are more likely to define themselves through the prism of social relations (Allison & Schultz, 2001). Therefore, parenting style could have a direct connection with girls' identity development. Meanwhile, regarding the boys, authoritarian and democratic parenting style determines adolescents' identity development through their personal differentiation of self level when in communicating with parents they have or do not have an opportunity to develop their independent thinking or to learn to distinguish between their emotions, thoughts and desires from parents' feelings, thoughts and expectations of them.

In contrast to parents who use authoritarian parenting style, supporters of democratic parenting style are able to find and maintain the right balance between the child's support and control, to establish clear boundaries concerning relationship, but at the same time to be warm, encouraging and understanding of the growing autonomy of adolescent's needs, abiding him/her as an individuality, recognizing his/her personal uniqueness, the ability to make decisions and be autonomous as well as giving an adolescent a choice in decision-making and helping him/her to take responsibility for his/her behaviour

(Stienberg, 2011 as cited in Yousefi, 2012). Maybe for this reason, the democratic parenting style is associated with greater differentiation of self (Kriščiūnaitė & Pakrosnis, 2013), which can be transmitted from parents to children (Bowen, 1978). In addition, differentiation of self, as well as achieved sense of integrated identity, is associated with better mental health characteristics (Jenkins et al., 2005; Skowron et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2007; Ramgoon et al., 2006; Sandhu et al., 2012; Dumas et al., 2009), all this could explain mediation of differentiation of self between the democratic parenting style and identity diffusion in the sample of boys. In the sample of girls, differentiation of self did not mediate the link between democratic parenting style and identity diffusion, but a direct negative relationship between democratic parenting style and identity diffusion was found. This could be associated with the results of other studies, which disclosed that democratic parenting style (as well as achieved identity) is associated with positive mental health characteristics, such as good self-esteem, social acceptance and kindness (Nelson et al., 2011), less depressiveness (Gate et al., 2013), higher academic achievements and more confidence in solving problems (Ang, 2006) as well as less behavioural problems (Manongdo & Garcia, 2007; Smith & Hall, 2008). A good parent-child relationship, parental warmth and acceptance are also negatively associated with emotional and behavioural problems of adolescents (Giannakopoulos, Mihas, Dimitrakaki, & Tountas, 2009). Research findings also revealed that democratic parenting style is linked with helping children to accept autonomous and rational decisions (Kim et al., 2009; Weaver & Kim, 2008 as cited in Yuwen & Chen, 2013), which could also foster adolescents' identity development. One more explanation why democratic parenting style predicts lower identity diffusion could be that supportive parenting facilitates youths' identification with parental and social norms (Stice & Barrera, 1995; as cited in Manongdo & Garcia, 2007), which, in turn, could facilitate adolescent's identity development, and democratic parenting style could also help adolescents to identify themselves with their parents and internalize their worldview (Cakir & Aydin, 2005).

Results of this study have shown that permissive parenting style does not predict identity diffusion for boys, but, according to hypothesis, positively predicts identity diffusion in girls' sample. Because identity diffusion is considered to be related with adolescents' mental health problems (Dumas et al., 2009; Jung et al., 2013; Ramgoon et al., 2006) positive links between the girls' identity diffusion and permissive parenting style could be explained considering the results of other researches. According to Renen & Wild (2008) lower levels of connection and regulation from parents (this is characteristics of permissive parenting style) are related with more reported suicidal ideation or behaviour by adolescents. Poor parent-child relationship, low parental interest and monitoring are related with a greater risk of adolescent reporting abnormal levels of emotional and behaviour problems (Giannakopoulos et al., 2009). Permissive parenting is also positively related with the conduct disorder (Smith & Hall, 2008). Permissive parenting style includes more lax, inconsistent, and avoidant behaviours (Baumrind,

1966). Permissive parents also tend to give more freedom than is age appropriate, it is also characterized by children having unlimited boundaries for their behaviour. So, young children are left on their own attempts in developing culture appropriate values, attitudes, and behaviour patterns (Kohler & Christensen, 2010). Regarding this, in adolescence it could be more difficult for the child to frame his/her thoughts, feelings, behaviour or self-view. This could be a possible explanation why permissive parenting style is related to girls' identity diffusion.

It was also found that permissive parenting style was negatively associated with differentiation of self for boys, but there were no such statistically significant differences found for girls. The negative links between boys' differentiation of self and permissive parenting style could be related with permissive parents' tendency to behave towards their adolescents in a non-punitive, acceptant, and affirmative manner. They also tend to avoid confrontation with their children and do not oppose their child's impulses, desires or actions and because of this behaviour parent-child communication may suffer. In turn, permissive parenting may be related with a number of negative outcomes for the child (Nelson et al., 2011) and poor, ineffective parent–child communication is identified as the main reason contributing to poor emotional well-being of adolescents (Yuwen & Chen, 2013) and also with the lower levels of differentiation of self. Permissive parents also make few demands for household responsibility and orderly behaviour. They allow their child to regulate his/her own activities as much as possible, avoid the exercise of control, and do not encourage him/her to obey externally defined standards (Baumrind, 1966). It could be a one more reason why permissive parenting style is related with a lower level of differentiation of self for boys. Gender differences between differentiation of self and permissive parenting styles could be explained that boys tend to have intrapersonal, self related orientation to life, and girls tend to have more interpersonal, me – other related orientation to life and react more emotionally to their interpersonal relationship issues (Cook, Buehler, & Blair, 2013). It means that boys not only tend to have a higher level of differentiation of self (Knauth, Skowron, & Escobar, 2006), but the knowledge of self and self-reflecting experiences and autonomous thinking (Lee, Beckert & Goodrich, 2010) may be more important to them.

Limitations and Future Directions

The findings of this study must be viewed in the context of its limitations. One limitation may be the generalizability of the findings. The sample consisted solely of middle adolescents from more middle class families who ranged in age from 14 to 18 years and who were residing in two of the biggest cities in Lithuania. Another potential limitation of this study is that it relied solely on the self-report of the adolescent. Although adolescents respond behaviourally and emotionally to their own perceptions of the parenting style that they experience, their recalls may differ from what their parents would report and what is actually experienced in families. Parents' perception of their own parenting style should also be taken. Information about adolescent's identity diffusion and differentiation of self was also only obtained from adoles-

cent's self-reports which might not reflect the accurate picture. The use of multiple informants (parents, peers and teacher reports) and multiple methods, for example, structured observations of adolescents interacting with their parents or interview with adolescents and their family members may enhance our understanding of links of parenting styles, differentiation of self and adolescent's identity development. Parent and adolescent personality characteristics, for example, such as personality traits or features of emotionality should also be taken into account. Further research on siblings, grandparents living at home with adolescents, and the family system as a whole is needed in order to fully understand how the family, and not just parents, may determine adolescent's identity development. Future research on relationship with peers and adolescent's identity development should also be taken into consideration. Finally, future research must also include an examination of broader social context factors that may be related with the adolescent's identity development, such as school, media, neighbourhoods, socioeconomic status of family, stress or parental education.

Beside all these limitations, the broader goal of understanding the interrelations between adolescents' identity development, differentiation of self and parenting style is to help to improve the lives of adolescents at risk for psychological problems. Difficulty in identity development may lead to emotional and behavioural problems. Parenting plays an important role in social and emotional development of adolescents. Parents must find and keep balance in adolescent's need for autonomy and supervision. The democratic parenting style, parental support and positive attitude to adolescent's personality are crucial in helping the adolescents to explore and form their identity, to realize who they are and who they want to be. Parental establishing of clear boundaries and encouraging age appropriate autonomy and decision-making are important to adolescent's perception and development of interpersonal and intrapersonal boundaries that help to develop differentiation of self. Autonomy granting is also a significant factor in helping adolescents to develop a more advanced self-concept, and in turn, a personal sense of identity. Programs of parental education by training parents to provide their adolescents a more responsive and supportive environment should be developed and implemented. Psychoeducational programs for adolescents where adolescents could have an opportunity to enhance self-knowledge and develop interpersonal communication skills which in turn could help them to develop differentiation of self and foster their identity development. When applying these findings to therapies or interventions, it seems likely that efforts aimed at the prevention of identity development problem behaviours would benefit from targeting parenting styles and the differentiation of self may determine adolescent's identity development.

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Appendix 1

Table 7. ***Model of parenting styles on identity diffusion across genders***

	Boys (N = 349)		**Girls (N = 455)**	
	Standartized estimate	**Significance level (p-value)**	**Standartized estimate**	**Significance level (p-value)**
Auhoritarian --> identity diffusion	.157	**.004**	.206	**< .001**
Democratic --> identity diffusion	–.115	**.036**	–.207	**< .001**
Permissive --> identity diffusion	.10	.061	.131	**.005**

PAAUGLIŲ IDENTITETO RAIDOS, TĖVŲ NAUDOJAMŲ AUKLĖJIMO STILIŲ IR DIFERENCIJAVIMOSI SĄSAJOS

Tija Ragelienė, Viktoras Justickis

S a n t r a u k a

Paauglių santykiai su tėvais ir šių santykių kokybė užima svarbią vietą paauglių identiteto raidos procese, tačiau tėvų naudojamų auklėjimo stilių ir paauglių identiteto raidos sąsajos nėra iki galo suprantamos. Šio tyrimo tikslas buvo analizuoti paauglių tėvų naudojamų auklėjimo stilių, diferencijavimosi ir identiteto raidos sąsajas. Iš viso tyrime dalyvavo 804 paaugliai, kurių amžius buvo nuo 14 iki 18 metų. Tyrime buvo bandoma nustatyti, ar diferencijavimasis yra tarpinis veiksnys, paaiškinantis sąryšius tarp paauglių tėvų naudojamų auklėjimo stilių ir identiteto raidos. Struktūrinio lygčių modelio rezultatai atskleidė statistiškai reikšmingą netiesioginį diferencijavimosi efektą tėvų auklėjimo stiliaus ir identiteto difuzijos sąryšiams vaikinų imtyje. Tėvų auklėjimo stiliai taip pat turėjo tiesioginį poveikį identiteto difuzijai merginų grupėje. Tyrimo rezultatai padeda geriau suprasti, kaip tėvų naudojami auklėjimo stiliai veikia paauglių identiteto raidą. Straipsnyje taip pat yra aptariami šiuos sąryšius lemiantys lyčių skirtumai.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: paaugliai, identitetas, auklėjimo stiliai, diferencijavimasis.

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