Explaining the Relationship between Parenting Styles, Identity Styles and Spiritual Health in Adolescents

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Abstract

This research aimed to explain the structural relationship between parenting styles, identity styles and spiritual health of adolescents. The descriptive and causal correlation methods were used in this study and 628 subjects (311 females and 317 males) among high school students in Karaj, Iran were selected by multi-stage sampling method. For this purpose, the parenting style questionnaire of Baumrind, identity styles of Berzonsky (ISI-6G) and spiritual health that were designed by researchers and were used after evaluating their reliability and validity. Data were analyzed after preparation by using structural equation model. The results showed that the identity, informational and normative styles have significant and positive relation with spiritual health and have no significant relationship with avoiding identity. Authoritative style of parenting practices has a significant and positive correlation with the spiritual health and authoritative style has a significant and negative relation with spiritual health. However, easy-going method has a significant and positive correlation only with the dimensions of self-consciousness and transcendental-esoteric experiences and has a significant and negative relation with other dimensions of spiritual health. The results obtained on the relation between parenting practices and identity styles indicate that authoritative parenting practices has a positive relation with normative identity and negative relationship with avoidant identity. Also, authoritarian parenting style has a negative relation with informational and normative identity and significant and positive correlation with avoidant identity and only easy-going parenting style has a significant and negative correlation with informational identity. Also, in this research, informational and normative identity styles mediate only the relationship between authoritative parenting style and spiritual health of adolescents.

Keywords: Identity style, parenting styles, spirituality, adolescent

Introduction

Adolescence is the inevitable stage of human evolution that has been noted due to the particular sensitivity. In this important period, human evolution is occurred in the cognitive, moral, emotional and behavioral area (Ghobari Bonab & Raqebiyan, 2008) and different needs are felt after these changes (Yeshigeta et al., 2008) and worship is one of the most important needs. Morally, during the teenage period mystical soul, morality and spirituality appears more. Teenager is more ready to accept human virtues, moral and spiritual values and feelings of perfectionism are appeared in him (Khodayari, 2008). The results of studies have shown that the concept of spirituality is related to all health areas at all ages (Esmitt, 2004; Shek, 2012) and researchers are interested in that all over the world (Omidvari, 2009). Some studies' results indicates that without the spiritual dimension, other dimensions of biological, psychological and social do not have proper function and

are not able to achieve their maximum capacity (Ross, 1994; Muller et al., 2000).Due to the importance of spiritual health study, this study try to seek and explain that the spiritual health is related to what factors.

The existence of relationship between various factors and spiritual health is obtained by studying the background of study that the most important of them is the relationship between structural parenting style and identity style of adolescents.

The first definition of identity is proposed by Erikson. He has introduced the identity as the basic achievement of adolescent period. Identity is the main element of human personality that seeks to find objectivity and allows individual to determine their status in relation to the world and others properly. Identity formation is a combination of skills, worldview and replication of childhood that comes in the form integrated and unique whole (Bakhshayesh & Rezaei Moghaddam, 2010)

Findings indicates that crisis in identity formation among adolescents is more than other groups, when adolescents look around themself and evaluate their identity feel that they have to answer to questions about the human existence and even nature. Philosophy recognition and life meaning and reliance on religious and spiritual organizations create mental relaxation and help to resolve the identity crisis (Movaghenbashi & Dehghani, 2006). In line with multiple definitions of identity, Berzonsky provided a cognitive- social perspective and introduced three styles of informational identity, normative and avoidance based on the process-oriented direction for demonstrating the difference of processes that individuals utilize in various conditions for decision-making, problem solving and discovery of information.

Another important issue in psychology is the study of parenting styles. According to Gano AND Moor (2002), Rull (2008) and other researchers in this field, the amount of spirituality and religious of adolescents directly and indirectly is influenced by identity, personality and parenting styles. Although, a few studies have been done in relation to parenting styles and religious (Spilka et al., 2003), empirical evidences emphasis that among three styles proposed by Baumrind (1971) children who have enjoyed by authoritative parenting style have higher social, emotional growth and academic achievement.

Results of many studies have shown that the parental, attitudes, activities and actions are appeared in the form of family patterns or parenting styles. Adopting the types of different training styles in family is affected by several factors and many of these factors are induced by conditions of environment of society and dominant culture, but all parenting styles aim to shape the psychological character and strengthen child's competences. Due to the importance of these two purposes and considering two dimensions of paternal behavior namely adoption against the rejection and crackdown against easy-going, scholars today discuss parenting styles and their effects on the growth of children and provide different patterns that among social factors, parents and family system have the most prominent impact on the person's identity and how it is shaped. In fact, most experts verify the impact of family on individual and consider family as the most important institution in shaping the identity of the children (Schultheiss, & Blustien, 1994). In this regard, Adams (1985) concluded that parents can facilitate or delay the positive growth of identity. Finally, it seems that parenting styles indirectly influence the spiritual health and identity. Results showed that paternal attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that appear in the form of family pattern or parenting styles are considered as the key factor in the personality development and stabilizing moral and spiritual properties of children and their identity (Kargarshovali & Paknejad, 2004).

Methodology

The method of present study is causal correlation and its statistical population include high school students and their parents in Karaj city. The sample size of this study is 628 subjects

including 313 female students and 365 mothers, which were selected by multistage sampling method. 272 subjects of teenagers were in the first grade, 247 subjects in the second grade and 109 subjects in the third grade of high school. Mean and standard deviation of age of girls were respectively 15.89 and 0.86 and boys, respectively, 16.05 and 0.96. Also, the mean and standard deviation of age of mothers were respectively 42.48 and 5.10 and fathers participated in the study were 47.26 and 5.70.

Instruments of the study

Parenting styles: the parenting style questionnaire of Baumrind (1972) was used to assess the parenting styles of parents of adolescents participating in the study. The questionnaire consists of 30 questions which assesses three democratic, dictatorial and easy-going parenting styles on a five-point scale of completely agree (4), agree (3) not sure (2), almost disagree (1) and disagree (0). Buri (1991, cited in Dolatabadi et al., 2014) by using retest method has reported the internal consistency of the questionnaire in mothers and fathers for easy-going style 0.81 and 0.77, for dictatorial style 0.85, 0.86 and for democratic style 0.87 and 0.88. Also, Esfandiari (2005) has reported the reliability of this test by test-retest method for easy-going style 0.69, for dictatorial style 0.77 and for authoritative style 0.73. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to evaluate the internal consistency of scales of this tool and coefficients were obtained respectively 0.69, 0.74 and 0.78 for easy-going, dictatorial and democratic styles.

Identity styles scale (ISI-6G): the 40-point version of identity styles of Berzonsky (1992) was used to assess identity style of adolescent. This scale assesses three confusion or avoidant, informational and normative styles in a five degree spectrum (1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree). It should be noted that the 10 items of this scale are related to the commitment subscales that are used for secondary analysis and are not considered as identity style. Therefore, these 10 items were not used in this study. Berzonsky (1992) has reported the internal consistency of three scales of informational, normative and avoidant respectively 0.62, 0.66 and 0.73. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the mentioned styles were obtained 0.69, 0.74, and 0.71, respectively.

Spiritual health questionnaire: the researcher-made questionnaire of spiritual health was used to measure the spiritual health of adolescent (Abbaspoor Azar, Borjali, & Farokhi). So, after reviewing the background of study and theoretical foundations of spiritual health and viewpoint of educational sciences and psychology experts, 103 items with six degree scale of at all (1) to very high (6) were designed, then it was implemented on a sample of 120 adolescents. Then, based on the evaluation of the responses of adolescents 71 items were prepared for the final run. Ultimately, spiritual health questionnaire along with identity styles questionnaire were conducted on 630 students. Data after collecting was randomly divided into two groups of 315 people. A group of data were analyzed by using principal component analysis with varimax rotation. The number of factors was determined based on two criteria of Eigen value (greater than one) and Cattell'S Scree plot. The analysis results showed that the index of sampling adequacy (KMO) is equal to 0.94 and the value of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is equal to 0.88 which was significant at 0.01 level. The primary analysis of 12 factors by Eigen value was more than one that totally explained 74.51% of the total variance. After removing questions that their factorial load was less than 0.3 and questions that had created the factorial load more than 0.3, they were analyzed again and 8 factors with more than one Eigen value were extracted and depending on the type of questions of each factor, the titles of spiritual values, transcendental intrinsic experience, connection with nature, individual dynamic, the higher states of self-consciousness, communication with others, inner relaxation, spiritual experiences of environment were considered for its factors. Also, confirmatory factor analysis by using data of the second group supported the designed 8-factor structure of questionnaire because

the results of the confirmatory factor analysis by using AMOS 7.0 software and estimating the maximum likelihood (ML) showed that the fitness indicators were suitable (p>0.05, χ2=847.081, CFI1= 0.946, GFI2=0.931, AGFI3=0.903 and RMSEA4=0.077) and typically confirmed findings of exploratory factor analysis. It should be mentioned that the internal consistency of factors of the mentioned questionnaire was obtained between the 0.91 – 0.72 by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Findings of the study

The mean, standard deviation and correlation matrix of the spiritual health variables (spiritual values, transcendental intrinsic experience, connection with nature, individual dynamic, the higher states of self-consciousness, communication with others, inner peace and spiritual experiences of environment), identity styles (avoidant, informational and normative) and parenting style are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation and correlation matrix of research variables

14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	variables
														Identity style
													-	Informative
												-	0/484**	Normative
											-	-0/028	0/001	Avoidance
														Spiritual health
										-	0/055	0/250**	0/334**	Spiritual values
									-	0/456**	-0/056	0/389**	0/368**	Transcendent mystical experience
								-	0/459**	0/341**	-0/069	0/358**	0/442**	Relation with nature
							-	0/418**	0/658**	0/428**	-0/08*	0/406**	0/435**	Dynamic process
						-	0/297**	0/336**	0/399**	0/229**	0/191**	0/458**	0/354**	States of consciousness
					-	0/289**	0/411**	0/421**	0/429**	0/550**	-0/026	0/341**	0/366**	Communication with others

				-	0/373**	0/547**	0/455**	0/420**	0/496**	0/256**	-0/031	0/408**	0/296**	Inner peace
				0/296**	0/285**	0/313**	0/442**	0/497**	0/429**	0/293**	-0/008	0/344**	0/421**	Environmental spiritual experiences
					-									**Parenting styles**
	-	-0/087*	-0/076	0/127**	0/021	0/125**	-0/082	0/119**	0/116**	0/001	-0/063	0/186**		Easy-going
-	0/288**	0/214**	0/142**	0/202**	0/188**	0/149**	0/165**	0/219**	0/146**	-0/091*	0/152**	0/349**		Authoritative
-	-0/255**	0/175*	-0/171**	-0/197**	-0/173**	-0/118**	-0/141**	-0/138**	-0/247**	-0/089*	0/101*	-0/081*	-0/087*	Democratic
24/15	41/49	41/93	19/43	14/32	46/75	43/16	33/33	24/04	98/67	19/06	28/59	32/31	37/12	Mean
5/77	5/24	5/44	5/43	2/20	5/13	5/62	7/29	3/72	13/05	3/17	5/89	4/96	5/86	SD

According to Table 1, informational identity style has meaningful relationship with all dimensions of spiritual health and parenting styles and consistent with the expectation this relationship is negative with easy-going and dictatorial parenting styles. The relationship between normative identity style and all dimensions of spiritual health is positive and significant at 0.01level. Also, the normative identity style has positive relation with authoritative parenting style and negative and significant relation with dictatorial style. Avoidant identity style has negative relationship with democratic parenting style and positive relation with dictatorial style at significant level of 0.05. Apart from the relationship between easy-going parenting style and factors of self-consciousness states and spiritual experiences of environment and spiritual health, all dimensions of spiritual health have negative relationship with easy-going and dictatorial parenting styles and significant and positive relation with authoritative style.

This study used structural equation modeling method to assess the structural relationships among parenting styles, identity styles and spiritual health in adolescents (model 1). In the model of present study, it is assumed that parenting styles and identity styles predict spiritual health in the form of a model.

Before analyzing the structural equation modeling, it was necessary to assess the ability of each indicator of spiritual health in measuring the latent variable of spiritual health. Therefore, the confirmatory factor analysis by using software AMOS 0.7 and estimating the maximum likelihood (ML) was used. Finally, by modify the model in four steps (by creating the covariance between the errors of spiritual values- communication with others, individual dynamic -higher states of self-consciousness, inner peace- higher states of self-consciousness and relationship with nature-transcendental inner experience) fitness indicators were obtained which showed model had an acceptable fit with data ($\chi 2$ (df =16, N =624)= 40.59, , CFI =0.986, GFI = 0.984, AGFI =0.965 and

RMSEA =0.048). Also, factorial loads of all indicators were higher than 0.32 (the specified cut-off point by Tabachnik and Fidel, 2007). This shows that all indicators have required ability to measure the latent variable.

The utilization of structural equation modeling technique showed that the structural model does not fit with the data. For this reason, the modification indicators were evaluated and accordingly by creating covariance between normative and informational errors, the structural model was reformed and fitness indicators were obtained which indicating an acceptable fit of model with collected data. For modified structural model chi-square index ($\chi 2$) was equal to 241.06, comparative fit index (CFI) equal to 0.928, goodness fit index (GFI) equal to 0.948, adjusted goodness fit index (AGFI) equal to 0.909 and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was equal to 0.07 that totally indicated a good fit of the model with the collected data. Thus, it was concluded that parenting styles and identity styles in the form of a model predict the spiritual health of adolescents. Table 2 shows the total path coefficients, direct and indirect, between research variables.

Table 2. Total path coefficients, direct or indirect, between parenting styles, identity styles and spiritual health

Indirect effect		Direct effect		Total effect		
SD	β Coefficient	SD	β Coefficient	SD	β Coefficient	**Paths**
0/028	-0/040	0/034	-0/009	0/042	-0/049	Easy-going parenting- spiritual health
0/029	0/017	0/033	-0/173[**]	0/046	-0/189[**]	Dictatorial parenting- spiritual health
0/036	0/175[**]	0/038	0/029	0/047	0/205[**]	Democratic parenting- spiritual health
				0/037	-0/067	Avoidance identity- spiritual health
				0/034	0/372[**]	Normal identity - spiritual health
				0/040	0/367[**]	Informative identity - spiritual health
				0/044	-0/036	Easy-going parenting- avoidance identity
				0/045	0/087[*]	Dictatorial parenting- avoidance identity
				0/048	-0/079	Democratic parenting- avoidance identity
				0/044	-0/017	Easy-going parenting – normal identity
				0/048	-0/043	Dictatorial parenting – normal identity
				0/053	0/137[*]	Democratic parenting – normal identity
				0/045	-0/098[*]	Easy-going parenting- informative identity
				0/041	0/013	Dictatorial parenting- informative identity
				0/049	0/325[**]	Democratic parenting- informative identity

As seen in Table 2, total path coefficient between easy-going parenting style and spiritual health variable is not significant at 0.05 level. In contrast, total path coefficient between dictatorial and democratic parenting style with spiritual health is significant at 0.01 level (β coefficient is respectively equal to the -0.189 and 0.205) that this path coefficient is negative for dictatorial style. This means that by adding a standard deviation to dictatorial parenting style, 0.189 standard deviation is reduced from spiritual health of adolescent. Among identity styles, the path coefficient of two normative and informational styles with spiritual health is positive and significant at 0.01 level (β coefficient is equal to 372/0 and 367/0 respectively). The path coefficient between avoidant identity style and spiritual health was not significant at 0.05 level. According to the results of the above table among parenting styles only dictatorial style could significantly predict the avoidant identity style (β =0.087, P>0.05). Also, among parenting styles only democratic style significantly predicted normative identity style (β =0.137, P<0.05). In contrast, the two authoritative and easy-going parenting styles predicted informational identity style (β coefficient is respectively equal to -0.098 and 0.325). It is worth mentioning that although the path coefficients of two dictatorial and authoritative parenting styles with spiritual health were significant, only the direct path coefficient between dictatorial style and spiritual health was significance at 0.01level. Unlike the dictatorial style, indirect path coefficient between the democratic style and spiritual health was significant at 0.01 level. This issue indicates that the authoritative parenting style probably influence the spiritual health through identity style.

Figure 1 shows standardized path coefficient between the research variables that accordingly has explained parenting styles and identity of 48% of the variance of spiritual health.
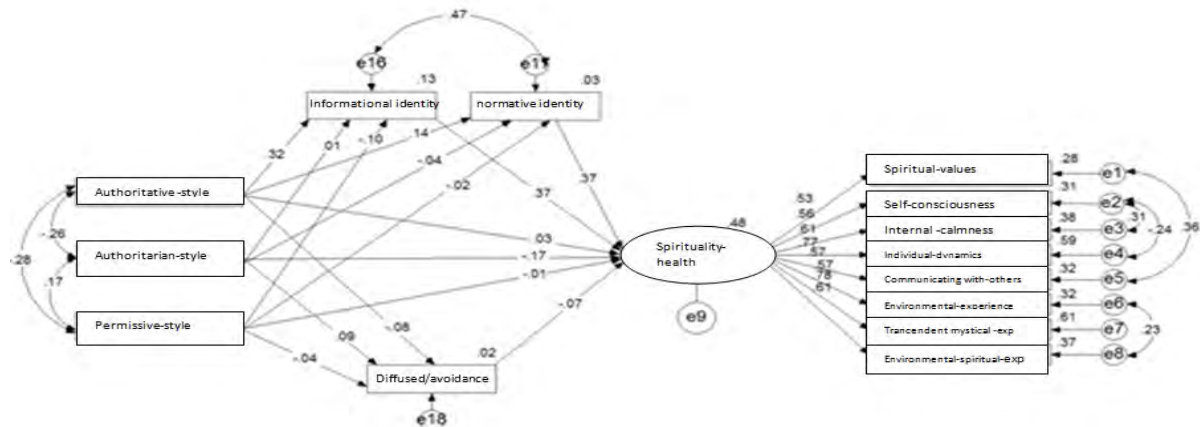

Figure 1: The tested model of study and standardized path coefficients between its variables

Conclusion

The present study examined the structural relationships among parenting styles, identity styles and spiritual health by using structural equation model method. Analysis results show that parenting and identity styles predict the spiritual health within a model. Investigating the relationships between research variables showed that informational and normative identity styles have a significant and positive correlation with spiritual health but avoidant identity style has a significant and negative relationship with the spiritual health. These findings are consistent with results of studies of Ker, Pordelan, Heydari and Jasimi (2014), Bahari, Khosroshahi and Mahmoud Ali Lu (2011), Bakhshayesh and Rezaei Moghaddam (2011), Case and Raytz (2007), Janet, Gilbert,

Thompson et al (2009) Griffith & Gurrix (2001) and other researchers in this area. In explanation of these findings can be pointed to the Wolf model (1997) that Hats Boots (2000) has operated that (Duriez et al, 2005). According to the idea of Wolff and Hats Boots (2003), adolescents who according to the idea of ISI (2003) have informational identity style and process the religious content deeply and meaningfully and critically consider the conformity of religious content with their personal criteria and adolescents with normative identity style who are committed to the fixed religious idea like adolescents with informational identity style are committed to the religious doctrine. On the other hand, characteristics of adolescents with informational and normative identity style are consistent with spiritual people with religious orientation. However, this correspondence cannot be seen in adolescents with avoidant identity style. Also, the present study investigated the amount of relationship between parenting style of parents and spiritual health of adolescents and concluded that the authoritative parenting style has a significant and positive correlation with spiritual health. This finding is consistent with results of studies of Hoge, Petrillo and Smith (1983), Clark, and Ritengton and Denser (1998). According to D. Ross et al., (2004) Potvin and Sloane (1985), Vigert and Thomas (1973) in explanation of these findings it can be said that when parents and children have emotional support and positive emotional communication, adolescents show a high commitment to religious values. Also, the parents who in addition to controlling their children support them too, their children will have religious and moral values similar to their parents'. Researches findings on the relationship between dictatorial parenting styles and spiritual health are also shown that the dictatorial parenting style has a significant and negative relationship with spiritual health of adolescents, Studies of Ellison and Corporation (1993), Desteo and Hunsberger (1977), Wells (1991) Jesterchat (1995), Chegini (2011) have shown this relationship. It seems indulge in creating restrictions in dictatorial parenting style leads to the defective training of children, these parents have very high expectations of their children and show little emotion in interacting with their children. According to Kanjar et al (1995), Daronbash and colleagues (1987) these parents focus on undisputed obedience and respect of the children which leads to low self-esteem, independence and creativity, delayed moral development in children (Peterson 1984, Wald R. 1980). Another finding of this study revealed that the easy-going parenting style has positive relation with self-consciousness dimension and spiritual experiences of adolescent and has significant and negative correlation with other dimensions of spiritual health.

Although many researches results indicate the role of family in the formation of spirituality in adolescent, still cannot talk about a certain quantity as the severity of this effect. Family is an interface to transfer beliefs and values of adolescents and although it may not be constituted as a single channel. Ericsson believes that religious rituals facilitate. Guidance in religious ceremonies and rituals by mentors has a long social mechanism that is seen in cultures to facilitate the evolution of young people to adults (Levinson, 1978). Typically, mentors are non-parental adults that are often relatives such as uncles, uncles and older siblings (Zimmerman, Bain Haymer and Notarver, 2002). The relationship with non-family members as a mentor can be a powerful and compensatory relationships with family members. Mentors do whatever parents are committed to do for children without the family's emotional complexity (Leyner & Benson, 2001, Yannis, Melellan & Yates, 1999). Relationship with mentors enables teens to know a self- extra-progressive and self-spiritual (Hamil, Leklerak & Lefransoa, 2003, Erystal& Doubie, 2002, Hemel & et al., 2003) and their spirituality links to higher states of self-consciousness through the inner experience of transcendent and inner realities and relates to self, others and larger fact (Steinman, 2010).

Another result of this study on the existing relationship between parenting styles and identity styles showed that authoritative parenting has positive relationship with normative identity and significant and negative relation with avoidant identity. Since the type of parental interaction with

teens has a significant impact on self-esteem, some personality variables, adolescent's future success in life, many behavioral features, and self-concept and identity of adolescents induced by some family factors including the type of parental interaction with teenagers, many studies have shown this relationship like studies of Yousefniya (2002), Nazer, Khosropour et al (2014), Sandi, Rezai and Salehi (2013), Sharif et al (2003), Rangin, Amirsardari (2011), Babapoor Khairaddin and Anamgh (2013), Frank et al. (2012), Adams (1992). It seems that adolescents match their normative identity with important expectations and guidelines of their around through processing style. In fact, their unilateral reliance on integration reduces potential threats to the "self" (Somens et al, 2005). Adolescents through processing style of avoidant identity evade from the issues of identity or postpone it (Berzonsky, 1990) that this way of dealing is in conflict with authoritative parenting style. The next results of this study showed that the dictatorial parenting style has negative relation with formational and normative identity and significant and positive correlation with avoidant identity. This findings are in line with research findings of Nazer, Khosropour et al (2014) Sandi, Rezai and Salehi (2013), Babapoor, Khairaddin and Anamogh (2013), Jassemi, Ebrahami, Valizadeh (2013), Fouladchang, Sheikholeslami and Safari (2012), Mirzajani (2008), Frank and Bierce (2012) and Adams (1992). It seems that children of parents who use dictatorial parenting style have the lowest identity development and avoidant confused identity and normative and informational identity cannot be seen in them. Because these two identities are more developed identities that are in conflict with authoritative parenting style. About the existing relationship between easy-going parenting style and adolescent's identity styles, it can be said that in this study, a negative relationship is obtained between easy-going style and informational identity. This finding is consistent with results of researches of Babapoor, Khairaddin and Anamoq (2013), Mirzajani (2008), Fouladchang et al., (2012), Sambolis et al., (2001), Adams et al. (1990) and other researchers. In the explanation of this finding it can be said that easy-going parents prevent adolescent identity development and have the most positive relationship with avoidant identity. The latest finding of this study showed that only authoritative parenting style mediates spiritual health of adolescents through informational and normative identity styles. This result is in line with researches of Gong et al., (2000), Kamnygr et al. (2000), and George, (1997). This finding can be explained in this way that, because authoritative parenting style is the best type of parenting style and provides optimum performance of family and creates a more perfect normative and informational identity, the sense of adolescent becomes stronger towards his identity. Thus, answering to the existential and meaningful life questions leads him to a spiritual health. According to the obtained results, it is suggested to increase research on this topic and MA and PhD theses to be directed in the pathology of spiritual health and spiritual health workgroups to be established in province's cultural base with approach to interaction with seminary and university. Designing and preparing required training and services packages to spiritual health promotion in schools, developing educational texts with understandable patterns approach and religious orders in accordance with the needs of different age groups and holding training courses for teachers and parents to answer the questions and improving their attitudes about the importance of spiritual health are necessary. Another important issue that should be considered by future researchers is that, despite the different western tools, with appropriate reliability and validity to measure variables of this study, since these concepts, due to the religious and cultural background, are somewhat different from the concept of western thought and culture, it is recommended to conduct a research at the national level (in the opinion of Islam) to construct appropriate tools for measuring spiritual health, specific identity styles and parenting styles of Iranian adolescents.

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