Relationship between identity styles and self esteem

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ABSTRACT: The present study was carried out with the title of analyzing the relationship between identity styles and self esteem. The participants of the study was high school students (8114 male, 6075 female) from Ardabil city, during 90-91 educational semesters. Among these students, a sample of 200 students (100 male, 100 female) were selected by the approach of multi-stage cluster sampling. Data were collected by the use of Berzonsky's questionnaires of identity styles (ISI-6G), Cooper smith's self esteem. With the aid of Pierson's solitary test and stepwise regression, the results show that among identity styles, informational and normative identity styles and diffuse-avoident identity styles have positive and negative relationship with self esteem, respectively. And normative identity style predicts self esteem positively, but diffuse-avoident identity styles predict that negatively.

Key words: Identity styles, self esteem

INTRODUCTION

For the formation of total structure of a life, whole of the lifespan is important, but some of them are more. Adolescence, as one of the most critical period of life, accompanies various changes in different dimensions. Based on this, people need establishing a meaningful identity structure for the purpose of regulating and managing life, to make them able to continue a unity feeling and to provide a reference frame for decision-making, problem solving, and interpretation of experiences and information. The study of identity is rooted in the theory of Ericson's psychosocial development (1950). In his opinion, identity includes a social and individual concept and has been considered as an interaction between person and society (Flum & Kaplan, 2012). Ericson (1963, 1968 & 1980) conceives identity formation as a process that activates noticeably in adolescence and continues until youth, and includes a continuous attention to "who is possible" (looking for identity) and the process of decision-making about "who is it" (identity commitment) (Kerpelman et al, 2012). Solving the challenge of identity development against identity confusion necessitates a situation in which a teenager forms a stable feeling in a collection of goals, values and personal viewpoints. Berzonesky's model of identity style (1990) stylistic differences about how do people process information about identity and how do they tend or avoid the formation of an identity feeling. Some people evaluate and process the data about themselves knowingly prior to forming commitments and definitions of themselves. On the other hand, others accept and internalize the things that their life's important people have prescribed normatively. The concept of identity has been widely applied. Many studies have been done about identity based on Marcia's model of identity mood (1966) for more than forty years. Marcia has defined four different kinds of identity: Achievement identity, Foreclosure identity, Moratorium identity, Diffusion identity. Recently, scientists have persisted on a process that identity is formed on identity outcomes rather than personal differences (Berzonesky, 1988). Specifically, Berzonesky (2004) introduced his theory as a social-cognitive model. In his opinion, an identity style refers to the strategy an individual uses to process, structure, utilize, and revise self-relevant information. Three different identity styles are distinguished: information-oriented, a normative, and a diffuse-avoidant style. Individuals scoring high on the information-oriented style actively seek out and process identity-relevant information to make well-informed choices. These choices, in turn, result in well-differentiated and well-integrated identity structure. Individuals scoring high on the normative style focus on the process of making identity-related decisions until situational demands force a choice onto them. Such an approach results in a fragmented and loosely integrated identity structure. People with diffuse-avoidant identity style choose exciting strategies, have low self-esteem and know nothing about their future (Berzonesky and Kuk, 2000). Formation
of a style is one of the main developmental challenges that teenagers and youths should pass it (Ericson, 1968). Results of a study by Reshvanlou et al (2012), showed that although, all three styles of informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant identity style, decrease at the end of adolescence than its primary years, informational and normative identity, ranks higher than diffuse-avoidant style in these ages. With regard to ultra-analysis of Bosch and Card (2012) there has been an average positive relationship between informational and normative identity styles and an average negative relationship between informational and diffuse-avoidant identity styles, and a minor negative relationship between normative and diffuse-avoidant identity styles. Self-esteem is a factor of personality which relates to identity (Scheier et al, 1994). Moreover, it is one of the public structures of psychology and a total reflection for every person's value, beliefs and viewpoints, as well as, an exciting response to these beliefs (Man, Husman & Schaalma, 2004). According to Cooper smith (1979), self-esteem is a type of evaluation which people have about themselves and continue during their lifespans (Amirazodi & Amirazodi, 2011). To put self-esteem differently, how do people think of their own, how do they love themselves and are they pleased with their performances?. Specifically, how do people feel about themselves from social and educational aspect and how compatible and close are ideal-self and real-self (Hosseini et al, 2007). Our self-esteem develops and evolves throughout our lives as we build an image of ourselves through our experiences with different people and activities. Experiences during our childhood play a particular large role in the shaping of our basic self-esteem. When we were growing up our successes (and failures) and how we were treated by the members of our immediate family, by our teachers, coaches, religious authorities, and by our peers, all contributed to the creation of our basic self-esteem (Yaratan and Yucesoylu, 2010). Basically, a high degree of self-esteem shows a positive evaluation. On the other hand, a low degree of self-esteem shows a totally or rather inappropriate negative evaluation of person himself/herself (San trock, 2003). Luy Ckx (et al, 2007) pointed to the positive relationship between normative identity style and self-esteem. Teenagers, who have acquired identity, enjoy higher self-esteem in comparison with teenagers who do not have (Philips and Pittman, 2007). These findings can show the differences of self-esteem between informational and normative identity styles, with diffuse-avoidant identity styles, Recent studies have confirmed that self-esteem increases during adolescence and proceeds until the age of 20 (Erol & Orth,2011). These days, despite the complications and obstacles on the way of teenagers' psychosocial development, there must be more emphasis on teenagers' problems. So, regarding the reciprocal and close relationships between self-esteem and identity, we still need studies to analyze and clarify a certain relationship between these two. Teenagers will make the future and the identification of their characteristics must be an aim for programmers and education managers. So, the present study attempts to answer this question “Is there any significant relationship between self-esteem and identity styles?”.

METHED

Population of the study included all highschool students (8184 male and 6075 female) in Ardabil city during 2011-2012 semesters. Among them, 200 students were selected (100 male and 100 female). They were selected by multi-step clustering method and the data were collected by Berzonesky's identity style questionnaire (ISI-6G) and Cooper Smith's self-esteem in groups. Identity style questionnaire evaluates three identity styles including informational, normative and diffuse-avoidant styles, as well as, its forth dimension, identity commitment. This questionnaire was made and revised by Berzonesky (1989) for the first time. With a total of 40 questions, it includes 11 questions about informational identity styles, 10 questions about diffuse-avoidant identity styles and 9 ones about normative identity style. There are also 10 questions about identity commitment that are used for secondary analysis and are not considered as identity style. Responses are determined based on 5-degree Likert. Berzonesky (1992) reported Cronbach Alph 0.62 for informational identity style, 0.66 for normative identity styles, and 0.73 for diffuse-avoidant style (as cited in Mirzajani, 2007). Reshvanlou (et al, 2012) estimated Cronbach Alph 0.62 for informational identity style, 0.74 for normative identity style, 0.66 for diffuse-avoidant style, and 0.71 for the questionnaire itself. Cooper smith's test of self-esteem was used for evaluation which involves 58 articles and 4 factors including general self-esteem, family self-esteem social self-esteem, and educational self-esteem. In a study by Sharifi and Ghasemi (2012), stability coefficient of this test was 0.85 with Cronbach Alph and its justifiability coefficient was 0.71. By means of Cronbach and bisection method, Heydary (et al, 2005) reported the stability of the test about 0.54 and 0.61 respectively. In another study by Ghobari Bonab and Hejazi (2007), the validity of questionnaire was 0.87 which is acceptable.

Findings

The data collected from correlation test and analysis of regression was analyzed with stepwise method. Mean, Standard deviation, and correlation of components are shown in the following table.
Table 1. The correlation matrix between identity styles and self-esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General self esteem</td>
<td>16.43</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social self esteem</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>.496**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Family self esteem</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>.410**</td>
<td>.396**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Educational self esteem</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.399**</td>
<td>.376**</td>
<td>.343**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Total self esteem</td>
<td>30.75</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>.912**</td>
<td>.689**</td>
<td>.662**</td>
<td>.606**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Informational identity</td>
<td>40.40</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>.235**</td>
<td>.185**</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.297**</td>
<td>.259**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Normative identity</td>
<td>33.84</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>.234**</td>
<td>.252**</td>
<td>.186**</td>
<td>.213**</td>
<td>.277**</td>
<td>.489**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>diffuse-avoidant identity</td>
<td>26.17</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>-1.135</td>
<td>-.175</td>
<td>-.068</td>
<td>-.146</td>
<td>-.164</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be observed from table 1, normative identity style has a significant relationship with self-esteem (components general, social and educational) and total self-esteem at the level of 0.01. Informational identity style has a positive significant relationship with total self-esteem and all of self-esteem components, except for family self-esteem and moreover, diffuse-avoidant identity style has a negative significant relationship with social and educational self-esteem.

Table 2. The prediction of self-esteem based on identity styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>constant</td>
<td>18.316</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>0.277</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>16.420</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normative style</td>
<td>0.367</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>constant</td>
<td>23.554</td>
<td>0.327</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td>11.822</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Normative style</td>
<td>0.376</td>
<td>0.284</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diffuse-avoidant style</td>
<td>-0.212</td>
<td>-0.175</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>18.194</td>
<td>0.355</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9.398</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Normative style</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>0.207</td>
<td>0.126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diffuse-avoidant style</td>
<td>-0.206</td>
<td>-0.170</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informational style</td>
<td>0.214</td>
<td>0.156</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A closer look at Table 2, reveals that all of three identity styles (normative, Informational and diffuse-avoidant styles) are capable of positive prediction of self-esteem. Normative identity style can predict higher rather than other styles and diffuse-avoidant identity style predicts self-esteem in reverse order. At the first step, normative identity style predicts 0.07 percent of self-esteem, at the second step, avoidance style predicts 10 percent of self esteem and at the third step, and Informational identity style predicts 12 percent of self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

Findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between self-esteem component and identity styles. Informational and normative identity styles have a positive significant relationship with self-esteem, on the other hand, there is a negative relationship between self esteem and confused-avoidance identity style. Along with this findings, the result of a study by Normi, Berzonesky, Tommy, and Kinni(1997) showed that people with informational style have higher self-esteem than people with normative style. Furthermore, results of Hosseinizadeh and Sepah Mansour (2011) showed a positive significant relationship between self-esteem and normative and informational identity style, and a negative significant relationship between self-esteem and diffuse-avoidant style. Some other scientists confirmed that informational and normative identity styles can determine self-esteem in a positive variance manner and diffuse-avoidant identity style predicts it negative. In a research by Reshvanlou, Keramati, and Saadati (2012) girls' grade of self-esteem with informational identity style, gets a rising trend with growing, after a falling trend at the end of guidance ages. But in girls with normative and diffuse-avoidant identity styles, the grade of self-esteem decreases at the end of high school ages. Furthermore, the results show that people with informational and normative identity styles have a positive understanding of themselves, while people with diffuse-avoidant identity style have negative understanding (Erigit and Kerpelman, 2009). Slovin (2006) believes that teenagers, by utilizing their logical skills, find a difference between their thoughts and their behavior. Based on this, they can have different possibilities for behavior and may complain themselves. On the other hand, it seems that teenagers with informational identity style, due to better success and social positive feedbacks, can have positive imagination and higher self-esteem. Because of dependence on information and new experiences, teenagers with diffuse-avoidant identity style do not have a chance for success and positive feedbacks, and have lower self-esteem. So, the state of development and formation of identity and self-esteem can play an important role in the human's steps of life, specially, in adolescence. These two factors have a close relationship and are considered as two basic problems in development and personality formation. It can be concluded that adolescence involves physical, cognitive, psychological and behavioral rapid changes and due to this, is very important, since, the teenager experiences all things in future and past achievements. If there are unsolvable problems, the process of identification with digress. Majority of educational problems are rooted in confused identity, because a teenager who dose not know himself/herself, can not find a way. So, school
consultants should aid teenagers in recognizing good identity styles and self-esteem. The current study suffered from some limitations, such as, small number of sample and selection of one cultural and social context. It is recommended that bigger samples should be designed to generalize the findings of the study, carefully.

REFERENCES


