

Aspects of Identity Development of Adolescents - A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

Identity refers to our sense of who we are as individuals and as members of social groups. Identity development occurs throughout one's lifetime. But during adolescence, an individual will be more self-conscious about changing identity; they also begin to think about how identity may affect their lives. Hence Identity formation is a major component of adolescence, in that one is developing a conception of his or her values, abilities and hopes for the future. The present study focuses on the different aspects of identity in which the adolescents trying to recognize themselves. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the present study. Hyderabad and Secunderabad was purposively selected for conducting the study. The sample of the study was 200 Professional and Non-professional graduation adolescents (100 boys and 100 girls) between 18-20 years of age group. Professional course adolescents are having high personal identity orientation whereas non-professional course students have high collective orientation. Girls were having personal and relational identity orientation high than boys and whereas boys were having high collective identity orientation.

Key words: Identity, Adolescents, Aspects of Identity, Professional and Non-professional.

INTRODUCTION

In the social jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity. Adolescents form their own personal sense of who they are based on many things, to include the reactions and opinions of family and friends as well as what is considered fun and chic by the parameters of the social contexts in which they live. Chief amongst all the input they use to form their identity is the

feedback they get from family and friends. This feedback acts as a barometer to help them decide that personal identity mark.

The process of adolescence is a period of preparation for adulthood during this time several key developmental experiences occur. The development of a strong and stable sense of self is widely considered to be one of the central tasks of adolescence.

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Identities are the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is. Identity is a self-portrait composed of many pieces. Who am I? What am I all about? What I am going to do with my life? What is different about me? How can I make it on my own? These questions search for an identity. Identity is constructed by different characters of the person like the career and work path the person wants to follow (Career identity), political identity, religious identity, relationship identity, achievement or intellectual identity, sexual identity, cultural or ethnic identity, based on the interests, type of personality, (introvert/extrovert), body type. Etc... Identities can be focused on the past-what used to be true of one, the present-what is true of one now, or the future-the person one expects or wishes to become, the person one feels obligated to try to become, or the person one fears one may become. Identities are orienting, they provide a meaning-making lens and focus one's attention on some but not other features of the immediate context. Synthesizing the identity components can be a long and drawn-out process, with many negations and affirmations of various roles and faces. Identity development gets done in bits and pieces. Decisions are not made again and again. Identity development does not happen neatly, and it doesn't happen cataclysmically.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Ex-post facto research design was adopted for conducting this study. Twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad from Telangana state was purposively chosen as the locale of the study. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select sample for the present study. Sample comprised of 200 adolescents with equal number of boys and girls. Criteria for sample selection was: the adolescents between 18-20 years and Students studying graduation from professional and non-professional colleges. Interview schedule, questionnaire and Aspects of Identity Questionnaire were used to collect data from the sample. An aspect of identity questionnaire by Cheek and

Briggs² was used to test the identity development of adolescents. This scale was pre-tested and then applied in the present study to assess the identity development of the respondents. The scale consists of 45 items and were divided into four subscales as

1. Personal identity orientation
2. Relational identity orientation
3. Social identity orientation
4. Collective identity orientation

The scale has five point rating scale and the scoring ranges from 5 to 1 for each item. Each item has 5 point rating. The five point scale included were as follows

- 1 = Not important to my sense of who I am
- 2 = Slightly important to my sense of who I am
- 3 = Some what important to my sense of who I am
- 4 = Very important to my sense of who I am
- 5 = Extremely important to my sense of who I am

The scale was administered to the respondents and they were asked to respond to each one of the 45 statements. After getting responses, the scores for each dimension was calculated by summing up the weightage of responses for respective statements and they were categorized into high, average and low.

A Study on Pattern of Identity Development among Adolescents by G. Swarupa Rani and Sarada Devi⁵ found the results that, almost equal percent of both boys (63%) and girls (67%) had average personal identity. Half of the girls sample (53%) and only one fourth percent of the boy's sample (23%) had high relational identity, which means compared to boys, girls had high relational identity. Social identity was high among more number of boys (85%) than girls (62%). With regard to collective identity, half of the boys sample and one fourth percent of the girls sample had high and average collective identity respectively. From the study it can be concluded that, both boys and girls are equally good at personal identity, more number of girls had high relational identity where as high percent of boys had high social identity and collective identity too.

Scientific study of adolescence has long targeted the development of one's identity and the formation of friendships and peer relationships as important topics of study⁶. Two of the key tasks in adolescence are "to stand out to develop an identity and pursue autonomy and to fit into find comfortable affiliations and gain acceptance from peers"¹. Although seemingly divergent goals, the interplay between the need for one's own personal identity and the need for close personal ties and strong group affiliations permeates all domains of adolescents everyday lives³.

The process of adolescence is a period of preparation for adulthood during this time several key developmental experiences occur. The development of a strong and stable sense of self is widely considered to be one of the central tasks of adolescence. Identity refers to our sense of who we are as individuals and as members of social groups. According to Erikson⁴ the family helps in orienting children toward roles that are expected out of them at different stages of their lives. Furthermore, Rana and Shirali⁸ explained that family plays a critical role in adolescent identity formation by clarifying their confusion about change and transition.

Adolescents form their own personal sense of who they are based on many things, to include the reactions and opinions of family and friends as well as what is considered fun and chic by the parameters of the social contexts in which they live. Chief amongst all

the input they use to form their identity is the feedback they get from family and friends. This feedback acts as a barometer to help them decide that personal identity mark.

Widyanto *et al.*⁹ stated that adolescents engaged in text-based virtual realities in social networking sites and sometimes take on other personas and social identities as a way of making themselves feel good and raising their own self-esteem.

According to Lloyd⁷ Identity development involves an adolescent's active search for their role, contemplation of personal strengths and weaknesses, and the ability to make meaning of their context and experiences.

Statistical analysis:

Statistical analysis like frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation, Chi-square and z-test were used to analyze the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Aspects of identity development

This section of the chapter deals with the identity development in adolescents who were using SNS .For this purpose AIQ (Aspects of Identity Questionnaire by Cheeks and Briggs.² was used to assess the level of identity. The questionnaire measures the identity in terms of who are and what a particular person is and what constitutes person's identity. This scale measures 4 aspects identity which include the Personal Identity, Relational Identity, Social Identity and Collective Identity.

Table 1: Distribution of Professional and Non-professional adolescents Aspects of identity
N=200

S.No.	Aspects of identity	P.Adolescents				NP.Adolescents				Total			
		Girls (n=50)		Boys (n=50)		Girls (n=50)		Boys (n=50)		P.Adolescents n=100		NP.Adolescents n=100	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Personal identity orientation												
	Low	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Average	18	36	26	52	31	62	31	62	44	44	62	62
	High	32	64	24	48	18	36	19	38	56	56	37	37
2	Relational identity orientation												
	Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1
	Average	21	42	17	34	25	50	41	82	38	38	66	66
	High	29	58	33	66	25	50	8	16	62	62	43	43
3	Social identity orientation												
	Low	2	4	2	4	2	4	0	0	4	4	2	2
	Average	24	48	22	44	17	34	12	24	46	46	39	39
	High	24	48	26	52	31	62	38	76	50	50	69	69
4	Collective identity orientation												
	Low	1	2	0	0	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2
	Average	42	84	24	48	31	62	17	34	66	66	48	48
	High	7	14	26	52	18	36	32	64	33	33	50	50

Table 1. presents distribution of adolescents on different aspects of identity and obtained results were discussed under the subheadings as below:

Personal identity: This describes that is placed on one's private conception of self and subjective feelings of continuity uniqueness, traits, values and abilities. It is clearly evident from the study (Table 1.) that 2/3rds (64%) of girls pursuing professional courses had high personal identity orientation; whereas majority of non-professional girls (2/3rd) had average personal identity orientation. It is noteworthy to mention that only 48 per cent of professional boys and 38 per cent of non-professional course boys were having high personal identity orientation and majority of boys (52% professional & 62% non-professional) were fallen under average category of personal identity orientation

Relational identity: It represents the importance that is placed on other people who are in direct personal contact. In relational identity orientation majority of professional students (58% of girls and 66% of boys) had high orientation. But in case of non-professional respondents half of them had high and other half of them were average relational orientation aspect of identity. Interestingly majority of non-professional boys (82%) have scored average and only 16 percent have scored high on relational orientation dimension.

Social identity: It describes adolescents social roles and reputations and its importance in defining self, one's public image as presented through social roles and relationships. Results on social orientation dimension yielded very interesting fact that nearly 50 per cent of professional girls had scored high and average on social orientation dimension. Similar results were observed in case of professional boys also where 52 per cent scored high and 44 per cent scored average in social identity dimension. Interestingly majority of Non-professional students (62% girls & 76% boys) had scored high on social identity and remaining were fallen under average category (34 percent girls and 24 percent boys).

Collective identity: It represents the importance that is placed on social categories to which an individual belongs. The fourth dimension of identity studied is collective identity orientation. From the results it is surprising to note that majority of girls (84 %) in professional courses scored average and remaining 14 per cent of them scored high on collective identity orientation. Interestingly all professional boys studied were fallen equally in both high and average category of collective identity dimension. Compared to professional more number of non-professional girls (36%) and boys (64%) scored high on collective identity dimension and two-thirds of non-professional girls and one third non-professional boys scored average on collective identity dimension.

Table 2: Mean differences Aspects of Identity based on Gender

S.No	Aspects of Identity	Girls		Boys		z- test
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	Personal Identity	2.62	0.505569	2.43	0.49757	0.008176*
2.	Relational Identity	2.54	0.500908	2.4	0.512471	0.052153*
3.	Social Identity	2.51	0.574369	2.62	0.524976	0.16113
4.	Collective Identity	2.23	0.468287	2.57	0.514879	0.002607*

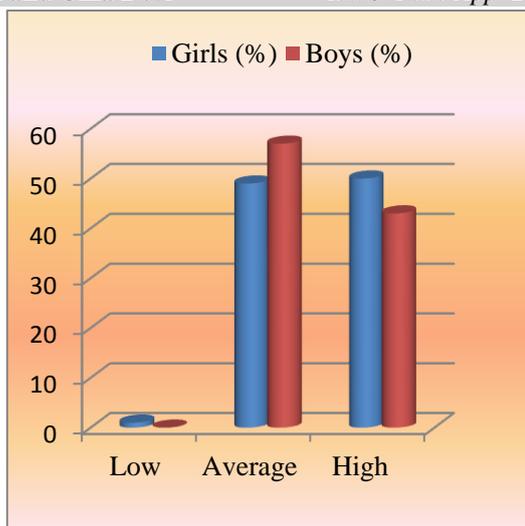


Figure 1 Personal identity orientation

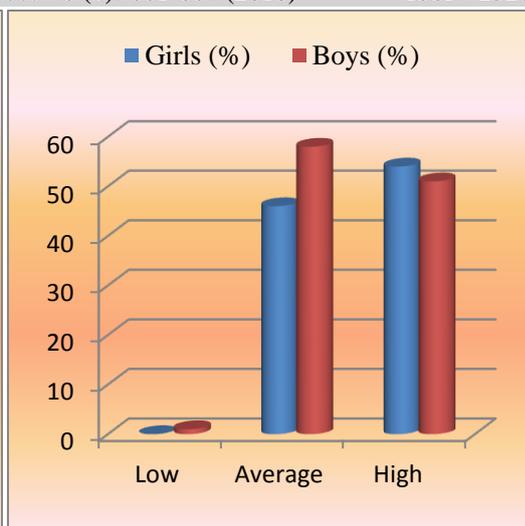


Figure 2. Relational identity orientation

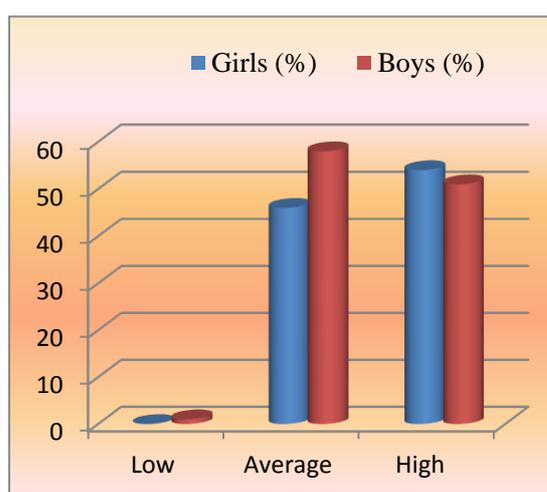


Figure 3 Social identity orientation

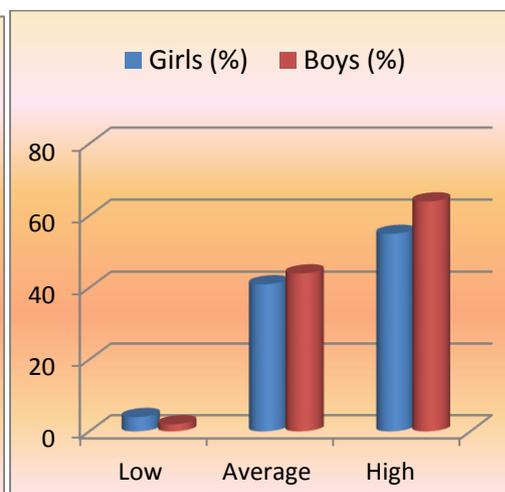


Figure 4 Collective identity orientation

Table 3: Mean Differences in Aspect of Identity based on group of study

S.No	Aspects of Identity	Professional		Non-professional		z-test
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1.	Personal Identity	2.55	0.497494	2.36	0.5004	0.008001*
2.	Relational Identity	2.62	0.487832	2.64	0.482418	0.770966
3.	Social Identity	2.55	0.572276	2.57	0.533948	0.799567
4.	Collective Identity	2.32	0.489898	2.5	0.538516	0.014526*

P<0.05

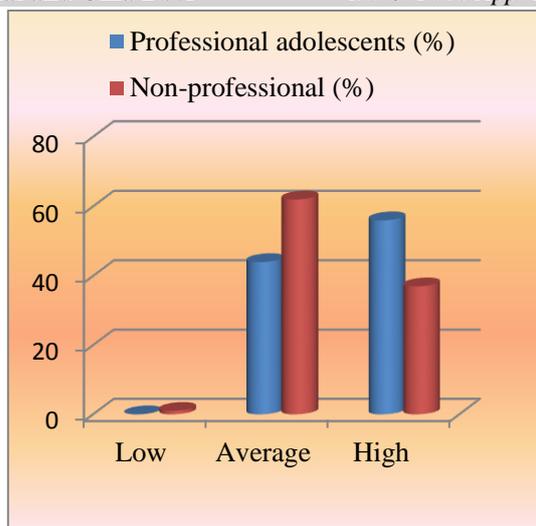


Figure 5 Personal Identity Orientation

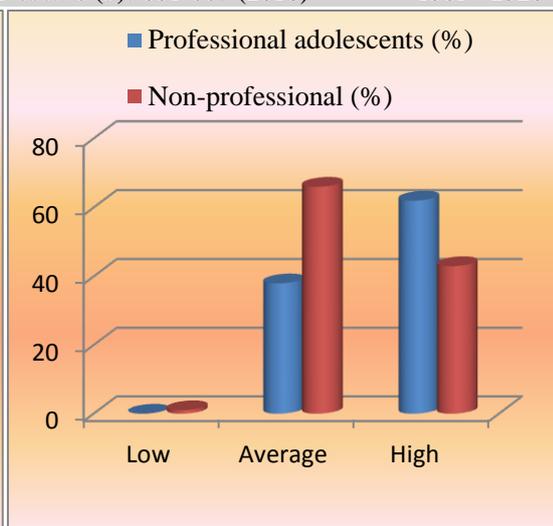


Figure 6 Relational Identity Orientation

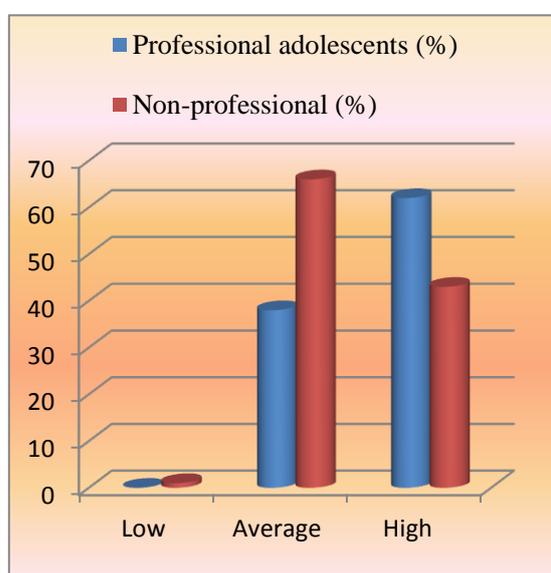


Figure 7 Social Identity Orientation

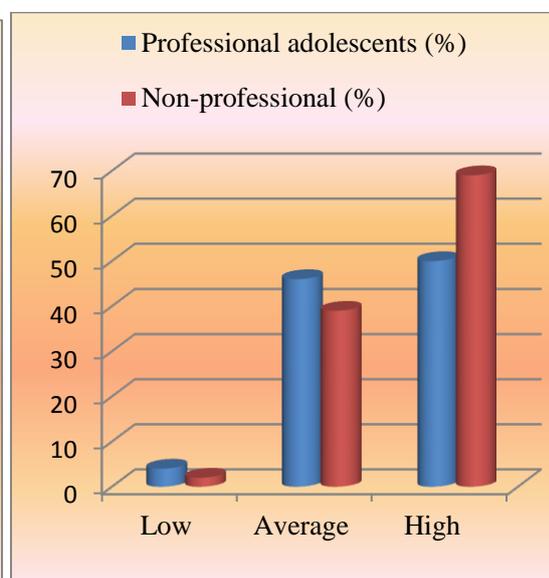


Figure 8 Collective Identity Orientation

Mean differences Aspects of Identity based on Gender and group of study:

The above table 2 gives the gender differences in different aspects of identity. It is noteworthy to mention that there is significant difference between girls and boys in personal identity and relational identity orientation where girls surpassed boys, however in social identity orientation no significant difference was found between genders. It is surprising to note from the study that significant gender difference exists in collective identity orientation, with boys having high collective identity than girls. But study by Kavyashree and Manjula revealed that boys have significantly higher relational, collective and social identity compared to girls.

Table 3 reveals an interesting finding that there is a significant difference between professional course students and non-professional course students in personal identity orientation. Professional course adolescents were found to have high personal orientation than the non-professional adolescents. However no significant difference was found between these two groups in relational identity and social identity orientation. It was surprising to note from the study that there is significant difference between professional and non-professional students in collective identity orientation; here non-professional adolescents have high collective orientation than the professional course pursuing adolescents.

CONCLUSION

The finding of study reveals that professional there was significant difference between professional and non-professional course students in two aspects of identity orientation i.e. personal identity and collective identity orientation where professional course adolescents were having high personal identity orientation whereas non-professional course students have high collective orientation. There was a significant gender difference in three aspects of identity that is personal, relational and collective. There was no significant gender difference between genders in social identity orientation. In personal and relational identities girls are having high orientation and boys are ahead of girls on collective orientation.

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