



Predictors of Identity Dimensions and Identity Status among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Identity development during adolescence plays an important role due to increased cognitive maturity and social exposure of adolescents that enable them to explore the abstract nature of their complex identities larger and self-determined set of ideals and goals. Various theories and models proposed by different authors defines individual in different context in a clear-cut manner. Each individual varies from the other individual on the basis of their type of identity which defines their uniqueness and individuality. In this context, present review article focusses mainly on age and gender differences, dimensions of adolescents identity, influence of personality on identity of adolescents, intervention studies related to identity development of adolescents.

Keywords: Identity development, Age, Gender, Personality and Intervention.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the period of life between childhood and adulthood. It is a distinguished period in a person's life to sum up his/her past and current experience to arrive at a sense of identity, which in turn guide such person's future plans (Janarthanam and Gnanadevan, 2014). Identity development is especially prominent during adolescence due to increased cognitive maturity and social exposure that enable adolescents to explore the abstract nature of their complex identities. Successful identity development involves the reworking of childhood identifications into a larger and self-determined set of ideals and goals. However, if an individual fail to identify with life goals, he or she is more vulnerable to

experience identity confusion by the end of adolescence. Marcia (1966) stated that the exploration of various alternatives and the choice to become committed to one of the available possibilities are crucial dimensions on the pathway of establishing a stable identity and he used the term identity status to label and describe four unique developmental identity points such as, identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, identity moratorium and identity achievement. Waterman (1982) proposed developmental hypothesis which states that identity has a developmental direction away from diffusion toward achievement through the intermediate steps of foreclosure or moratorium.

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Identity theories and models

1. Attachment theory
2. Social identity theory
3. Eudaimonistic identity theory
4. Cognitive developmental theory
5. Erikson Model of Identity Formation
6. Grotevant's Process Model of Identity
7. Identity style model
8. Identity-based motivation model
9. Meeus-Crocetti Process Model of Daily Identity.

Types of Identity

- Self-identity.
- Social or interpersonal identity.
- Cultural identity.
- Vocational or ideological identity.
- Ethnic identity.
- Religious identity.
- Gender identity.
- Future identity.

Predictors of identity formation of adolescents

1. Self-concept
2. Society and socio-cultural influences
3. Gender and age
4. Personality traits
5. Family
6. Peer relationship
7. Scholastic influences
8. Cognitive influence.

Since, each identity status appears to be differentially associated with several indicators of personality profiles or traits of adolescents as well as gender and age also found to have a significant influence on the identity of adolescents. Hence, in this context, predictors of identity dimensions and identity status are reviewed under following categories.

1. Age and gender difference in dimensions of adolescents identity

Andrik et al. (2016) examined heterogeneity in certainty and uncertainty dynamics of adolescents daily identity formation and its association with the development of internalizing and externalizing problem behaviour using a longitudinal micro-level approach. Adolescents in the educational and interpersonal identity class showed relatively high and stable commitment levels, relatively low and decreasing commitment fluctuations, and low stable reconsideration while it was

vice-versa in identity crisis class. Classes revealed differential development of global and school anxiety, aggression and best friend support.

Andrik et al. (2017) examined reciprocal within-person longitudinal linkages between adolescents identity exploration and identity commitment making in the interpersonal and educational identity domains. Results indicated that adolescents reconsider current identity commitments and explore alternatives before they make strong commitments within the interpersonal identity domain across early to late adolescence. Within the educational identity domain, increasing identity commitment level and commitment fluctuations predicted less identity reconsideration over time.

Umit et al. (2015) conducted a study to assess differences in identity statuses of 1201 Turkish youth in the age group of 12 to 24 years belonging to middle-class family. Turkish version of Utrecht Measurement of Identity Commitment Scale (U-MICS) was used to assess identity of adolescents. Results of the study indicated that with increase in age, level of commitment, in-depth exploration and reconsideration also got reduced that is, individuals in the closure and diffusion statuses were higher while, the number of individuals in the achievement, moratorium and searching moratorium statuses were less in the older age groups. Reduced level of reconsideration in participants showed that when they grew up, they become increasingly certain about their choices while, the reduced level of commitment and in-depth exploration suggest that, at the same time participants face difficulty in maintaining a firm sense of identity. Results also indicated significantly higher number of females in the closure, achievement and searching moratorium statuses than males while, males were found to be higher in the moratorium and diffusion statuses.

Pop et al. (2015) conducted a longitudinal study with an aim to assess the pattern of educational identity in adolescents by testing the moderating effect of age and

gender. Participants were 462 early-to-middle adolescents (13-15 years) and 689 middle-to-late adolescents (16-19 years) studying in eighth to twelfth grade who were randomly selected from seven theoretical (48.5%) and vocational schools (51.5%) in the North-West part of Romania. Overall, 21.68 percent of data were missing across three waves where, participants with and without complete data were compared by using Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test. Three identity processes in the educational domain that is, commitment, in-depth exploration and reconsideration of commitment were assessed by Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale (U-MICS). Results of the study revealed slight longitudinal decrease in vocational identity of middle-to-late adolescents in comparison to early to middle adolescents. Results also revealed that girls had more commitment and exploration level towards their present educational choice while, boys had higher level of reconsideration towards their present educational commitments. However, in-depth exploration increased in boys and slightly decreased in girls over time and reconsideration of commitment increased in both boys and girls over time, with a sharper increase in boys than in girls. Hence, boys were more at risk to face identity confusion during the academic year.

Verschuere et al. (2017) examined relationships between identity statuses and socio-demographic variables among 7,906 Flemish individuals in the age group of 14-30 years that comprised of high school students, college or university students, 1,092 were employed, and 32 were unemployed. Dimensions of Identity Development Scale was used to assess identity of participants. Results of the study revealed that majority of youngest individuals (high-school students) were in the troubled diffused statuses and college students were mostly present in achievement and moratorium statuses.

Wim et al. (2010) evaluated the extent to which identity statuses represent stable individual dispositions versus states into and out of which individuals move over time

during adolescence and also examined gender differences in identity statuses and identity transitions. Systematic evidence for identity progression revealed a decrease in number of diffusions, moratoriums, and searching moratoriums individuals. Females were identified more in searching moratorium and achieved status, and less in diffused status than males.

Wim et al. (2012) examined identity development and gender differences in prevalence of identity status trajectories in a five-wave study of 923 early-to-middle and 390 middle-to-late adolescents, covering the age group of 12-20 years. Findings indicated significantly higher number of achievers and lesser number of diffused individuals, in middle-to-late adolescence than in early-to-middle adolescence. Majority of females were in the advanced identity status trajectories than males and stable differences were found between males and females trajectories in psychosocial adjustment.

Tatiana and Inna (2018) assessed identity development with respect to gender difference among 70 adolescents (35 girls and 35 boys) in the age range of 11 to 16 years and 100 young adults (50 men and 50 women) in the age group of 17 to 23 years. Results of the study indicated no significant difference in gender with respect to their conceptual identity because with growing age, both young boys and girls begin to point out not only the meanings of personal significance but also their social citizenship, a desire to contribute something meaningful to the society.

2. Influence of personality on identity of adolescents

Andreas (2012) assessed the development of vocational identity among Swiss students in middle and late adolescence in relation to basic personality dispositions and well-being. Findings of the study indicated that students with different identity statuses and changing status patterns differed significantly in their personality traits. Higher neuroticism was related to the emergence of identity exploration over time, while conscientiousness related to maintaining or achieving a sense of

identity commitment in achievement and foreclosure status.

Kai et al. (2017) examined longitudinal associations between personality facets and identity dimensions of 1233 early and middle adolescence. Results through cross-lagged models revealed bi-directionality between personality and identity in early and middle adolescence.

Luyckx et al. (2014) assessed the directionality of effect and the developmental interdependence of the Big Five personality traits as well as different personality types on identity processes among adolescents. Findings of the study indicated that level of agreeableness, conscientiousness, commitment making, and identification with commitment, exploration in depth and exploration in breadth increased across time among adolescents. With respect to the cross-lagged coefficients, emotional stability negatively predicted exploration in depth. Extraversion and conscientiousness negatively predicted ruminative exploration but extraversion positively predicted commitment making. Openness positively predicted all exploration processes. In different personality types, resilientists scored highest in openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness while under-controllers scored highest in emotional stability and extraversion.

Theo et al. (2013) examined the role of personality traits in establishing intimate relationships and the interplay between personality traits and interpersonal identity processes during these relationships among 424 randomly selected female college students of mean age 18.6 years (Cohort 1) and 390 late adolescents sample of mean age 19.7 years (Cohort 2) from a community. Results of the study revealed that highly extraverted individuals were more likely to become involved in a relationship. Neuroticism was associated negatively and Agreeableness and Conscientiousness were associated positively with a stronger sense of interpersonal identity within intimate relationships.

3. Intervention studies

Mat et al. (2009) examined the effect of an adventure recreation program on adolescent

identity development. Results indicated that participants in adventure recreation program experienced significant identity development along with higher information, normative identity style and commitment making which was in contrast to comparison group.

Adriana et al. (2018) test the efficacy of the Identity Project Intervention (IPI) in enhancing adolescents ethnic resolution identity exploration and resolution. Exploration and resolution was found to be more in treatment group than in a control group and also Ethnic Racial Identity (ERI) exploration in second treatment condition positively predicted Ethnic Racial Identity (ERI) resolution at third treatment condition among adolescents.

Nicoleta et al. (2014) examined the role of motor activities in developing female adolescents vocational identities in context of their choice of profession and intention of going to university. A significant improvement regarding the choice of profession and percentage increase in their intention of going to university appeared in the experimental groups than in control group.

Seth et al. (2005) studied the impact of cognitive strategy and emotionally-focused strategy on two types of identity processes (self-construction and self-discovery) among a culturally diverse sample of 90 emerging adult university students. A quasi-experimental design was used to evaluate the relative impact of the cognitively focused self-construction and emotionally focused self-discovery strategies. Quantitative and qualitative study results indicated that cognitively focused intervention strategies were most efficacious in affecting self-constructive identity processes, whereas emotionally focused intervention strategies were most efficacious in affecting self-discovery identity processes. This pattern of differential effects suggests that programs intended to broadly affect identity development should include both types of intervention strategies and should target both self-constructive and self-discovery processes. Saskia (2013) studied the effects of a student career choice guidance program (Saxion

Orientation Project) on identity development of 120 participants in the age group of 17 to 23 years from 2009 to 2011. Saxion Orientation Program aimed to help the participants to discover what they can and want in the vocational domain. Program lasted for four months and took two days per week that covered four components like group meetings, individual sessions, visits to organizations and educational institutions and homework assignments. It also offered specific trainings for participants to enable them in learning to cope with fear of failure and with a tendency to postpone and additional sessions were followed by career counsellors. Each group consisted of about 12 participants and one coach/trainer. Project comprised of two parts. First part was the period of orientation of about 8 weeks which focused on exploring oneself and on exploring the domain of vocational and educational possibilities. Second phase was the phase of the confrontation with reality of about 12 weeks, where participants explored educations and vocations in detail. Next to period of confrontation, focus was on dealing with different processes and methods of making a career choice. An identity interview, Groningen Identity Development Scale (GIDS) was administered to measure the level of exploration and commitment strength and the commitment content of participants in different domains like vocational and personal domain and the global identity. Levels of identity development were measured both before and after the guidance by comparing the identity development of the participants with a norm group of the same age and educational level. Results of the study indicated that following the guidance, there was a significant rise in the levels of commitment strength in the vocational and personal domains and in global identity of the participant group than the norm group.

Overall Conclusion: Heterogeneity in certainty and uncertainty dynamics of adolescents identity indicated that adolescents reconsider current identity commitments and explore alternatives before they make strong

commitments within the interpersonal identity domain across early to late adolescence. Within the educational identity domain, increasing identity commitment level and commitment fluctuations predicted less identity reconsideration over time. Systematic evidence of identity progression was found among adolescents across age. Females were found higher in searching moratorium and achievement status and lower in diffused status than males. On the basis of personality traits, higher neuroticism was related to the emergence of identity exploration over time, while conscientiousness was related to maintaining or achieving a sense of identity commitment in terms of achievement or foreclosure. Thus, well-developed identity with higher achievement level plays an important role in adolescents life. It helps them to excel in their vocational choice; career and goals as well as it also help to maintain good interpersonal relationship with different types of people in the society. Interventions such as adventure recreation program, identity project and motor activities played a significant role in enhancing their overall identity, ethnic racial identity and vocational identity respectively.

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