

MARCIA'S IDENTITY STATUSES IN RELATION TO SELF-EFFICACY AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

The period of adolescence is considered to be very critical in the identity formation, as social roles change and ties with parents are transformed during the period of adolescence. A coherent and committed sense of identity help adolescents by providing a personal standpoint that will help in making decisions and solving conflicts, which enable them to become more autonomous and responsible for their own lives. During the past four decades, most identity researchers had based their work on identity status paradigm and this model has stimulated quite a large number of theoretical and empirical researches in these previous years. The self of an individual, is the most essential psychological context in the development of identity. The self is a part of person's personality who he or she aware of it as well. The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between identity formation and self-efficacy among adolescents. For this purpose, a sample of 250 boys and 250 girls with age ranging from 15-20 years was taken. Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity (Bennion and Adams, 1986) and The General Self-Efficacy scale (Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1995) were administered on the sample. The results of Regression analyses revealed that the self-efficacy is found to be significantly (positively) related with identity achievement status, and negatively related to foreclosure and diffused identity statuses.

Keywords: Identity Achievement Status, Identity Moratorium Status, Identity Foreclosure Status, Identity Diffusion Status, Self-Efficacy.

As social roles change and ties with parents are transformed during the period of adolescence, a coherent and committed sense of identity help adolescents by providing a personal standpoint that will help in making decisions and solving conflicts, which enable them to become more autonomous and responsible for their own lives. So knowing 'who one is' and developing a clear sense of 'self' are important tasks to be accomplished by adolescents. "Who am I? What are my values and goals? What is my life's purpose? What makes me different from other people?" Am I really the same person from previous years? (Schwartz, 2001, p.7). These questions proposed by Schwartz (2001) illustrate those aspects of self-knowledge which are needed to form a healthy sense of identity. He describes these aspects as forming a roadmap in the development of human that ultimately gives meaning and understanding to an individual's life.

Even though, development of identity is said to be a lifelong journey, the experiences gained in adolescence sometimes have a lifelong effect on one's identity.

Within the field of psychology, the nature and the process of development of identity and other related concepts like self and self-identity have attracted many researchers over decades. Studies began with Freud's early writings and they were popularized by Erikson's (1950, 1968) theoretical expositions. Marcia, 1966 (cited in Kroger, 2007, p. 27) has been credited with developing the identity status paradigm which was the very first empirical operationalization of Erikson's pioneering work. Marcia classified four identity statuses on the basis of exploration and commitment:

I. Identity Achievement Status

Marcia (1966) originally considered and labelled

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the identity achieved status as the final state of the identity formation process. This status is characterized by high commitment following high exploration. Identity achievers are considered as the 'balancers' of work, relationships and interests. The identity achieved individual is one who has gone through the process of active exploration and has selected one or more options to adhere. The individuals in identity achieved status are stable, are capable of dealing with changing environmental demands, can establish and they can pursue their realistic goals.

II. Identity Moratorium Status

Identity moratorium status is the state of active exploration in the relative low commitment or absence of commitment. Kidwell et al. (1995) proposed that the moratorium status may be linked with storm and stress, consequently, individuals tend to remain for less time in this moratorium state as compare to other statuses of identity (Meeus, 1992). Individuals in this status are labelled as 'daughters of crisis'. Individuals in this status experience crisis because of the active exploration of various alternatives, but have not yet chosen any alternative. These individuals continue to explore through various alternatives and the uncertainty of this active exploration often becomes increasingly intense.

III. Identity Foreclosure Status

Identity foreclosure status is characterized by making commitments to a particular set of beliefs, norms, values and standards without any active exploration. Foreclosure status individuals are 'culture bearers' i.e. they maintain they commitments reflected by their parents and society. Marcia (1967) mentioned that the individuals who are in foreclosure status of identity tend to be authoritarian and they show conflict-free as well as smooth relationships with their parents as compare to the individuals of other statuses. Consequently they tend to resist any kind of change at almost any cost.

IV. Identity Diffusion Status

Identity diffusion status is the state that is

characterized by the relative lack of both exploration and commitment. Diffused identity status individuals are generally apathetic and disinterested (Marcia, 1980). Berzonsky (1985) mentioned that the individuals of diffused identity status are often at high risk for a number of maladaptive outcomes, like academic problems and drug problems (Jones, 1992). So, individuals in diffusion status are labelled as 'apathetic wanderers'. In general terms, identity diffusion is basically a lack of any sort of basic identity structure which might hold the person together and afford that person a solid basis for making choices and following a consistent life path.

During the past four decades, most identity researchers had based their work on identity status paradigm and this model has stimulated quite a large number of theoretical and empirical researches in these previous years. Identity development is usually considered as one of the most common growth aspects. The self of an individual, is the most essential psychological context in the development of identity. The self is a part of person's personality who he or she aware of it as well. Bandura (1997) mentioned self-idealism elements of the self efficacy as the collection of each person's beliefs, expectations in relation to achieve effective tasks. Self efficacy refers to personal beliefs about his or her abilities and skills used by an individual for achieving planned levels, for progressive performance and for handling events in life effectively.

People who possess high assurance in their abilities, they approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than considering them as threats to be avoided. The high efficacious outlook of a person helps in developing deep interest and intrinsic engrossment in various activities. Persons with high self-efficacy set challenging goals for themselves and they show strong sense of commitment towards these goals. Even in case of failure they heighten and continue to maintain their efforts. In contrary, people who doubt their capabilities, they tend to avoid difficult tasks and perceive them as personal threats. They show low

level of aspirations and weak commitments towards their goals.

Erikson (1968) mentioned that the adolescents whose beliefs, obedience and innovation is grew better they showed effective identity cohesion. According to Waterman's (1990), there is a clear relationship between the development of the identity of an individual with the growth of the self and self-efficacy beliefs. A study conducted by Scholtz (1983) states that the young ones who earned their innovation and self-efficacy at early steps they are better able to achieve the highest degree of identity cohesion. Erikson (1968) proposed that the better feeling of self, self-beliefs can help someone to get his or her best struggles in achievement of identity. Hence, it can be concluded that self-efficacy has a significant impact on the development of adolescents' identity. Based on the above mentioned hypothesized and empirical links, the main purpose of the study is focussed on exploring the interrelationship between identity statuses and self-efficacy.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were framed:

- Identity achievement status will be positively related to self-efficacy.
- Identity moratorium status will be positively related to self-efficacy.
- Identity foreclosure status will be negatively related to self-efficacy.
- Identity diffusion status will be negatively related to self-efficacy.

Method

Sample

To achieve the objectives of the research, total sample consisted of 500 adolescents (250 boys and 250 girls). The sample was collected from various schools and colleges of city Amritsar, Punjab, India. The age ranged from 15-20 years with an average age of 17.62 years (SD = 1.85). The participants were chosen through convenient sampling.

Measures

Extended Objective Measure of Ego

Identity Status- second revision (EOMEIS-2)

Identity achievement status was assessed with EOMEIS-2 (Bennion & Adams, 1986). There are two domains in this scale i.e. ideological domain and interpersonal domain. Four identity statuses are measured on the basis of two dimensions: Exploration and Commitment. Each item is rated on 6-point scale (1=disagree strongly; 6=agree strongly). Each item was scored by weighing the response of 'strongly agree' with a value of 6 and the response of 'strongly disagree' with a value of 1. Authors have reported internal consistency alphas ranging from .58 to .80. The test-retest reliability of identity achievement variable measured with EOMEIS-2 in the current study came out to be 0.74.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES)

The self-efficacy was assessed with GSES (Schwarzer, & Jerusalem, 1995). The GSES is a 10 item scale which is designed to assess optimistic self beliefs used to cope with a variety of demands in life. The GSES is designed for the age of 12 years and above. Each statement is prepared based on self-efficacy concept in Bandura's theory (1997). The items of the scale are rated on 4 point scale (1= not at all true, 4=exactly true). The scores on this scale range from 10 to 40. The GSES has internal consistency with cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.75 to 0.90, with the majority in the high 0.80.

Results and Discussion

Pearson's Product Moment correlation analysis and regression analysis were employed to determine the intercorrelations between identity statuses (identity achieved, moratorium, foreclosure and diffused statuses) and self-efficacy.

Table 1
Inter-Correlations among various identity statuses and self-efficacy

	Identity Achievement Status	Moratorium Status	Foreclosure Status	Diffusion Status
Self-Efficacy	.095*	-0.064	-0.097*	-0.12**

*=p<0.05; **=p<0.01

Table 2
Regression Analysis Taking Identity Statuses as Outcome Variable and Self-efficacy as Predictor Variable

Predictor Variable	Outcome Variable	R ²	β	t	SIG
Self-efficacy	Identity Achievement Status	.09	.095	2.14*	.03
Self-efficacy	Moratorium Identity Status	.03	-.064	1.42	.15
Self-efficacy	Foreclosure Identity Status	.09	-.097	2.17*	.03
Self-efficacy	Diffused Identity Status	.06	-.17	3.65**	.00

*=p<0.05; **=p<0.01

Table 1 revealed that the results of Pearson's product moment correlations among identity achievement, identity moratorium, identity foreclosure and identity diffused statuses and self-efficacy. A perusal of the table suggests the significant positive relationship between identity achievement and self-efficacy among adolescents ($r=.095^{**}$, $p<0.05$). Also, identity foreclosure status was found to be negatively related with self-efficacy ($r = -0.097^*$, $p<0.05$). Likewise, identity diffusion status and self-efficacy was also found to be negatively correlated with each other ($r = -0.12^{**}$, $p<0.01$). The present study results reveal insignificant correlation between moratorium identity status and self-efficacy among adolescents. Thus, an interpretable relationships pattern of various identity statuses with self-efficacy were obtained. The relation between self-efficacy and identity achievement status is found to be directly significant in nature. It can be said that increase in the self-efficacy will lead to enhance the identity achievement among adolescents. There is a reversed and significant relation between self-efficacy and diffused identity status, which means high self-efficacy, will lead to low diffused oriented status of identity.

Further, table 2 revealed the results of regression analysis considering identity statuses as outcome variable and self-efficacy as predictor variable. A glance at the table 2 revealed that, when identity achievement was entered as criterion

variable, the R^2 came out to be .09 indicating 9% variance in identity achievement. The beta coefficients of self-efficacy was ($\beta = .095$; $t(500) = 2.14$, $p<0.05$). The present results reveal that identity achievement is positively related with self-efficacy. The high efficacious outlook of a person helps in developing deep interest and intrinsic engrossment in various activities. Persons with high self-efficacy set challenging goals for themselves and they show strong sense of commitment towards these goals. Even in case of failure they heighten and continue to maintain their efforts. They are able to recover their sense of efficacy quickly after failures. This efficacious outlook enhances personal accomplishments in an individual's life. According to Waterman's (1990), there is a clear relationship between the development of the identity of an individual with the growth of the self and self-efficacy beliefs. A study conducted by Scholtz (1983) states that the young ones who earned their innovation and self-efficacy at early steps they are better able to achieve the highest degree of identity cohesion. Erikson (1968) proposed that the better feeling of self, self-beliefs can help someone to get his or her best struggles in achievement of identity. When moratorium identity status was taken as outcome variable, the results indicated that the R^2 came out to be .03 indicating 3% variance in identity moratorium scores. However, the effect of self efficacy was insignificantly but negatively related with moratorium identity status.

For foreclosure identity status, the results indicated that self-efficacy scores were negatively correlated (Table 2). The R^2 came out to be .09 indicating 9% variance in identity foreclosure status. This unique contribution of self-efficacy was reflected in the beta coefficient which has come out to be ($\hat{\alpha} = -.097$; $t(500) = 2.17$, $p < 0.05$). The negative association between self-efficacy and foreclosure identity status reveals that the adolescents who are low on self-efficacy they prefer to make commitments to a particular set of beliefs, norms, values and standards without any active exploration on their own self. They maintain their commitments as reflected by their parents and society. They become more attached with their current circumstances and to those persons as well, who helped them so as to put those circumstances in place. Consequently they tend to resist any kind of change at almost any cost. Such kind of reliance on current or present circumstances creates some kind of a security blanket. When this security blanket is removed, these individuals often go into crisis (Marcia, 1994, 1995); they don't know what to do and how to manage. Njus and Johnson (2008) proposed that foreclosure status adolescents show low self-efficacy than those adolescents who are in identity achieved and moratorium statuses.

Further, with regard to diffusion identity status, the results indicated that diffused identity status scores were negatively correlated with self-efficacy (Table 2). The R^2 came out to be .06 indicating 6% variance in diffused identity status. As shown in Table 2, self-efficacy was negatively associated with diffused identity status by making unique contribution which is reflected in the beta coefficient that has come out to be ($\hat{\alpha} = -.17$; $t(500) = 3.65$, $p < 0.01$). Hence, significant negative relationship is found between the diffusion identity status and self-efficacy. Adolescents who doubt their capabilities, they tend to avoid difficult tasks and perceive them as personal threats. They show low level of aspirations and weak commitments towards their goals. In the face of difficulty they decrease their efforts and give up quickly. They view their deficient aptitude to be responsible for insufficient, so, they lose faith in their capabilities. Terrance, Jakubowski, Myron and Dembo (2004) reported the similar kind

of association between self-efficacy and diffused status of identity.

Implications

The findings of the present study can have practical implications for young people in their adolescent years. As Self-efficacy is seen as the important aspect in identity formation, so enhancing self-efficacy can serve as a fruitful tool in identity formation. It is recommended that the quality of educational experiences should be improved so as to contribute in making adolescents' sense about their 'self.' It is suggestive that the schools, teachers and parents should become proactive in supporting and creating congenial learning atmosphere in the school as well as home context that should provide opportunities and experiences that are sensitive to self-efficacy of the individual.

Conclusion

On the whole it can be said that the results of present study indicate that specific developmental links exist between various identity statuses (identity achieved, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion) and self-efficacy in adolescents. It suggests that how an adolescent is able to form identity is associated with efficacious outlook of the person. The better feeling of self, self-beliefs can help adolescents to get his or her best struggles in achievement of identity.

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