



Associations between identity diffusion and adolescent well-being, resiliency, parenting style perception, attribution style, and decision-making style

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Abstract

Identity is a social construct in addition to a self-structure. The distinguishes one person from another and what connects them is both a societal and personal construct. Individuals define themselves in relation to others in their particular social contexts during this process. Identity, is the result of how an individual's sense of self and their social surroundings interact. As a result, identity can be described as a process of self-definition under the constraints of people's social settings. Identity development can be thought of as a continuum, with an integrated personal identity at one end and identity dispersal (incoherent self-image, self-fragmentation) at the other. Identity diffusion is often seen as the foundation for subsequent personality disorder, resulting in a wide range of maladaptive and dysfunctional behaviors. It is a key component of the "borderline personality organization". Parenting methods, such as supporting academic accomplishment, are goals-oriented, whereas parenting style refers to the overall emotional environment in which specific parent-child interactions take place. This is how parenting style differs from parenting practices. Children can learn certain beneficial skills through interaction with their parents. The abilities included communication, language, and problem-solving impulsivity, appropriate social behavior, and expectations. These abilities can lower the likelihood that teenagers would participate in unhealthy conduct, such as aggression. Based on the inclusion or removal of two variables, Diane Baumrind's early work on parenting style defined parents as having one of three parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, or indulgent-permissive (responsiveness and demandingness).

Keywords: Identity diffusion, adolescent, well-being, resiliency, parenting style, perception, attribution style, and decision-making style

Introduction

Identity issues are a crucial aspect of an adolescent's existence and a psychosocial task. Adolescents begin to ask themselves questions like "Who am I?" "What am I doing with my life?" "What type of relationships do I desire?" "What kind of work do I want to pursue?" and "What are my beliefs?" starting in their early teens. It is a complicated concept that has been explained by a number of authors. Identity, is the result of the dynamic interaction between ego identity synthesis and ego identity confusion. As a result, it denotes a consistent sense of self over time and in many contexts. It is further defined as an entire perception of one's identity, both now and in the future, as well as how one fits into their social surroundings. So, achieving identification is achieving comfort with your past, present, and future selves. Ego identity is described, as a sense of who one is, based on the past, and who one can reasonably be in the future. Thus, it is a self-configuration that combines the teenagers'

history, beliefs, and values. It is further described as the process of coming to conclusions about who one is and considering potential future selves. Consequently, it is an awareness of the individual's uniqueness. Additionally, it is described as a self-organized construct, an integrated psychological framework of individual values and objectives that arise from interpersonal contact. Furthermore, the self-structure that incorporates experience into cognitive schemas is ego identity. For instance, cognitive schemas assist people in information filtering and personalizing incoming knowledge to create their own distinct ego identities.

Identity Diffusion/Diffused Identity

One of the four identity statuses listed by Marcia is diffused identity status. Low commitment and low exploration are its defining traits. It is perceived as a failure to integrate the concepts of oneself and important others. As a result, there

is a terrible sensation of incoherence and a loss of the ability to define oneself and commit to beliefs, goals, or relationships. An failure to notice or even absorb contradictions is a common description of this. Diffusions come in a wide range of types, but they all share a limited or nonexistent exploring phase and a reluctance to make firm commitments. These are the traits they have:

Personality Traits

People who are sporadic have demonstrated low levels of autonomy, self-esteem, and identity. They appear satisfied to "travel where the wind blows" or wherever circumstances take them since they lack strong identity-defining convictions and are not interested in developing any. They have shown the least sense of long-term, integrative personal continuity. Additionally, they are most likely to be introverted and to struggle with adjusting to a university setting. Compared to other identity statuses, discovered that they were most affected by peer pressures toward conformity.

On a task that required them to estimate being the center of others' attention, they were also the most inwardly oriented of all identification statuses. Identity diffusion status has been linked to grandiose self-expression and disagreeability. Additionally, they have demonstrated the lowest levels of conscientiousness and the highest levels of neuroticism (together with the moratoriums). Together, these results point to a late adolescent dispersed individual with delayed psychosocial development.

Correlates of identity diffusion

According to recent studies, a person's identity development is substantially influenced by a variety of psycho-social elements. Macro-level influences like culture, gender roles, and history have a significant impact on identity development. Individual differences like temperament, attribution style, etc. may also have an impact on identity.

Parenting Style

A parenting style is a psychological construct that represents the common methods parents employ to raise their children. The temperaments of parents and children have an impact on parenting style, which is mostly influenced by one's own parents and culture. Identity development entails a proactive investigation of and a comparatively strong commitment to personally unique beliefs, opinions, and life goals. Depending on how they raise their children, parents might either aid or hinder this process. The definition of parenting style given "a constellation of attitudes toward the kid that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, produce an emotional atmosphere in which the parents' behaviors are expressed".

Decision Making Styles

Teenagers must make more and more critical life decisions that will affect their future. The ability to make decisions should make it easier for teenagers to handle situations where they must make difficult choices. Decision-making abilities should be regularly taught during adolescence, at a time when important decisions are already being made, according to many academics. There isn't agreement among scholars about how decision-making styles ought to be

characterized. Whether decision-making styles represent persistent individual variations across time and settings or a more state-like aspect appears to be the main area of disagreement. Decision-making styles refer to the distinctive way in which an individual approaches, responds to, and acts in a decision-making scenario.

Research Methodology

The teenager will develop into a healthy adult with a clearly defined identity if the adolescence is spent without great difficulty. If they are unable to overcome their crises, it will result in a diluted sense of self. An individual who is dispersed has a gloomy outlook on life, limited resilience, and subpar cognitive ability, all of which contribute to poor wellbeing. No clear correlation between identity status and attribution style was found when the literature was reviewed. Studies have linked stress to coping strategies and identity, but they have not connected it to resilience. Due to the complexity of the construct ego identity, it might be claimed that the concept of ego identity development is still relevant today. However, the majority of research were carried out in western contexts, and there aren't many in India. Additionally, different cultural and ethnic groupings have diverse ego identity development patterns. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the idea of teenage identity dispersal.

Sample

500 students from Jaipur's co-ed English-medium schools in the 11th and 12th grades made up the sample size. The study employed a non-probability purposive sampling technique. The sample's age range was between 15 and 19 years. Before the screening, the kids were first given a proper test to gauge their identity status. Out of those, 110 students-boys and girls-who had been classified as having scattered identities were chosen for further study.

Procedure

The current study was broken up into two sections. A sample of 500 teenagers under the age of 18 were first given an identification status test for screening purposes. The teenagers were assigned to statuses in accordance with the identification status rule book's cut off marks for each status. 50 males and 60 girls made up the group of adolescents who were determined to be diffused ($N = 110$) and were chosen for further examination. After the sample was chosen, a good connection with the subjects was built. With approval from the appropriate authority and in line with the instructions on each questionnaire, the investigator personally administered each one. The test was administered with great care, and prompt consultation and support from the school counselor was conducted. The order in which the tools were administered was chosen at random.

Results and Discussion

Identity Diffusion is strongly inversely connected with resilience, according to the bi-variate analysis's findings ($r = -.25$, $p < .05$). As a result, adolescents with low resilience are more likely than those with high resilience to have a Diffused Identity status. Resilience is the ability to respond effectively to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even severe causes of stress, such as issues with family and

relationships, serious health issues, or difficulties at work and in the home. Thus, it can be inferred that teenagers with low resilience are more likely to experience the aforementioned issues. Numerous studies have shown strong links between resilience, mental health, greater levels of anxiety or depression, self-esteem, etc. and identity dissemination. As a result, our theory has been validated, supporting a strong connection between resilience and identity diffusion.

According to the aforementioned table, identity diffusion is inversely connected to psychological health ($r = -.23$, $p0.01$). The possibility of finding identity-related solutions in line with individual talents and requirements increases with the examination of a number of options. It also helps to learn more about the advantages and disadvantages of potential alternatives. Finally, the teenagers will experience higher levels of wellbeing since they are more likely to succeed in pursuing such self-consistent and informed commitments. Because it suggests a weak ability on the part of the individual to adjust to their surroundings, a diffused identity status is not regarded as healthy. The relationship between identity diffusion and wellbeing has been the subject of several studies. It has been noted that lower levels of wellbeing are accompanied by diffusion, which can range from psychopathology to crippling emotional states. They cautioned that while the absence of all these factors puts teenagers' mental health at risk, having a strong sense of self and direction in life, together with a dedication to self-selected objectives and values, helps adolescents attain life satisfaction and adjustment. The findings of the current study concur with those of previous studies. As a result, our theory has been proven correct and shows a considerable connection between well-being and identity dissemination.

Table 1: Correlation coefficients between identity diffusion and variables taken for the present study (N=150)

Variables	Identity Diffusion
Identity Diffusion	1
RESILIENCE	-.25*
WELL-BEING	-.28**
Perceived Parenting Style	
Mother Permissive	.22*
Mother Authoritarian	.50**
Mother Authoritative	-.29**
Father Permissive	.14
Father Authoritarian	.54**
Father Authoritative	-.25*
Attribution Style	
Good Achievement (GAch)	-.26*
Good Affiliation (Gaff)	-.19
Bad Achievement (Bach)	.24*
Bad Affiliation (Baff)	.07
Good Achievement Affiliation (Gacaf)	-.26**
Bad Achievement Affiliation (Bacaf)	.19*
Decision Making Style	
Rational Style	-.73**
Intuitive Style	.25**
Dependent Style	.09
Avoidant Style	.44**
Spontaneous Style	-.12

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the above table, identity diffusion and perceived parenting style are significantly correlated (mother and father). Both the mother's and the father's authoritative parenting styles are significantly inversely connected with identity dissemination ($r = -.29$, 0.01) and ($r = .25$, 0.05). The aforementioned table also shows a strong positive link between Identity Diffusion and the authoritarian parenting styles of the mother ($r = .50$, $p0.01$) and father ($r = .54$, $p0.01$). It implies that although authoritarian parenting is associated with diffused identity, authoritative parenting is associated with the development of attained identity. According to this result, parents who raise their kids using forceful, authoritarian techniques and who also fail to address their emotional and mental health needs are likely to have a significant influence in their children's confusion about who they are as adolescents. Less of the authoritarian parenting style's methods of interaction, such as limiting freedom and upholding rules, are used by these parents. The findings of the present study that authoritarian parenting is associated with identity diffusion are well supported by a wealth of literature.

In comparison to adolescents with a diffused identity status, those who had researched and committed to an identity reported more openness, fewer issues, and better overall communication with both of their parents. The notion that teenagers benefit most from having authoritative parents is one of the most significant concepts to have come out of the last 25 years of study on adolescent development in the family setting. Because of the warmth, firmness, and giving of psychological autonomy that make up this parenting style, parental authoritativeness is excellent in supporting teenage identity formation. Studies on parent-adolescent attachment have examined the beneficial effects of the authoritative parenting style's warmth dimension on identity development. Additionally, the favorable relationship between authoritative parenting and teenage adjustment seems to be independent of family structure, socioeconomic level, and race. Children's opinions of their parents' parenting styles range from being marginally to highly connected.

Another intriguing conclusion is that the authoritative parenting style of the mother is much more negatively connected with the status of diffused identity than the authoritative parenting style of the father. It implies that a mother's influence on a teen's growth across all facets of life is greater. Similar results were discovered. Delinquent, dangerous, and more aggressive conduct can all be attributed to poor parenting. Thus, the findings supported our theory that identity dissemination significantly corresponds with both the authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles of both the mother and the father.

The results also demonstrated a substantial positive link between identity diffusion and the mother's permissive parenting style ($r = .25$, $p0.05$). Parents that are permissive often allow their kids more freedom than is age-appropriate, and they also let them act without regard to consequences. Therefore, young kids are left to try to establish culturally appropriate beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral patterns on their own. Regarding this, it could be more challenging for the youngster to frame his or her thoughts, feelings, behavior, or self-view during adolescence. It's interesting to note that children raised in permissive environments tend to

be less self-regulatory, independent, and responsible than their peers who were brought up by authoritative or authoritarian parents. This may be the reason why the mother's permissive parenting style is linked to identity dissemination. This conclusion echoes that of other studies. The findings support the theory that teenagers' identity diffusion and their mother's permissive parenting style are related.

A significant link between attribution style and identity diffusion was shown by correlational studies. Results showed a strong negative connection ($r = -.25, 0.01$) between Identity diffusion and the positive achievement feature of attribution style. This translates to teenagers who believe that their internal motivations for success will remain constant and have an impact on them worldwide scoring lower on identity diffusion and higher on achievement. Additionally, a strong positive link between Identity Diffusion and the bad achievement dimension of attribution style was found in the results ($r = -.24, 0.01$). This demonstrates that teenagers who assume that internal causes of poor performance will persist and have an impact on them internationally do better on identity diffusion tests.

Additionally, the results showed a strong negative association ($r = -.26, 0.01$) between identity diffusion and the combined excellent achievement affiliation dimension of attribution style. Adolescents who internalize the causes of their combined high academic success and affiliation component of attribution style and predict that it will be constant and have an impact on them internationally tend to do worse on the Identity Diffusion test. Additionally, results revealed a strong positive association ($r = .19, p0.05$) between the combined negative achievement and affiliation component of attribution style and identity dispersion. This translates to adolescents scoring higher on Identity Diffusion who attribute the causes of their bad achievement to themselves, believe it will remain constant and influence them internationally. "Optimism, failure is a typical habit to explain you,". People who are pessimistic think that unpleasant things result from conditions that are persistent and enduring. However, optimists attribute success to stable variables whereas pessimists attribute success to transient factors. A pessimistic person enables his frustration to spill over into other areas of his life. The pessimists put the blame for problems and things going wrong on themselves. People are better prepared for difficult situations when explanations are pessimistic and they feel defeated, which leads to disappointment as the second emotion. When a cynical student encounters these setbacks and academic failures, such as a disappointing grade, slurred speech, or confused books, he typically responds with a passive coping and fatalistic approach, which causes him to put out less effort and receive lower grades.

In conclusion, the total evidence points to Identity Diffusion as the effect of attributing uncontrollable undesirable events to internal, stable, and global sources. Studies on the association between attribution style and identification status were found to be lacking while reviewing the literature. The locus of control and optimism-pessimism in connection to identity status have both been studied. This forced the research to concentrate on revealing how attribution plays a role in both the facilitation and obstruction of clearly defined identity. Comparing the

findings with earlier research in this area, it can be deduced that accomplished or informative identity style is associated with optimism, whereas diffusion or avoidant identity style is associated with pessimism. Positive people exhibit more successful interpersonal behaviors and high levels of self-reliance, understanding, and empathy. They also have better physical and mental health, as well as lower levels of anxiety and sadness. They put in a lot of effort, are very engaged in planning, and take initiative. They possess the capacity to effectively alter difficult circumstances and manage their stress. They make good academic progress and have good emotional understanding and control. They are content and practice more healthy practices. Pessimistic persons, on the other hand, are more likely to suffer from infectious diseases, have low levels of self-reliance, more mood problems, more stress, and weaker bodies. The results supported the hypothesis that there was a substantial connection between identity dispersion and attribution style and its aspects.

The correlational analyses between Identity Diffusion and decision-making style are also shown in the above table. The correlation between identity dissemination and rational style is significantly negative ($r = -.73, p0.01$). It suggests that adolescents who don't behave logically or use effective methods likely to perform better on the Identity Diffusion test. Decision-making abilities should be regularly taught during adolescence, at a time when important decisions are already being made, according to many academics. Adolescents with a scattered sense of identity are unable to make thoughtful, methodical decisions. They are therefore incapable of the independent investigation and dedication necessary for the development of an ego identity.

Additionally, the aforementioned data showed a substantial positive correlation between identity diffusion and both intuitive and avoidant styles ($r = .25, p0.01$). It suggests that teenagers with greater identity diffusion scores frequently delay making decisions, put them off, or use an intuitive approach instead. It is characterized by a dependence on inner experience, fantasy, and a tendency to make snap decisions without much thought or research. The intuitive decision-makers take ownership of their actions, but they prioritize emotional self-awareness, fantasy, and sensation, frequently acting rashly. People in the diffusion state could employ an intuitive style to lessen the ambiguity that comes with an open period of inquiry and commitment.

Conclusion

The results also revealed a strong positive connection ($r = .44, 0.01$) between avoidant behavior and identity dispersion. Although individuals with a scattered sense of identity may have done some investigating, they appear to be drifting rather than actively doing so. The desire to postpone making decisions is the dominant decisional trait of the diffusion status. They tend to shy away from making decisions or delegate accountability to others. When faced with a decision, they require much more time, yet they are also more selective and less thorough in their information search. Therefore, it can be inferred from the results that dispersed people either rely on their intuition or feelings when making decisions or completely avoid them when they feel weary. Thus, it demonstrates a lack of maturity in both the emotional and practical aspects of decision-making.

Several earlier related investigations have provided support for the findings.

The above result table, on the other hand, does not indicate a significant relationship between identity diffusion and the father's permissive parenting style, the good affiliation, negative affiliation dimension of the attribution style, or the reliant and spontaneous style of general decision-making. Therefore, the results don't support the hypotheses that suggested a meaningful connection between identity dissemination and the aforementioned characteristics.

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