Relationship between Identity and Self-esteem with Attitude to life among Art students

Fatemeh Abdi, Fariborz Bagheri

Department of General Psychology, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

Department of Clinical Psychology, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

Fatemeh Abdi, Fariborz Bagheri: Relationship between Identity and Self-esteem with Attitude to life among Art students

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate relationship between identity, self-esteem and attitude to life among Art students. The samples were randomly selected from Art students of Tehran University and Art Institutes. The Measurement of mode identity (OMEIS) questionnaire, Batista on attitude to life questionnaire (LRI) and Cooper and Smith self-esteem questionnaire were used as the tools in this research. From 150 received questionnaire, 76 ones were confirmed from the view point of the accuracy. Regression analysis showed that variables such as self-esteem and successful identity were positive predictors of Art students attitude to life. These two variables showed a significant relationship between self-esteem and positive attitude to life with reliability of 95 percent. Whatever self-esteem was more among Art students, they tend to show more positive attitude to life and also how students get more successful identity, they get more positive attitude to life. Self-esteem and successful identity are predictors of positive attitude to life among Art Students. Thus, policy makers and planners should consider these factors and it is essential educational planners and practitioners pay attention to this important matter, and professionals should try to enhance mental health among university students.

Key word: Attitude to life, life meaning, identity, identity formation, Self-esteem,

Introduction

Identity is defined as an essential element of a person, and self- continual and internal and subjective concept that a person owns. Individual's knowledge of its essence, is an individual's identity. This is supposed to be the most fundamental and most important stage of growth [1]. Toffler believed that the people will be managed to took the opportunity and ability to address global issues and provide new and innovative solutions when they reach to the cohesion and solidarity within a unity (for a stable identity) in the first stage [2]. Identity formation, requires decisions about some aspects of life such as employment, love and religious ideology and political priorities. Thus, identity formation is a process of autonomous and self-strengthening and integrating of a set of unique ideals and goals in life and is composed of countless individual [3]. Sneed and Whiteboune (2003) believed that the identity guides the individual during his life [4]. Hashemi (2006) knows identity as set of characteristic features of an individual and gives him possibility to determine its position relative to the world and others. The attributed characteristics and features to ours, form our identity [5]. Religion, occupation, nationality, profession, ethnicity and other characteristics that are important for individuals and he defines himself based on them, integrate in the process of identity. Theorists distinguish at least two broad types of identities related to the role and identities related to the sustainable features. The role identities include relation to social issues (e.g., gender, race, age, and so on), group membership (e.g., religion and family) and social roles (e.g., student, teacher, athlete, etc.). The sustainable features include our beliefs about our own identities in relation to personality traits (e.g., optimism, courage, weak, dissociable, etc.). We often describe ourselves based on information which includes composition of the roles and stable properties [6]. Perhaps one of the most successful theorists in this arena is Ericsson. He (1968) believed that the most important matter is those, especially teenagers are dealing with it, is to identify and respond to questions like these: Who am I? What am I? What will I do for a living? How can I be myself?

These questions are usually general and universal, and can be raised in high school and college for a few years for people. Canadian
researcher James Marcia (1998, 1980) analyzed the concept of identity from the viewpoint of Ericsson, and outlined four-mode of identity as confused, early, deadlign and acquired identification [7]. Individuals can reach the definition of themselves by identity and if this definition is at odd with their social reality, they experience features such as maturity, stress and behavioral problems. Existence of such behaviors in early and late adolescence considered by many psychologists show individual's normal effort to find a definition of self and in other words identity. From the viewpoint of Ericsson's theory, the continuity of identity can be seen in a range of person's life. However, the identity crisis will appear in adolescence and the beginning of the university. Identity requires assessment of a person about personal ability, disability and their upbringing.

Consequences of the damage detection process leads to many problems in young people, such as identity confusion about time, illicit sexual relations, confusion in tasks, choosing a negative identity, desire to excel in all situations, the generalized doubts and uncertainties. Problems over identity might lead young people some deviant behaviors such as drug usage, refuge away from the house, engaging in the unlawful issues and practices in society [3, 5, 6]. The identity is related to the some variable of cognitive psychology. For example, in a research relationship of identity was proved with personality, characteristics and mental health [6], and is associated significantly with more complex personality characteristics like self-esteem, control position and moral reasoning [6, 8]. Marcia (1966) proved these four identity conditions and then he confirmed them in a study [6]. It seems that the identity status of youth students is important because based on research results, students with a confused identity were more exposed to compatibility problems and students who were familiar with the subject's identity, were more prepared for compliance with the university [9].

People with high self-esteem in various situations felt good and more productive than low self-esteem. People with high self-esteem do better in various situations [6]. Moreover, it was clear those with high self-esteem were more extroversion than those with low self-esteem and picked up dramatically intellectual skills, pleasant and morality [10]. The research has shown that students with low self-esteem experienced social problems in coping and dealing with others [6]. One of the issues that seems to have a role in individual's identity formation and mental health is attitude to the life. Positive attitude to life or seeking meaning in life as being power (growth), activity, and the willingness of individuals to create or supplement of their meaning understanding, importance and purpose in life is important enough which disorder in it is associated with psychological distress. From the viewpoint of Frankel [11], human beings are motivated through the will, an intrinsic motivation, find meaning in life, and motivation and willingness to find meaning increase against reaction to the annoying events [11].

Nowadays, art is one of the most serious and most urgent humanitarian issues that have penetrated in the text lives of all people. Art is now in the hands of suffering, conscious and aware thinkers [12]. Some of the artists of different personality traits than others reported that [13]. Art students have also shown that they own certain psychological characteristics that make them distinct from others. Less research has been done about the relationship between identity status, self-esteem and life attitude in Art students. Given the attention to the necessity of theoretical studies and the need to check the identity and the other hand, research results have shown that those with higher self-esteem enjoy higher status and more efficiently and will be immune from mental and social health [14] and people with higher scores of identity, they feel more successful, reliable, compatible and more efficient, and more coherent in terms of individuality and higher in terms of mental health than others [15]. This study intends to examine the relationship between identity status, self-esteem and attitude to life among Art Students and it is expected to provide useful information to policy makers, experts and officials.

Materials And Method

The method of this study was a survey research method. The samples were randomly selected from Tehran University Art students and Tehran cinema institutions. An identity questionnaire (OMEIS), Batista attitude to life questionnaire (LRI) and Smith self-esteem questionnaire were used to get the results. 76 received questions among 150 questions were confirmed and examined for true authenticity.

Benyon and Adams identity questionnaire OMEIS:

This questionnaire includes 64 questions and has been established 4 subscales. Questionnaire measures included A) Confusion identity, 2) Delayed identity, 3) Early identity, 4) Achieved identity (Successful). Each subscale consists of 16 questions. The test was graded on Likert Scale. The validity of this questionnaire has been confirmed by Ahmadi Nejad and Rahimi on Iranian students [3].

The validity of this questionnaire was estimated by the Cronbach's alpha for each of the positions, respectively, is 0.60, 0.73, 0.63 and 0.59, and at the interpersonal level 0.60, 0.81, 0.65, 0.68. Omidian and Shokrkan reported reliability coefficients by Cronbach's alpha for these conditions 0.75, 0.69, 0.73, 0.68. Adams et al. (1984) reported convergent validity for this
questionnaire 0.32 to 0.92 and for divergent validity 0.27 to 0.79 [11]. In order to calculate the reliability of question, a sample consisting of 40 Art students participated voluntarily in the test. Cronbach's alpha range were obtained from 66 Percent to 84 Percentages as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Interpersonal relationships</th>
<th>Ideological</th>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Smith Self Esteem Questionnaire:**

This scale has 58 materials and in total includes 4 subscales and the scale of a lie detector, as follows:

- General self-esteem scale (26 Phrase), Social Esteem (Peers) (8 Phrase).
- Family self-esteem (Parent) (8 Phrase).
- Academic self-esteem (School) (8 Phrase), Lie detector (8 Phrase).

In order to estimate the reliability of questionnaire in Iran, the method of two halves was used, so the reliability coefficient of the results of this method with 83.0, which is statistically significant [16]. In another study, Cronbach's alpha internal correlation method was obtained 0.81 which was statistically significant and for total sample of the study also calculated reliability coefficient was 0.79 [10]. In order to calculate the reliability of questionnaire, 40 Art students voluntarily participated in the test. Cronbach's alpha ranged from 71 Percent to 81 Percent, respectively.

**Life Regard Index:**

Life regard index was designed on the concept of Batista positive attitude to life (1973). The test was provided in order to assess the meaning of life [17]. Positive attitude to life is the belief that a person has a framework purpose in life that makes him a valuable meaning to life. This test has two subscales:

1. Framework scale, which is an expression of perception and philosophy of life and also his/her approach to infer meaning in life.
2. Complement scale, which means his perception of life is based on selective frame. Each of these subscales includes 14 phrases, which 7 phrases were expressed in negative and 7 phrases in positive.

As Table 1 shows, the mean attitude score to life were 49.35, with 3.5 SD and 21 range. Average subscale scores reflect the perception of the structure and philosophy of life and also his approach to infer meaning in life. The mean scores of the completed subscale in the samples were 13.18 with 78.2 SD and 9 range. The mean scores of "complete" subscale of life perception was based on the selected frame equaled 36.17 with 9.2 SD and 12 range.
As Table 2 shows, the average score of social self-esteem was 53.5, family self-esteem 46.5, academic self-esteem 29.5. Mean scores of premature or early identity formed was 88.42, mean score of late or delayed identification was 28.60, the mean score of agitated or confused identity was 88.48 and successful or advanced identity was 72.70.

As Table 2 shows, the average score of social self-esteem was 53.5, family self-esteem 46.5, academic self-esteem 29.5. Mean scores of premature or early identity formed was 88.42, mean score of late or delayed identification was 28.60, the mean score of agitated or confused identity was 88.48 and successful or advanced identity was 72.70.

As Table 3 shows, the relationship between identity, self-esteem and attitude to life. Stepwise multiple regression method was used to examine relationship between identity, self-esteem and attitude to life, R squared was 443.0, which indicated two variables of self-esteem and successful academic or advanced identity and 44 percent variance of the dependent variable could be decisive of a positive attitude to life.

As Table 4 shows, the final model obtained from step method included only two predictive variables. Predictive variables of Academic self-esteem and Successful or Advanced identity remained in the model (p ≤ 0.05), and other variables were excluded from the final model, because they were not statistically significant (p ≥ 0.05). The table provides information about the variables exist in the model. Beta standardized coefficients showed that academic self-esteem had greater proportion than the measurement of model variables. So, the academic self-esteem indicated 4.52 percentage of successful identity and 6.28 percent changes indicated attitude changes to life.

Conclusion:

In this study, 76 Art students were studied. Results showed that there was a significant relationship between academic self-esteem and successful or advanced with a positive attitude to life among the subjects. Less research has been addressed to this topic among Art university students. Most research has been on identity styles among vocational and humanities students [12]. The results of Debats (1996) showed that high level of life and positive attitude to life were predictors of low mental disorders and high level of happiness and self-esteem in people and concluded that relationship between the meaning of life and mental health was important [17]. People with meaning and positive attitude to life were more stable in terms of emotional status [18] and less neurotic, anxiety and depression were seen in those with lower attitude to meaning of Life [19]. People with the meaning of life had goals that they were more creativity than others and spend less time for their individual activities and are more resistant against problems [19]. Harlow et al. (1986) showed the meaning of life acts as a mediator between depression and worthless and a tendency to assume a variety of social pathologies such as drug use and suicide [20]. In this study, there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and successful or advanced academic identity with positive attitudes to life among Art Students. Students with higher academic self-esteem showed more positive attitude to life and students with more identity successful or advanced academic identity showed more positive attitude to life. Ghazni and Ghaffari (2004) also showed a significant relationship between hope and self-esteem and reported individuals with higher self-esteem had higher life expectancy than others. Self-esteem is the fourth level of Maslow's needs and these needs gives man confidence and independence. Alison also showed that people with low self-esteem have symptoms such as somatic complaints, apathy, loneliness, depression and hopelessness [10]. Fresson (1977) found statistically a significant relationship between hope and self-esteem [7]. Maki and Smith
(2002) believed that self-esteem is one of the determining factors of human behavior. Research has shown that what people have more self-esteem they own more efficiency and higher status and will be protected from mental-social disorders [14]. In fact, their perceptions and judgments of themselves determine how they deal with different issues. Self-esteem can be a collection of thoughts, feelings, emotions and experiences formed the impression in the process of social life and probably academic self-esteem was more important among Art Students than other dimensions. Also, the results showed that how people get higher scores on measures of identity they are more successful, more reliable, adaptable, self-efficient and coherent in terms of individuality and of mental health are also higher than others [15]. Marcia knows successful identity as a confronting with personal crisis and thoughtful decision making. Individual is aware of variety of choices and difficulties that life has provided for him and it is almost achieving level of divergence that Piaget had proposed it. Selective that a person will do it with commitment, a commitment to serve the mental resources to achieve the goal [20]. The results also showed that those with advanced and successful identity have achieved introverted and under stress and under pressure influence are considered to perform very good in terms of cognitive. If they are exposed to sudden changes of environment, they do not lose themselves. They have a sense of humor and are open to new experiences [21], perhaps they are expected to have this positive attitude to life. Considering the importance of abundant mental health of community and efforts towards promotion and addressing the life significantly and attitude to life as the ultimate criterion for evaluating of the mental health in community, Frankel (1990) proposed this kind of research should been done on various youth employments and academic careers. It is also recommended to perform further research in the field of interventional procedures [23]. Although this study was conducted on university students, researches have shown that university would postpone the identity crisis and prolong the period of examining different roles and ideologies by the youth [6]. When the students were compared with full-time jobs with the same age, it became clear that the employed people had achieved their identity sooner than university students. Students were identified longer in interrupt status [8]. So, it is suggested to be done research in other categories of the population and in people with different jobs. This research has been done only on Art students and it is recommended to be done on different field students.

References

5. Hashemi, Z., 2006. Relationship between religious orientation (Islamic) with identity identity dimensions and styles between male and female students at Shiraz University, Psychology MA thesis, Department of Educational Sciences and Psychology, Shiraz University.  