

## The Relationship between Identity Crisis and Responsibility of Adolescents in Nazarabad

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between identity crisis and responsibility of male adolescents of Nazarabad. The subjects included 200 students of third grade of high school who were selected through clustering sampling. The instruments included personal Identity Crisis Inventory and Responsibility Scale of California Personality Inventory (CPI). Using regression and Pearson correlation index at the significance level of 0.001 ( $P < 0.001$ ) revealed that there is negative and significant relation between identity crisis and responsibility.

**Keywords:** *Adolescent, Identity, Identity Crisis, Responsibility*

Adolescence is an important period in life, and best opportunity to actualize talents. Great changes happen in different aspects such as physical, mental and emotional. Identity forming is one the most important matters facing an adolescent. In this period, people ask themselves questions such as who am I? What's my future job? What would be my future education? Who would I marry? What are my ethical or philosophical values of my life? And still are at a quest to answer such questions.

Erikson(1968) defines identity as “a relatively constant emotion of self-cohesion”, that is although people have common needs and interest, they are different, and need to have independence, consistency and integrity in their actions and motivations. He believes that identity functions in developing coordination between one's own thought about himself or herself as a special, consistent person and others' thoughts about him or her. Glasser (1965) identifies identity as personality; in such a way that first a person has achievement identity, feels lonely and valued, and handles problems well. When ones are not able to handle problems, he or she may experience failure identity. In this case, one has difficulty in solving problems and feels anxious when he or she faces success. Glasser also express that trading love, kindness,

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responsibility, being receptive to reality and having purpose in learning concepts are effective in forming identity. It seems that everyone's identity is composed of his own thought about him/herself and others' thoughts about them which has independence and consistency in behaviors, speech and emotions.

The basis of forming identity is the efforts which we are interested to follow. Such efforts would lead us to understand who we are and how we behave (Shafeeabadi and Naseri 2007). Others' opinions about us play an important role in our identity clarifying. What others reflect about us is to some extent a meaningful image of our identity.

Marcia (1966) believes that identity is a combination of beliefs, values, roles, behaviors which leads one to feel integrity with him/herself, and to illustrate his direction towards future. Considering the two criteria of commitment (loyalty to personal beliefs) and exploring (one's effort to select values, beliefs and job) and their existence or non-existence in identity forming process, he also states four kinds of identity:

- 1. Achievement identity:** In this case, one has positive attitude towards him/her-self, communicates intimately with others, is in harmony with others socially and is able to make appropriate decisions.
- 2. Foreclosed identity:** one tries to know him/herself and accepts the identity composed by others. These people do not feel autonomy and have rigid relations with others.
- 3. Moratorium identity:** in this case, one has internal conflicts, does not make great decisions, has dual relation (with angry or kindness) with parents and has difficulty in adapting with environment.
- 4. Diffusion identity:** one has not integrated attitude, is aimless or confused and has not personality consistency.

In the most recent identity-related theory which is developed by Berzonsky (1989), a cognitive, social and psychological pattern is created in which individual differences in using processes of cognitive-social, decision making, problem solving, confronting with adversity, involvement in task and obtaining psychological health are discussed. Three identity styles are introduced according to this pattern:

- 1. Informative identity style:** The people who have such style pursue information and assess it actively and informatively. They consider and study various aspects a problem when they make decision (Berzonsky and Sullivan 1992).
- 2. Normative identity style:** These people are in congruency with the rules of reference groups and important people in beliefs and decision making. They do not actively seek and assess information, and try to defend identity structure which is obtained without exploring or investigating. These people tend to imitate others and have low patience (Berzonsky 2003).
- 3. Diffusion/Avoidance identity style:** Berzonsky (2003) believes that the people who have this style are confused, avoid doing various activities in life, have low self-esteem, have negative self-concept and do not have self-regulation. It seems that family and child raising styles are also

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effective in adolescents' identity forming. In such a way that Berzonsky (2005) states that there is relationship between parents' child raising style and decision making styles, identity-related conflicts and the way adolescent analyzes the information which is related to him/her self. The adolescents who have informative style in processing their identity issues may have grown in a sure and decisive family.

In Erikson's theory (1968) the psychological balance is guaranteed if one's identity over time forms on the basis of experiences which are the results of right, social interactions and result in self-awareness and distinguishing oneself from others. But, if one experiences role confusion rather than self-awareness and forming positive identity, he/she will not be psychologically balanced; therefore he/she experiences identity crisis. Shamlou (2005) also maintains that an adolescent's failure to form his/her own personal identity result in crises which are called identity crisis. Failure in choosing job or education is an example of identity crisis in social role. When they experience identity crisis, most of adolescents feel empty, lonely and lack of self-awareness; they may even seek negative identity which is contradictory to what parents or society has considered for them. The quest for achieving and maintaining identity requires persistent effort in lifetime.

Ahmadi (2007) believes that identity crisis is the most important crisis which happens in an adolescent's life. And if it remains unsolved, the adolescent experiences diffused identity.

In this case, the adolescent feels extremely anxious or mentally turmoil, and would not have cohesive personality. It seems that the people who are not able to achieve cohesive identity experience identity crisis and show role confusion, in such a way that they do not know who they are, where they belong, where they will go or what is the purpose of their lives.

Consequently, such people would be confused who may go far away from normal procedure of life such as vocation or education. They may achieve negative identity and be absorbed to delinquency or drugs.

In other words, adolescents spend or period in which they look for answers for basic questions of their lives to create an identity based on such answers. They will experience identity crisis if they do not find any answer for their questions; or if they find a wrong answer, they will achieve negative identity. As a result, they will be absorbed to antisocial behaviors which are contradictory to the expectations of family or society. It seems that adolescents need to solve identity crisis successfully in order to achieve realization and turn into effective and successful people in family and society.

Marcia (1980) states that adolescents who experience diffused identity have low self-esteem and rarely accept the responsibility of their lives. Numerous researches have been accomplished on identity. As an example Dehshiri (2005) investigated the relationship between identity crisis and

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piety among high school students. The finding revealed that there is reverse and significant relationship between identity crisis and piety. The female participants gained higher scores in identity crisis than male ones. The finding of Ahmadi's research (2007) revealed that educating responsibility through Glasser's method is effective in reducing student's identity crisis. In his research, Berzonsky (2000) showed that the students who achieve diffused identity are more likely to experience adopting problems. And the students who were acquainted with identity had higher readiness to adapt to university.

The accomplished researches in identity crisis reveals that the people who handle identity crisis successfully have better social and family conditions and behave more effectively in respect to themselves, family and society. It seems that developing countries need people who are self-reliant, responsible and able to handle identity crisis successfully the people who accept the responsibility of their lives or fates, the people who are committed and responsible if they are in charge.

On this basis, it seems that responsibility is one of the important raising factors which play a vital role in people's roles and functions. A responsible person becomes recognized by his/her effective performance that is less likely to behave negatively. Family and society also need people who accept the responsibility of themselves, family and society. Glasser (1965) identifies a responsible person as healthy human. He also defines responsibility as one's ability to meet one's needs while not prohibiting others from doing so.

Ellis (1979), in his rational-emotional perspective, emphasizes on developing and responsibility and believes that healthy people are able to solve their problems. Although they may need others' help, they will not become upset if others do not help.

Markman and Tetlock (2000) recognize responsibility as behavioral consequences which people feel responsible for their decisions. Sharf (1996) identifies responsibility as attributing choices to ourselves and treating honestly with freedom. Responsibility also includes coming to terms with others and not blaming them for their personal problems. Mergler, et.al (2007) believe that responsibility means one's ability to organize thoughts, emotions, behaviors and an intention to accept the responsibility of choices and their personal or social consequences. Thus responsibility can be defined as the ability to meet one's own personal needs in such a way that it does not harm others' need, and also accepting the consequences of behaviors or actions.

Golub (2000) believes that responsibility commences in family where parents are responsible for their behaviors and their children's. Their life responsibility also begins on the basis of the accepted criteria or standards, then expands to others or neighbors. In this case, one is responsible not to threaten others' or neighbors' safety, peace and legal rights. In addition, he/she is also responsible not to let others do so. Consequently, responsibility process ends in society, i.e. people are responsible for safety, peace and health of society where they live. In addition to

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keep the society safe and sound, they must treat each other respectfully and accept the responsibility to confront inappropriate or anti-social behaviors.

It seems that educating children to accept responsibility in family is a very good way to prepare them to accept the tasks or responsibilities which they would confront out of family environment. It also provides the necessary tool for their independence. Thus for children who grow to adulthood, the ability to achieve social responsibilities out of family depends on an opportunity to experience the value of self-respect and consociation with society.

Mergler, et.al (2007) believes that responsibility should be divided into two parts: individual and social. In individual responsibility, one knows him/herself responsible for him/her, the situation which he/she is in and also better life for others and their needs. The adolescence period is a priceless time to learn social responsibility for, in this period; one likes to have more independence and would have to make decision about some of such values and behavioral styles. They believe that although individual responsibility focuses on individual, it occurs in a social context, i.e. a responsible person would probably consider the effects of his/her choice and decision on others. So, social responsibility is considered as a dimension of individual responsibility.

Ginott (1965) maintains that the existence of unemotional and indifferent humans who live in an aimless or unrestrained society result from rising in which responsibility has never been introduced. He also states that lack of responsibility or escape of responsibility can be considered as the main reason for lack of attention to pains, lack of public monitoring and negligence. As such, today we see people who negate responsibility from themselves in order to get rid of mental conflicts and rescue themselves from tiring efforts and activities. It seems that in order to have responsible people (who are responsible for themselves, family and society) child raising style should be attended. Parents' modeling facilitates children's responsibility educating. Family according to their role in child raising-can raise people whose responsibility is a part of their identity. They are responsible in achieving identity. In this case, Glasser(2010) states that the people whose identities are diffused often show weakness, unresponsive and distrust. In another study, Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2005) approved that responsibility is the medium of great variables such as the quality of doing homework and self-efficacy for achievement. The findings show that those students are more successful that not only do they care more to their homework, but also believe that they themselves are responsible for their achievement more than teachers or educational system. Cant (2000) studied the relationship between self-efficacy and responsibility in a 10-17 years old sample. He concluded that a gain results in more responsibility; there is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and responsibility.

Lewis (2001) also studied the relationship between students' classroom discipline and responsibility. This study accomplished on elementary and guidance school students. The purpose was to investigate the role of classroom discipline in reinforcing students' responsibility

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in order to maintain the rights of learners in classroom. The findings revealed that implementing suppressive methods against students' behaviors prohibits them from developing responsibility and detracts their attention away from homework. Other findings of the research showed that those students who were learning eagerly were more responsible. Females gained higher scores in responsibility than males. The students who experience suppressive order at school were less responsible while those who experience communicative order techniques in class were more responsible. The finding of Whiting and Whiting (1975) revealed that the people who frequently are given responsibility behave in a way that is more accepted socially than those who are not. Lyons (2005) investigated the effects of responsibility education on reducing racial or ethical prejudices, destructive stereotype beliefs and within or between groups relationship. In the study, the adolescents who participated in training sessions were compared to those who did not. In addition to approving differences between the two groups in the mentioned variables, findings – on social responsibility- showed that adolescents' social responsibility has extremely grown at least to ten month after education, but maintaining such feeling and turning in to a constant behavior requires more family or social support.

The finding of various research show that the responsible people show such responsibility in their behavior and function better that those people who are not.

In adolescence, people look for identity and experience identity crisis. They would have to choose positive or negative identity to pass through the period. Mean while society requires people who handled identity crisis successfully and possess a positive identity in order to be efficient and effective for society. Society also needs responsible people who accept the responsibility of tasks, activities, behaviors which are put on them by family or society. This comes true when families emphasize on raising individual and social responsibility. Although numerous researches have been accomplished on identity crisis and responsibility worldwide, the relationship between the two is studied less often. Thus we look for their relationship. Therefore the major question of the present study is to investigate the relationship between identity crisis and responsibility in adolescents.

### **METHOD**

As the present study investigates the relationship between identity crisis and responsibility, the method is descriptive with correlation design. Statistical population includes all third grad student of high school in Nazarabad in 2012-2013 educational years. 200 students were selected through cluster random sampling in multiphase.

#### ***Responsibility Evaluation Scale (RE)***

Gough (2000) recognizes California Personality Inventory (CPI) as one of the best inventories to evaluate normal people's personality traits. The inventory can be administered both individually and in groups in one hour. It also possesses remarkable technical precision for behavioral predictions. The inventory (responsibility) is provided for more than 12 years old normal people;

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the subjects answer the items in true or false. Finally, it assesses 20 important, constant and meaningful personality traits. While the scoring and interpreting each of scales of inventory is easy, for the mentioned scale to be assessed, it suffices to count the similar answers with the key in order to assess one's raw score.

After reviewing various researches on California Personality Inventory (CPI), Gough (2000) concluded that test-retest validity and internal consistency for each of scales of the inventory range within 0.52 to 0.81. The mode of total reliability index is also 0.70.

In a research Mousavi(1998) evaluated the reliability index of personality (RE) through odd and even question split-half, Krounbach Alpha and Getman as 0.69, 0.70, and 0.69. This indicates the desired reliability of mentioned scale. Rezaei (1999)also evaluated reliability through split-half, Krounbach Alpha and Getman 0.63, 0.65 and 0.63. in the present Krounbach Alpha is 0.63.

### ***Personal Identity Crisis Inventory***

This inventory included 10 items, each including four parts. Ahmadi (1999)designed the inventory based on diagnostic criteria of identity crisis in diagnostic references such as DSM\_IV. The criteria include:

1. problem in long-term goals
2. being doubtful in selecting vacation
3. lack of appropriate modeling for friendship
4. in appropriateness of sexual behavior
5. problem in religious knowledge
6. lack of attention to virtues
7. violating group commitment
8. disorder in time regulation
9. lack of appropriate model for marriage
10. negative attitude to oneself

Then, high to low degree items were designed for each criterion. Scoring is: 0 for first, 1 for second, 2 for third, 3 for fourth alternative. The subject's score was calculated through adding each of scores of marked alternatives. The minimums score is 9 a maximum is 30. The score between 15-30 indicates highest identity crisis. The scores lower than 9 indicate lack of identity crisis. 9 are cut-off and indicator of identity crisis because according to DSM\_IV possessing three symptoms equals 9.

Having compiled, the inventory was handled to the experts of Educational Science Faculties of Isfahan University and Khorasegan Azad University who proved its content validity. Then 60 high school students completed the inventory. They approved the items to be understandable, clear and to the point, and the face validity of inventory. The students' scores were examined through (odd and even) split half. The reliability index was calculated to be 0.78. the researcher

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reexamined the inventory in a group of 30 students and calculated the coefficient of correlation to be 0.89. Using Spearman-Brown, the reliability index of personal identity was 0.92. In the present study, Krounbach Alpha is 0.74.

### FINDINGS

The sample included 200 male students of third grad of high school.

*The descriptive data is provided in table 1.*

Variance	Standard Deviation	Mean	N	
26/813	5/178	6/48	200	identity
23/871	4/886	24/05	200	responsibility

As you can see, the average of identity crisis is 6.48 with the standard deviation of 5.178 and variance of 26.813. The average of responsibility is 24.05 with the standard deviation of 4.886 and variance of 23.871.

Pearson correlation was used to investigate the relationship between identity crisis and responsibility before using regression analysis. As you can see in table 2 the Pearson correlation was found to be significant at the level of 0.001 ( $P < 0.001$ ).

Responsibility	Identity		
-0/455**	1	Pearson correlation	Identity
0/000		Sig. (2-tailed)	
200	200	N	
1	-0/455**	Pearson correlation	Responsibility
	0/000	Sig. (2-tailed)	
200	200	N	

$P < 0/001$

As table 2 shows, there is a negative, significant relationship between identity crisis and responsibility ( $P < 0.001$ ,  $r = -0.455$ ). Thus, we can say that the more the identity crisis, the less the responsibility. The less identity crisis, the more the responsibility.

Sig.	T	$\beta$	B	F	MS	Df	SS	
0/000				51/719	983/852	1	983/852	Regression
0/000	-7/192	0/06	-0/429					Identity
					19/023	198	3766/543	Residual
						199	4750/395	Total

$P < 0/001$



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Table 3 offers the regression model for predictive variable (identity crisis) to be totally significant ( $P < 0.001$ ).

According to findings, predictive variable (identity crisis) is significant in predicting responsibility.  $R^2$  value (regression index by the power two) is 0.184. It means that predictive variable to explain 18.4% of variance of criterion variable. The value of variance is significant according to F value and significance level ( $P < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.184$ ,  $F_{2,200} = 51.719$ ).

### CONCLUSION

Adolescence is a period of people's lives in which they look for abilities, weaknesses, and strength, etc. Totally, they look for an answer for this question: Who am I? People would have to make important decision for their lives and future and accept the responsibility. Adolescence also coincides with identity crisis which adolescents should handle whether positively or negatively. It seems that how an adolescent solves identity crisis affects his/her responsibility. Therefore in the present study, we intend to investigate the relationship between identity crisis and responsibility in adolescents.

The findings revealed that there is reverse and significant relationship between identity crisis and responsibility, i.e. the less the identity crisis, the more the responsibility and the more the identity crisis, the less the responsibility in adolescents. The finding of the present study conforms with the findings of Ahmadi (2007) and Berzonsky (2000). Their findings indicated that educating responsibility decreases identity crisis. On responsibility, the finding of present study conforms with Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2005) and Glasser (2010). They indicated lack of responsibility in people whose identities were diffused.

According to the findings of the present study, it is recommended to hold group session about identity crisis for students, a few hours of class time be allocated for making students aware of identity and identity crisis. The major limitation of the present study is the lack of sex variable which result in lack of generalization to all the adolescents.

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