



Identity Styles and Educational Self- Efficacy of Elementary Students

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A B S T R A C T

The present research aims at studying the relationship between identity styles and educational self- efficacy. This research is applied in terms of goal and correlational in terms of descriptive method. The statistical community of the research is combined of all elementary students in Isfahan city, district 1 in which 400 people (200 boys and 200 girls) were selected through random sampling method based on Morgan table, and it was an answer to the questionnaires including Berzonsky Identity Styles Inventory (1989) and Murray and Bating self- efficacy (2001). In order to analyze data, we have simultaneously used both Pearson and regression correlational tests. The findings show that there is a positive and significant relationship between the informational and normative identity style and educational self- efficacy, but the relationship between a diffuse identity and educational self- efficacy is mostly negative and significant. The results indicated that the normative identity style and informational identity style can respectively predict 10% and 6% of students' educational self-efficacy. In addition, the informational identity is able to predict 13% of students' educational development.

Keywords: Identity Styles, Educational Self-Efficacy, Educational Development, Elementary Students.

INTRODUCTION

Identifying the factors affecting and predicting learning and educational development's methods in elementary period are assumed as the main concerns of Educational psychologists. After the theory presented by Erikson (1994), about identity, several surveys have also studied identity evolution. Such surveys resulted in new perspectives on identity, one of which is Marcia (1993), identity status theory (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005). Regarding individual identity and Ericson's view, Marcia considers commitment and self-exploration as the main dimensions of identity. Exploration refers to decision or behaviors resolving problems and collecting information, and commitment refers to having faith in a set of beliefs and merits. Accordingly, Berzonsky considered as one of representative completing Marcia's theory, has called identity as self-theory or self-constructed. Self- theory contains hypotheses, principles and constructions made through interactions between the environment and the world, and they create referring frame for the analytic process of variables' data related to identity. Accordingly, Berzonsky has introduced his theory as a social-cognitive model of identity (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005). In his view, identity is similar to a personal frame used as a source for interpretation of experiences. So, the data related to identity is interpreted and the questions related to life are

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answered. In order to study the similarities and differences of identity process in people, Berzonsky has identified three styles of identity.

These styles refer to social- cognitive Preferential Strategies used by people when they are involved in or avoid the tasks related to creating or maintaining the impression of identity (Berzonsky, 1992, 2008). These styles are: (informational style), (normative style), (diffuse avoidant style). Those with informational style actively search and analyze the information, they are dutiful and problem-oriented and willing to explore multiple solutions and various roles. Bright academic career goals, high academic performance expectations and motivation of improvement are considered as remarkable features of these people. Those with normative style conform to the experience of reference group and have collective documents. Their remarkable features include accepting others' beliefs without evaluating them, low flexibility in facing new situations and having stereotypical behavior. Those with diffuse avoidant style seek pleasure, excitedly face the problems and can be controlled from outside. They lack educational goals and a fixed job and have low levels of academic capabilities (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011; Berzonsky, Cieciuch, Duriez, & Soenens, 2011).

Furthermore, the identity styles can affect other variables such as educational self-efficacy which is included in the classification of educational issues. In his social- cognitive theory, Bandura (2010), defines self-efficacy as competency, adequacy, and the ability to cope with life and how the people can control their life. Therefore, self- efficacy affects this point that how much the people struggle with problems in achieving their goals and brings efforts and insistence on solving problems (Zimmerman, 1986). Those who have strong self-efficacy beliefs will try more than those who have weak beliefs in fulfilling their tasks, and it will result in their better performance.

These people consider the tasks as challenges which must be overcome. They deeply get involved in activities and try more to compensate the failures. Those having weak self-efficacy beliefs consider tasks harder than what they really are, so it results in tension, depression and a more limited sight in solving problems. Accordingly, those who have strong self-efficacy beliefs (people's judgment on the capabilities for fulfilling the tasks, learning and the capability of learning) have more internal motivation to do activities and are more successful in facing hard and challenging tasks (Pajares, 2002). Identifying the factors affecting and predicting educational self-efficacy are assumed as the main concerns of Educational psychologists. Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, and Cervone (2004), believe that identity can always affect educational choices and class behaviors. In other words, the appropriate conditions of the class not only bring the feeling of integration, but also affect educational performances and consequences. Educational self-efficacy and identity's processing styles both have social-cognitive nature and are considered as related variables.

Self-efficacy can be generally studied in two specific and generalized levels. When it is studied in specific level, the individual judgment on capabilities in certain conditions is concerned, while in generalized self-efficacy study, the individual judgment on adequacy in a general subject is concerned. The individual's perception in a specific field is limited to one task and one dimension. While the generalized self-efficacy is studied through multifaceted tasks (Martin & Rimm-Kaufman, 2015; Usher, 2009). Those students who have an identity style compatible with society can experience more success in different situations which can affect

their educational performance too. One of the searches done by Hejazi, Shahraray, Farsinejad, and Asgary (2009), on the relationship between informational identity and educational self-efficacy indicated that the informational identity style can predict educational self-efficacy. Regarding identity status and entering college, Berzonsky (2003), concluded that the reason of significant change in development of autonomous measures on education, training conflict and development of interpersonal communication exists in the difference of identity status.

Findings show that the students using diffuse avoidant identity style face more problems than those who use the other two styles. Shank and Cotten (2014), realized that self-efficacy beliefs predict almost twenty five percent of educational development variance, even more than the influence of educational strategies. It is exactly based on the importance of the role of self-efficacy beliefs in educational development, in which regarding students' self-efficacy in mathematics, Regarding the relationship between identity styles and behavioral problems, Adams and Fitch (1982), noticed that people with diffuse avoidant identity style face compatibility's problems such as delinquency and behavioral disorders more than those who possess other two identity styles. Mulder, Weigel, and Collins (2007), showed that girls have diffuse avoidant style less than boys.

Accordingly, the relationship between identity styles and educational self-efficacy and improvement has been studied in the present research. In Berzonsky's point of view, identity is considered as a certain frame and source for experience interpretation (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005). Those with high rate of self-efficacy are naturally interested in activities, they select challenging goals and are strongly committed to achieve their defined goals. Hejazi et al. (2009), indicated that the relationship between informational/normative identity and educational self-efficacy and diffuse avoidant identity style and educational self-efficacy is respectively positive and negative. Therefore, the present research heads to answer this question that is there a relationship between identity styles and students' self-efficacy in Isfahan city, district 1 in 2015-16? In order to answer this question, some sub-questions have been also designed.

- Is there a relationship between normative identity style and educational self-efficacy?
- Is there a relationship between informational identity style and educational self-efficacy?
- Is there a relationship between diffuse avoidant identity style and educational self-efficacy?
- Can the identity styles predict educational self-efficacy?

METHODOLOGY

The present research is applied in terms of goal, since we don't manipulate research's variables, the method used here is descriptive method and because the subject is studying the relationship between identity styles and educational self-efficacy, it is correlational in terms of method. The statistical community of the research includes the elementary students in Isfahan city, district 1 in 2015-16 and in order to select the sample and increase the accuracy in measuring, 400 people (200 boys and 200 girls) were selected through random sampling

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method based on Morgan table. The necessary data has been collected through two questionnaires including Identity Styles Inventory Berzonsky (1989) and Murry and Brody (1999) self- efficacy. In addition, in order to study student’s educational development, we have used their average score which are classified based on the terms such as (very good- good- acceptable- in need of training and trying more) in elementary school due to descriptive method used in evaluating students. Thus, with regard to this point that our results are based on quantified numbers (students’ average score), the students receive the terms very good and good are classified from 16 to 20, and those who receive the terms acceptable and need to try more are classified under 15/99. The validity of above questionnaire has been done through unreal validity approved by respected professors and advisors. Furthermore, we have calculated the reliability of the coefficient of the questionnaire through a trial test among 45 students using Cronbach's Alpha method, and the coefficient of normative, informational and diffuse avoidant identity style has been respectively calculated as 79%, 82% and 81%. Self-efficacy questionnaire equals 84%. In the present research, we have simultaneously applied Pearson and regression correlational tests for data analysis.

RESULTS

In order to have a better realization of nature of the group studied in the research and to get more familiar with the variables, it is necessary to describe data before analyzing statistical data. In short, we have used descriptive statistical methods (minimum, maximum, average, standard deviation, slope and elongation).

Table 1. Descriptive indexes of variables

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation	Slope	Elongation
Normative identity	1.33	5.77	4.0152	1.06696	-0.158	0.179
Informational identity	1.00	6	3.7576	1.00854	-0.029	-0.77
Diffuse identity	1.00	6	4.0273	1.15217	-0.129	0.134
Educational self-efficacy	1.17	6.83	4.0848	1.17608	-0.609	-0.218
Educational development	0.82	6.18	5.691	1.06493	-0.205	0,151

Regarding table 1, the scores’ distribution of all variables have negative slope. In other words, the cube of scores out of its average is a minus number and the scores of most of people is less than average in this scale. The distribution of self-efficacy scores and informational identity have respectively the most and the least slope. Except informational and self-efficacy styles, the score distribution of all variables have positive elongation.

It means that the score for most of people in this scale is close to the average score. Here the distribution of self-efficacy and the scores of informational style have respectively the most and the least elongation.

In order to approve data’s description and generalize the results of the research in to the community which the sample has been extracted out of, we have simultaneously used the correlational and regression coefficient’s statistical tests, the results of which have been mentioned below.

The main question: the research includes this question that is there any relation between identity (in general terms) and elementary students' educational self-efficacy in Isfahan city, district 1?

Table 2. The results of Pearson correlational coefficient for investigating the relationship between identity and educational self-efficacy

Predicting variable	Index variable	R	p	Results
identity	Self-efficacy	**0.367	0.001	The relationship is direct and significant.
	Educational development	**0.441	0.001	The relationship is direct and significant.

As it is shown in the table above and regarding the correlational coefficient obtained for every one of variables, the relationship between identity and educational self-efficacy is positive and significant in level 0.001. It means that the more the identity of people grows, the more their educational self-efficacy improves.

In order to define the main question of the research well, we study the significant relationship between identity styles and educational self-efficacy as follows:

Is there a relationship between normative identity style and educational self-efficacy?

Table 3. The results of Pearson correlational coefficient for investigating the relationship between normative identity style and educational self-efficacy

Predicting variable	Index variable	R	p	Result
Normative identity	Self-efficacy	**0.320	0.001	The relationship is direct and significant.
	Educational development	**0.209	0.001	The relationship is direct and significant.

As it is shown in the table above and regarding the correlational coefficient obtained for every one of variables and the significant level, the relationship between normative identity style and educational self-efficacy and improvement is positive and significant in level 0.001. It means that the more the normative identity of people grows, the more their educational self-efficacy and development improve.

Is there a relationship between informational identity style and educational self-efficacy and development?

Table 4. The results of Pearson correlational coefficient for investigating the relationship between informational identity style and educational self-efficacy and development

Predicting variable	Index variable	R	p	Result
Informational identity	Self-efficacy	**0.239	0.001	The relationship is direct and significant.
	Educational development	**0.361	0.001	The relationship is direct and significant.

As it is shown in the table above and regarding the correlational coefficient obtained for every one of variables and the significant level, the relationship between informational identity style and educational self-efficacy and improvement is positive and significant in level 0.001. It means that the more the informational identity of people grows, the more their educational self-efficacy and development improve.

Is there a relationship between diffuse avoidant identity style and educational self-efficacy and development?

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Table 5. The results of Pearson correlational coefficient for investigating the relationship between diffuse avoidant identity style and educational self-efficacy and development

Predicting variable	Index variable	R	p	Result
Diffuse avoidant identity	Self-efficacy	**-.0147	0.001	The relationship is direct and significant.
	Educational development	**-.0119	0.001	The relationship is direct and significant.

As it is shown in the table above and regarding the correlational coefficient obtained for every one of variables and the significant level, the relationship between diffuse avoidant identity style and educational self-efficacy and improvement is negative and significant in level 0.001. It means that the more the diffuse avoidant identity of people reduces, the more their educational self-efficacy and development improve.

Can the dimensions of identity styles predict educational self-efficacy?

Table 6. The summary of self-efficacy regression analysis

Identity styles	R	R ²	Balanced R ²	Significant level
Normative	0.320	0.02	0.09	0.001
Informational	0.239	0.06	0.041	0.005
Diffuse	-0.147	0.02	0.017	0.21

Regarding R² mentioned in the table above, the variables of normative and informational identity styles respectively determine 10 and 6 percent of self-efficacy which is a significant number. As it is observed here, the results achieved from diffuse informational identity styles aren't significant. Later, in order to study the regression's significance which is the test showing that whether the predicting variable (identity styles) can predict the index variable (self-efficacy) or not, we have used one way variance analysis test (ANOVA). The results of test has been presented in the following table.

Table 7. The results of one way variance analysis related to predicting factors

Variable		Sum of squares	Df	Mean of squares	F	The significant level
Normative	Regression	37.852	1	37.852	117.18	0.001
	Error	129.153	399	0.323		
	Total	167.005	400			
Informational	Regression	46.444	1	46.444	153.78	0.001
	Error	120.561	399	0.302		
	Total	167.005	400			

The table above shows the amount of F and significant level in predicting variables. As it is observed the amount of F is significant in level 0.001 and all predicting variables except diffuse avoidant identity variable play an important and significant role in predicting self-efficacy.

Table 8. Regression coefficients

Model		β	Error	Beta	T	Significant level
Self-efficacy	Fixed number	3.512	1.764		2.669	0.005
	Normative style	1.056	0.177	0.476	5.980	0.001
	Informational style	0.812	0.136	0.479	4.820	0.001

As it is shown in the table above, there is a significant relationship between normative/informational styles and self-efficacy, so regarding the coefficients calculated in the table, the following regression equation can be presented for index variable (self-efficacy):

$$(\text{Informational identity style}) 0.812 + (\text{normative identity style}) 1.056 + 3.512 = \text{self-efficacy}$$

Can identity styles predict educational development?

Table 9. The summary of self-efficacy regression analysis

Identity styles	R	R ²	Balanced R ²	Significant level
Normative	0.209	0.04	0.035	0.249
Informational	0.361	0.13	0.114	0.001
Diffuse	-0.199	0.01	0.0093	0.21

Regarding R² in the table above, the variables of informational identity style determine almost 13 percent of educational development which is a significant number. In addition, as it is shown in the table, the results achieved from diffuse and normative styles are not significant.

Later, in order to study the regression's significance which is the test showing that whether the predicting informational identity variable can predict the index variable (educational development) or not, we have used one way variance analysis test (ANOVA). The results of test are presented in the following table.

Table 10. The results of variance analysis related to predicting factors

Variable		Sum of squares	Df	Mean of squares	F	Significant level
Informational	Regression	58.019	1	58.019	157.23	0.001
	Error	147.12	399	0.369		
	Total	205.031	400			

The table above indicates the amount of F and its significant level in predicting variable. As it is seen, the amount of F is significant in two models in 0.001 level and predicting variable (informational style) play an important role in predicting educational development.

Table 11. Regression coefficients

Model		β	Error	Beta	T	Significant level
Self-efficacy	Fixed number	4.301	1.439		2.669	0.01
	Informational style	1.719	0.109	0.237	3.712	0.01

As it is shown in the table above, there is a significant relationship between informational identity style and educational development, so regarding the coefficients calculated in the table, the following regression equation can be presented for index variable (educational development):

$$(\text{Informational identity style}) 1.719 + 4.301 = \text{educational development.}$$

CONCLUSION

Identity and how it is formed are among the subjects which many scientific fields such as psychology, sociology, politic sciences and even literature and art are interested in. This matter not only shows its importance but also indicates the vast area which is under study. The people can achieve a self- definition through identity and if this definition contrasts their social reality, then they will experience some conditions such as immaturity, stress and behavioral problems. Identity style is one of the important subjects in psychology which attracted researchers' attention in recent years. The researches done are mainly concerned with the relationship between identity styles and educational development, educational self-efficacy, personal relations, social compatibility and mental health. In the present research , we have also tried to see whether there is a relationship between identity styles and educational self-efficacy and development of elementary students in Isfahan city, district 1 or not.

The results showed that regarding the correlational coefficient achieved for each variable, there is a positive and significant relationship between identity and educational self-efficacy and development in level 0.001. Therefore, it can be explicitly expressed that determination of one identity style which shows the accurate realization of identity in students can lead to their self-efficacy and development. Then it can result in having the feeling of competency, adequacy and the ability to cope with life and people's control over their life. Thus, self- efficacy is effective on how the students are involved in problems leading to their goals and brings more effort and insistence against problems. As Marcia (1993), explained in his research that how teenagers try to discover their identity and what commitments they get against values. Those with informational identity style actively search and evaluate data, they are dutiful and problem-oriented, and they mostly tend to evaluate multi-solutions and various roles. The remarkable features of these people include bright educational and occupational goals, high educational performance and motivation for improvement. The findings in the present research show that the more people's informational identity grows the more their educational self-efficacy and development increase. Students' identity considered as one of effective components in enhancing their self-efficacy is very important. Because the more attention is paid to designing appropriate educational environment such as software and hard ware facilities and equipment and teaching methods which can guide students to the informational identity style, the more they can positively affect students' self-efficacy.

Those with normative style conform to the experience of reference group and have collective documents. Their remarkable features include accepting others' beliefs without evaluating them, low flexibility in facing new situations and having stereotypical behavior. So the teacher as the most important part of educational system and learning environment can encourage students to participate in group activities through improving their normative identity. With regard to this point that the students are at their early age and more flexible and their perception of teacher's actions are far from any kind of bias or inaccurate interpretation, therefore, strengthening human values and performing tasks as a group can be internalized in the personality of students. The results showed that the difference in identity status and identity styles create significant changes in educational self-efficacy, educational activities and a growth in interpersonal relations, in a way in which there was a positive relationship between normative identity style and training goals/educational independency, and the students with

informational identity style can be more ready to effectively comply with the school environment. Among the findings of the research, we can refer to this point that the relationship between diffuse identity style and development/self-efficacy is an inverse relationship; in other words, the less the students have diffuse identity style, the more they will have educational self-efficacy and development. Those with diffuse avoidant style seek pleasure, excitedly face the problems and can be controlled from outside. They lack educational goals and a fixed job and have low levels of academic capabilities

Identifying the students who have diffuse identity style is basically important in two views: first, they can't affect other students, and the second, their identity style can be changed into normative or informational style. Because regarding to students' early age and their flexibility, the change of identity will be much quicker.

As it is shown in this research, there is an inverse relationship between diffuse identity style and students' educational self-efficacy and development. Therefore, if students' diffuse identity style changes to informational or narrative style, we can expect that they will feel more competent and efficient to cope with educational problems and in general they will have a better life. In other words, they will have higher self-efficacy. The effective role of teacher on students is so crucial. The results achieved from this research are presented as follows:

✓ The high quality of teaching can make the students believe that the activities done during teaching are so valuable. As a result, it leads to a higher self-efficacy and a deeper learning in students. In other words, students come to this point that the teaching quality is bright in teaching period and it contains a certain structure, and the materials and activities are valuable too and they can be controlled by them. This matter can be effective on enhancing students' informational identity style, those who have informational identity style have certain goals; they fully trust their own judgment and independency and feel autonomous in performance, self-monitoring, educational achievements and interpersonal relations more than their peers in two other styles. Such students enjoy the period, won't get tired or angry and reach to a higher self-efficacy.

✓ Let the students feel autonomous (a sense of control) as much as possible. If the teaching class provides students with a sense of autonomy through preparing them with choice possibility and increases students' self-directed opportunities, their perception of value and control will increase, and as a result it leads to growth of positive emotions in students. So it will have no result except an appropriate sense of informational identity and a higher sense of self-efficacy in students.

✓ Creating an opportunity for students to have a self-discovery and identity leading to their success through providing suitable resources and learning environment.

✓ Creating a flexible training environment and focusing on teamwork without removing the competitor (lack of competition reduces the value).

✓ The training atmosphere should be in a way in which it improves the intimate and mutual relation among students and their teachers.

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