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Brief report: the Identity Style Inventory- validation in Iranian college students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to provide normative tables for Identity Style Inventory ISI-6G. This research was performed on the 3245 students (1535 male and 1703 female) of Islamic Azad University that were selected by simple random sampling. Data were presented by descriptive statistic and draw table. Obtained scores transformed to Z and T scores and percentile rank, and the norm tables for University Student Identity Style Inventory were calculated. In order to determine reliability of USDI were used internal consistency method and test-retest. Coefficient Cronbach's alpha for the Informational-Style, Normative-Style, Diffuse-Avoidant-Style and Commitment Identity was .833, .721, .565 and .841 and showed good internal consistency. In order to check the concurrent validity and divergent validity of this inventory were used respectively from the researcher made of scale interest to Identity Styles were obtained .672, .634, .642 and .649. Also concurrent validity for Informational-Style, Normative-Style, Diffuse-Avoidant-Style and Commitment Identity were obtained. Conclusion from these findings was that the Identity Style Inventory ISI-6G is a valid and reliable instrument to measure student's identity styles.

1. Introduction

Identity formation is an essential developmental challenge associated with adolescence (Cote, 2009; Erikson, 1950-1980). According to Erikson throughout each person's lifetime, they experience different crises/conflicts. Each of the conflicts arises at a certain point in life and must be successfully resolved for progression to the next of

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the eight stages. The particular stage relevant to identity formation takes place during adolescence (ages 12-20), this stage is called "Identity versus Role Confusion." The Identity vs. Role Confusion stage consists of adolescents trying to figure out who they are in order to form a basic identity that they will build on throughout their life. During the identity stage, the salient issues are occupation and ideology as individuals decide how to make their way in the world and what to believe in. The failure to resolve these issues results in identity confusion. Marcia (1966) developed a framework for studying Erikson’s concept of identity using crisis and commitment as organizing principles. Marcia introduced four identity statuses as Identity Diffusion, Identity Foreclosure, Identity Moratorium and Identity Achievement (1966-1996).

For many years most studies of identity formation were based on Marcia’s identity status paradigm, identifying four different identity types or outcomes. More recently, investigators have begun to focus on the process by which identity is formed rather than individual differences in identity outcomes (e.g., Berzonsky, 1988). In particular, Berzonsky (1990) proposed a process model of identity formation that focused on differences in the social-cognitive processes and strategies individuals use to engage or avoid the tasks of constructing, maintaining, and/or reconstructing a sense of identity. Berzonsky (1990) differentiated three processing styles, called informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant. Individuals with an informational identity processing style intentionally seek out, process, and evaluate self-relevant information. They are self-reflective, skeptical about self-views, open to new information, and willing to examine and revise aspects of their identity when faced with dissonant feedback (Berzonsky, 1990). This mentally effortful approach to identity formation should result in a stable, coherent, well-differentiated and integrated identity structure (Berzonsky, 1989). Normative individuals more automatically internalize and conform to the standards and expectations of significant others. Discrepancies between information about how they are and their normative standards evoke feelings of guilt and concern about avoiding failure. Their primary aim is to defend and maintain existing self-views. A diffuse-avoidance style is characterized by delay, procrastination, or defensive-avoidance of making decisions. There are difficulties in self-control and an impulsive component to the diffuse-avoidance style. This identity style is associated with reliance on external locus of control and emotional-focused coping behaviors (Berzonsky, 1992, 1994; Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996).

2. Methods

The research population comprises all students at Islamic Azad University in the academic year 2012-2013. Since the approximate number of was 120000 as declared by the Testing Office of the Islamic Azad University, 3000 subjects were selected from among the branches at the 12 regions of the University. Given access to the minimum sample (3000 subjects), 107 branches were randomly selected from among those existing in the 12 regions of the Islamic Azad University and the questionnaire copies were randomly distributed among the students majoring in different fields which should be returned by them. In the cases this failed (69 branches), the examiners were dispatched to the branches upon coordination with the branch authorities and administered the questionnaires to the students majoring in the fields already determined through listing. The sample consisted of 3245 Iranian college students (1534 males and 1703 females). The age of the participants was between 19 and 26 years (M=21, SD=1.21).

| Groups       | N   | Percentage |
|--------------|-----|------------|
| Gender       |     |            |
| Male         | 1534| 47.3       |
| Female       | 1703| 52.5       |
| N/A          | 8   | 0.2        |
| Associate's  | 439 | 13.5       |
| Bachelor's   | 2394| 73.8       |
| Education    |     |            |
| Master's     | 301 | 9.3        |
| PhD          | 108 | 3.3        |
| N/A          | 3   | 0.1        |
| Married      | 1199| 36.9       |
| Marital Status|    |            |
| Single       | 2019| 62.2       |
| N/A          | 27  | 8.8        |
| Sum          | 3245| 10         |
3. Tools

The ISI-6G was employed to assess identity styles. It is a revision of the original ISI (Berzonsky, 1989) designed to be more accessible to early and middle adolescents. The ISI-6G consists of 40 items using the same 5-point Likert-type scale as described for the EPSI. The ISI-6G subscales produced Cronbach alphas of .70 for informational, .68 for normative, and .70 for diffuse/avoidant styles (White, Wampler, & Winn, 1998). The ISI comp rises three continuous style scales: (1) an Informational-Style scale (11 items; e.g., “I have spent a great deal of time thinking seriously about what I should do with my life”); (2) a Normative-Style scale (nine items, e.g., “I prefer to deal with situations where I can rely on social norms and standards”); and (3) a Diffuse-Avoidant-Style scale (10 items; e.g., “I’m not really thinking about my future now; it’s still a long way off”). In this research we changed subjects represented degree of agreement with individual items on a scale from 1 to 5 points to yes no forms. In Iran too, ISI-6G scale was adopted by Ghazanfari (2003). He reported Cronbach’s α to be .68 for the overall sample of his study. Farsinejad (2004) also reported coefficients of Cronbach’s α for subscales of information style, norm style, confusion/avoidance style and commitment to be .77, .60, .66 and .68 respectively.

Criterion Questionnaire: In order to compute reliability of the subjects’ scores in identity styles, each definition of identities were developed as a question and administered as a questionnaire to the subjects of the 11th region who were randomly selected and they were asked to rate the level of accuracy of each statement on a continuum ranging between 0 and 10. The obtained reliability of this questionnaire was .78.

4. Findings

In Table 2, the statistical characteristics of the subjects’ scores in identity styles are presented by women, men and overall subjects.

| Informational-Style | Normative-Style | Diffuse-Avoidant-Style | Commitment Identity |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Total               | Male            | Female                 | Total               | Male            | Female                 | Total               | Male            | Female                 |
| N                   | 3245            | 1534                   | 1703                | 3245            | 1534                   | 1703                | 3245            | 1534                   | 1703                |
| Mean                | 4.63            | 4.34                   | 4.90                | 4.43            | 4.24                   | 4.60                | 5.41            | 5.54                   | 5.29                |
| Std. Error of Mean  | .055            | .081                   | .075                | .044            | .062                   | .062                | .039            | .056                   | .055                |
| Median              | 4               | 4                      | 5                   | 4               | 4                      | 5                   | 6               | 5                      | 3                   |
| Mod                 | 2               | 8                      | 4                   | 4               | 4                      | 6                   | 6               | 6                      | 0                   |
| Sd. Deviation       | 3.138           | 3.169                   | 3.106               | 2.503           | 2.426                   | 2.557               | 2.247           | 2.199                   | 2.275               |
| Variance            | 9.913           | 9.043                   | 9.645               | 6.265           | 5.888                   | 5.540               | 5.047           | 4.837                   | 5.175               |
| Skewness            | .097            | .24                    | -.025               | .074            | .130                   | .012                | -.098           | -.136                   | -.038               |
| Sd. Error. Skewness | .043            | .062                   | .059                | .043            | .062                   | .059                | .043            | .062                   | .059                |
| Kurtosis            | -1.377          | -1.325                  | -1.375              | -878            | -797                   | -.935               | -.637           | -.629                   | -.641               |
| Sd. Error. Kurtosis | .086            | .125                   | .119                | .986            | .125                   | .119                | .086            | .125                   | .119                |
| Range               | 10              | 10                     | 9                   | 9               | 9                      | 9                   | 10              | 10                     | 10                  |
| Minimum             | 0               | 0                      | 0                   | 0               | 0                      | 0                   | 0               | 0                      | 0                   |
| Maximum             | 10              | 10                     | 9                   | 9               | 9                      | 9                   | 10              | 10                     | 10                  |
| Sum                 | 15038           | 6655                   | 8351                | 14381           | 6501                   | 7835                | 17551           | 8500                   | 9013                |

This study is also aimed at determining how reliable Berzonsky's Identity Style Questionnaire (ISI-6G) is. Table 3 demonstrates reliability of the subjects' scores on styles of this questionnaire. In Table 3, correlation of overall score of the identity styles of Berzonsky's Identity Style Questionnaire (ISI-6G) with scores of the criterion questionnaire are shown. As is seen, there is a significant correlation between scores of styles and the criterion score at all cases. As displayed in Table 5, negative correlation of the information identity style and the norm identity style (-.407**) as well as identity commitment with the confusion/avoidance style (-.312**) and this correlation's matching other studies indicate presence of another aspect of structural validity for the ISI-6G.
Table 3. Demonstrates reliability and validity of the subjects' scores on styles of ISI-6G

|                      | Informational Style | Normative Style | Diffuse Avoidant-Style | Commitment Identity |
|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| **Total**            | .833                | .721            | .565                   | .841                |
| **Female**           | .824                | .739            | .687                   | .832                |
| **Male**             | .841                | .696            | .534                   | .848                |
| **Correlation of the overall score of ISI-6G with scores of the criterion questionnaire** | .672** | .634** | .642** | .649** |

**p<.01

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Identity formation is a life-long process. Although the issue of identity has long been taken into account by thinkers and intellectuals, it has been studied with newer approaches due to the stress laid on the aspect of the personal and acquisitive activities of individuals at the modern society. Self-concept development gradually leads to formation of personal identity, which is a psychosocial structure, i.e. it both comprises the characteristic attitudes and beliefs characterizing an individual and fosters the manner of relation of an individual to others. Searching for self-identity requires you to determine what is valuable to you and to set the criteria based on which you can assess your and others' behavior and feel meritorious. Establishing an identity and achieving a coherent definition of self is the most important aspect of psychosocial development during adolescence.

In order to carry out this study, 107 collegiate branches were randomly selected from among those lying in the 12 regions of the Islamic Azad University and Berzonsky's Identity Style Questionnaire (ISI-6G) was administered to 3245 (1534 male and 1703 female) subjects. Findings suggest that reliability of the subjects' scores on the information identity style were respectively .833, .824 and .841 by women, men and overall subjects. These were respectively .721, .739 and .696 in the norm identity style, .565, .687 and .534 in confused/avoidance identity style, and finally .841, .832 and .848 in terms of commitment scores. This question is posed by users of psychology test that how much the reliability coefficient of a test should be so that it could be applied with adequate trust. We know that answering this question depends on the goal of measurement, and if the test is to be administered for research purposes, a reliability coefficient between .70 and .80 seems suitable. We therefore realize that reliability of the scores of information identity style, norm identity style and identity commitment is good and that of the scores of confused/avoidance identity style is mediocre.

Validity is a major measurement idea in psychology science. Validity of the psychology test is an important issue which should be cited in studies. It actually points to the supporting evidence for what could be said about the basis for test scores not to the tests themselves. Whenever we claim that a test score means something different from the previous meaning, we attach validity to a new study. In this study, the correlation between criterion scores and scores of the information identity style was .672. This amount was reported to be .634, .641 and .649 for norm style, confused/avoidance style and identity commitment respectively. On the other hand, negative correlation between the information identity style and norm identity style (-.407), norm identity style and confused/avoidance style (-.731) and between identity commitment and confused/avoidance style (-.312) and this correlation matching other studies reveals another aspect of the structural validity for the questionnaire scales.

Another question which should be answered is whether the different between girl and boys' scores on Berzonsky's Identity Style Questionnaire (ISI-6G) is so significant that we need to develop separate norms for them; therefore, girl and boys' scores were compared in terms of each scale of Berzonsky's Identity Style Questionnaire (ISI-6G). This comparison showed that the F computed for the information identity style (26.233) was significant at the Alpha's level less than .001; the F computed for norm identity style (17.045) was significant at the Alpha's level less than .001, and the F computed for confused/avoidance identity style (9.949) was significant at the Alpha's level less than .002, that is, boys and girls have different scores on these scales and separate norms should be provided for them, but the F computed for identity commitment (1.649) was higher than the Alpha's level less than .05, i.e. boys and girls do not need to separate Z scores on the scale of identity commitment style. Thus, we presented Z scores for all scales by overall, girls' and boys' scores.

Concluding, the results of this study imply that the Iranian version of the ISI is a useful method for assessing the different processing styles of identity and the strength of their commitments. This measure displays good internal
consistency, test-retest stability, and concurrent validity. Overall, the results of the present study indicate that the Iranian versions of the ISI is useful instruments for assessing identity styles and processes, and provide additional support to the cross-cultural validity of these tools.

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