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Predicting Commitment and Self-Regulation Based on Identity Processing Styles

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to predict commitment and self-regulation based on identity processing styles among students of Hormozgan University. For this purpose, a sample of 422 people (in terms of gender ratio, educational groups, educational levels, and different academic years) were selected by stratified random sampling method from Hormozgan University students. The following questionnaires were used to collect data: Identity Processing Styles Questionnaire, Revised Commitment Scale, and a shortened form of a self-regulatory questionnaire. The data obtained from this study were analyzed using SPSS 22 and AMOS 24 software, and MANOVA, and multiple regression statistical methods. The results of multiple regression analysis showed that the prediction of commitment and self-regulation through identity processing styles was statistically significant at the level of 0.001. There was also a relationship between commitment and self-regulatory variables with identity processing styles, and the obtained coefficients showed that an equation could be presented based on identity processing styles to predict commitment and self-regulation.

Keywords: Identity processing styles, self-regulation, commitment, students.

Introduction

For many adolescents, entering college and experiencing this stage of life is a very important and difficult stage due to the intertwining of plans and goals with identification issues (White, 2009). During this period, which is considered the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, individuals are faced with challenging tasks in the identification process (Soenens, Berzonsky, Dunkel, & Papini, 2011); it is a progressive process that involves consciously integrating one's beliefs about oneself and commitment to the set of values acquired (Schwartz, 2005); adolescents, in the face of the task of identity formation, focus their attention on important issues. Such as career choices, religious beliefs, and political ideals focus on life, so that they can achieve a coherent personal identity and successfully overcome the identity crisis.

According to Erickson (Erikson, 1956), the most important goal of adolescents was to engage in the stage of identification and development of personal identity as a result of a successful transition from an identity crisis. According to Brzezinski's (Berzonsky, 1992) cognitive-social perspective, individuals achieved a perspective on their own growth and identity style through their actions in the physical and social world. Accordingly, Brzezinski had introduced three styles of information identity processing: normative and confusing-avoidance. People with an information identity style are actively seeking and evaluating information about themselves for their decisions and use problem-oriented strategies. Individuals with a normative identity style automatically follow the instructions of important individuals and define themselves in terms of collective aspirations such as religion and family. People with a

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confused-avoidance identity style usually avoid facing personal issues and decisions and make decisions according to the demands of the situation and those around them (Berzonsky & Kinney, 2019).

Studies have shown that commitment is associated with identity processing styles and differentiates identity styles (Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016). Commitment refers to having values and goals (Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016). Berzonsky and Cieciuch (2016) considered commitment as a purposeful and directional executive framework acted as a resource for evaluating behavior and feedback and made people feel purposeful. According to Berzonsky and Cieciuch (2016), individuals with informational and normative styles maintained stronger personal commitment than their confused-avoidance counterparts. People who are committed to their values, their goals play a more effective role in the processes of self-regulation and well-being.

Effective regulation of behavior and emotions could play an important role in the relationships between identity processing and commitment styles. Activity in different dimensions of a person's life span required continuous activity of a set of regulatory, control, and management processes, which was introduced as self-regulatory Self-regulation could be defined by reference to its executive characteristics, the ability to control, change and regulate emotion, arousal, and desire (Vohs & Baumeister, 2016). Identity processing styles and self-regulatory processes dealt with the processing of related information (Basharat, 2009). The theory of identity styles, with a focus on socio-cognitive processes that transmit information and feedback to individuals through the environment, was shared with other cognitive-social theories such as self-regulatory theory (Bandura, 1991). Hofer, Busch, and Kärtner (2011) in examining the relationship between identity processing styles and value orientation with self-regulatory mediation and commitment found that high levels of self-regulation were associated with information style and low levels were associated with confusing-avoidance style.

It seemed that in adolescence, the correct use of cognitive resources could be related to solving its crisis; Berzonsky and Cieciuch (2016) considered automatic cognitive and logical processes as one of the effective factors in the formation of identity. Cognitive theorists believed that self-regulatory processes determined the direction of activity and performance flow of individuals and played an important role in achieving identity, self-esteem, attention control, and well-being among students (Hofer et al., 2011). The effect of self-regulation on identity processing styles suggested that information and normative style with high levels of self-regulation led to a continuous review of academic performance over the confusing-avoidance style (Berzonsky, 2011). Also, different levels of cognitive resources were effective in shaping the commitment and the pattern of psycho-social balance. Thus, normative and informational styles were associated with high commitment, balance, intimacy, and confused-avoidance style was associated with low commitment and imbalance of various psychosocial forms (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011). Accordingly, due to the reduced stability of self-concept of constantly changing commitments, the confused-avoidance style was more prone to depression and anxiety than other styles (Johnson & Nozick, 2011).

Based on the above and research conducted abroad, it was found that the variables of identity processing styles, commitment, and self-regulation could be related to each other. Due to the high importance of

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adolescents' issues, the study of identity, and related issues with the variables mentioned in the country, the research had not examined the relationship between these three variables, and the purpose of this study was to understand the relationships and interactions that these three variables had with each other in Iranian society.

Material and Methods

Research method, statistical population, and sample: The present research method was a correlation. The statistical population of the present study included all students of Hormozgan University. From the study population, 450 people were selected for the sample using the relative class sampling method, and questionnaires were distributed. After removing the incomplete cases, a total of 422 questionnaires were selected. Of these, 188 boys and 234 girls were in the age range of 18-30 years.

Measuring tools

A. Shortened form of the self-regulatory questionnaire: 25-item self-regulatory questionnaire (Soenens et al., 2011) with evaluation in five areas including positive performance, controllability, expression of feelings and needs, assertiveness, and well-being on a scale of 5 Likert degrees were designed. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for this form range from 0.68 to 0.84, which has a high internal consistency (Marqués, Ibáñez, Ruipérez, Moya, & Ortet, 2005). The Persian form of this questionnaire was evaluated in Iran with a sample of 676 people. The self-regulatory scale with retest reliability of 0.87 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 showed that it has a satisfactory internal consistency (Vohs & Baumeister, 2016). In the present study, the reliability coefficient for this scale was 80.

B. Revised Commitment Questionnaire: A new edition of this 9-item scale in a 5-point Likert scale from grade 1 (not at all like you) to 5 (very similar to you), by Brzonsky to determine the personal meaning of beliefs and values. The things that people are committed to are designed. Various studies (for example, Brzonsky, Swans, Lakes, Smiths, Papini, and Gossens) indicate the desired validity and reliability of this scale. Psychometric properties of this scale were studied in two studies with 331 and 422 samples. The results of this study show that this scale has the validity of desirable structures and its reliability coefficient was reported to be 75. In the present study, the reliability coefficient for this scale was 71.

C. Revised Identity Processing Styles Questionnaire: This 27-item scale was developed by Brzonsky to measure identity processing styles. Various studies (Vohs & Baumeister, 2016) indicated the optimal validity and reliability of this scale and the reliability coefficients for information, normative and avoidance-confused styles, respectively 74. 0.0, 0.70 and 0.83 were reported. Psychometric properties of this scale were studied in two studies with 331 and 422 samples. The results of this study showed that this scale had a very good construct validity and the reliability coefficient of information, normative and avoidance-confused styles were 77, 64, and 70 (Adams & Berzonsky, 2008). In the present study, the reliability coefficients for these scales were 79, 60, and 81.

Execution method and data analysis: To collect data, participants were asked to answer the relevant questionnaires. After data collection, data analysis was performed using regression analysis using SPSS

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20 statistical software. Also, Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Results

In this study, 422 students from different faculties of Hormozgan University were surveyed in self-regulatory prediction and commitment based on identity processing styles. Table 1 showed the mean and standard deviation of different research variables.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of different research variables

Variables	Mean	SD
Information style	**34.75**	**5.06**
Normative style	**23.11**	**5.96**
Confused-avoidant style	**19.45**	**4.84**
Commitment	**36.23**	**5.77**
Positive performance	**19.38**	**3.09**
Controllability	**15.33**	**3.70**
Revealing feelings and needs	**15.48**	**3.83**
Decisiveness	**16.56**	**3.20**
Welfare	**18.66**	**3.22**
Total self-regulation	**85.40**	**11.94**

In table 1, the average scores of individuals were collected separately for different variables. As can be seen, individuals had the highest average in the variables of total self-regulation, commitment and information style, and 85.40, 36.23, 34.75 were obtained; in the variables of controllability and expression of feelings and needs, respectively, 15.48 and 15.3 were obtained. They got the lowest average. Table 2 showed the correlation between identity processing styles, commitment and self-regulation**.**

Table 2. Correlation matrix of identity processing styles with commitment and self-regulation

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Information style	1								
2.Normative style	.28**	1							
3.Confused-avoidant style	-.30**	.15**	1						
4.Commitment	.45**	.14**	-.51**	1					
5.Positive performance	.47**	-.025*	-.22**	.49**	1				
6.Controllability	.07*	.029*	-.28**	.34**	.31**	1			
7.Revealing feelings and needs	.30**	-.15**	-.29**	.37**	.42**	.32**	1		
8.Decisiveness	.20**	.09*	-.16**	.25**	.34**	.28**	.23**	1	
9.Welfare	.41**	.054*	-.32**	.48**	.63**	.36**	.47**	.29**	1
10.Total self-regulation	.38**	-.013*	-.37**	.55**	.75**	.66**	.71**	.59**	.77**

** < **.01,** * < **.05**

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As can be seen in Table 2, among the identity styles, information style (p <0.01 and r = 0.383) and confused-avoidance style (p <0.01 and r = -0.374) with their score - Total regulation, had a high correlation. The correlation of normative style with total self-regulatory score was also significant; among the identity processing styles, the highest correlation coefficient with commitment belonged to information style (p <0.01 and r = 0.455), confused-avoidance style (p <0.01 and r = 0.515) and the lowest correlation coefficient. Commitment was also related to the normative style (p <0.01 and r = 0.148). Multivariate regression method was used to investigate the possibility of predicting commitment and self-regulation, the results of which were shown in Table 3**.**

Table 3. Results of regression analysis to predict self-regulation and commitment based on identity processing styles

Criterion variable	**Regression coefficients**					**Summary Regression model Results**				
	Predictive variable	B	**β**	t	*p*	R	R^2	Modified R2	F	*p*
Self-regulation	Information style	.73	.31	6.96	.001	.48	.23	.23	42.94	.001
	Normative style	.25	.12	2.90	.001					
	Confused-avoidant style	-.77	.31	-6.84	.001					
commitment	Information style	.41	.35	8.76	.001	.62	.39	.39	91.27	.001
	Normative style	.18	.18	4.68	.001					
	Confused-avoidant style	-.56	-.45	-11.16	.001					

According to the results of Table 3, it was found that the correlation between identity processing and self-regulatory styles was equal to 0.49 that 23% of the changes in the self-regulatory criterion variable were explained by all identity processing styles. The information style beta was 0.313 and t = 6,926, which was significant at p <0.001; the information style was able to explain 0.3133 units of self-regulatory changes. Normative style was significant as another positive predictor of self-regulation with beta of 0.129 and t = 2.904 at p <0.001; normative style was able to explain 0.129 units of self-regulatory change. Finally, the confused-avoidance style became significant with beta of -0.312 and t = -6.808 at the level of p <0.001, and negatively predicted self-regulation. Also, in the study of commitment prediction based on identity processing styles, it was found that the correlation between identity processing styles and commitment was equal to 0.63 and 39% of the changes in the commitment variable were explained by identity processing styles. The information style beta was 0.352 and t = 8.762, which was p <0.001, and the information style was able to explain 0.352 units of commitment changes. Normative style as another positive predictor of commitment with beta of 0.185 and t = 4.682 was also significant at p <0.001; Normative style was able to explain 0.185 units of commitment changes. Finally, the confused-avoidance style became significant with beta of -0.455 and t = -11.168 at p <0.001. Among the predictor variables of identity processing styles, the confused-avoidance style (negatively) had the most role in predicting student commitment.

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Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between identity processing styles, commitment and self-regulation and to predict commitment and self-regulation based on identity processing styles. The results of statistical analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between identity processing and self-regulatory styles; so that information style (positively) and confused-avoidance style (negatively) were related to self-regulation. According to Brzezinski and Cook (Basharat, 2009), people with low levels of self-regulation were more likely to emphasize values and follow purely pleasant principles, and people with high levels of self-regulation were generally less self-regulating in standards (Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016). Brzonsky and Cook (Basharat, 2009) found that students prepare for college with an informational style and responded positively to stress. According to Berzonsky (2004), information style was a significant predictor of self-regulatory cognitive processes. When they encountered uncoordinated information with self-concept, they monitored their actions and behavior through conscious planning due to their internal self-regulatory source. In contrast, people with a confused-avoidance style avoid self-thinking when dealing with stress and experience problems in various areas of life. According to Berzonsky (2004), the source of control was the external confusing-avoidance style that led to emotional and unstable behaviors (Adams & Berzonsky, 2008). These people, having a state of uncertainty, avoid doing different things in life and had low self-esteem and negative self-concept (Berzonsky, 2004).

The results also showed that there was a significant relationship between commitment and identity processing styles, so that commitment was positively related to information and normative style and negatively related to confusion-avoidance style. These results could be stated in the earlier researches (Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016).

These findings confirmed the idea derived from the theory of identity processing styles that commitment was an integral part of identity processing styles. Berzonsky (2004) showed that individuals with normative and informational processing styles had stronger identity obligations and higher self-disclosure than their confused-avoidant counterparts. People who saw the world as unpredictable and uncontrollable, with their effective individual adaptation and regular personal behaviors were influenced by these commitments (Schwartz, 2005).

Commitments were seen not only in creating a sense of purpose but also as criteria and standards for individuals. Lack of lasting commitments caused a person to become vulnerable. Various studies had shown that the confused-avoidance style had developed behaviors problem compared to information and normative counterparts, such as eating disorders, alcohol, and work-related problems, neuroticism, depressive reactions, and early onset of illicit drug and alcohol use (Basharat, 2009). Explaining this finding, Berzonsky and Cieciuch (2016) stated that normative commitments were more likely to have an emotional theme than informational commitments. Belief in normative orientation might enhance what Chanowitz and Langer called premature cognitive commitments. Early cognitive commitment, or in other words, emotion-based commitment, could lead to instability in adaptive functioning and assessment of issues and disregard for contractual expectations (Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016).

Another explanation by Ryan and Deci (2002) theory of autonomy stated that regulatory processes were internalized by methods such as introspection and coherence. Introspection involved internalizing the criteria of important individuals that such obligations were not fully accepted by the individual's guilt (in fulfilling the obligations); coherence, on the other hand, required that values, goals, and criteria were processed and restructured in a measured and rational core of the individual.

According to the results of this study, it could be concluded that self-regulation and commitment were influenced by identity processing styles. In the field of self-regulation, it was found that self-regulation had a significant positive relationship with both informational and normative styles and a negatively negative relationship with the confused-avoidance style. Also, two information and normative styles were identified as positive predictors of commitment and confused-avoidance style were identified as negative predictors of commitment. This study could be a platform for studies and planning in the field of adolescents and related identification issues. Overall, the findings suggest that we could change identity processing, commitment, and self-regulation styles in arbitrary ways, such as by teaching different parenting styles, life skills, and changing styles. Identify self-regulation, self-regulation, and commitment in adolescents, or changed various aspects of well-being to promote mental health by pursuing such desirable programs, promised a brighter future for our adolescents and young people. One of the limitations of the present study was the reliance of its findings on data from personal reports of individuals and also the limitation of research records. For this reason, caution was advised in applying and generalizing the results.

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