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Identity Development Among Rural Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the development of identity among rural adolescents. Data was collected from students studying in different State syllabus schools of Belthangady Taluk, Dakshina Kannada District. The age range of the sample was 14 to 15 years. Adolescent Identity questionnaire developed by Cheek et al., (2002) was used to assess the level of identity. ANOVA was employed to test the hypotheses. The results of the study reveals that participants from high Socio Economic Status (SES) have significantly higher level of personal identity, social identity and collective identity when compared to participants from average and low SES families. In relational identity it was observed that adolescents from three SES have same identity orientation. Gender differences on different aspects of identity reveal that boys have significantly higher relational identity, collective identity and social identity when compared to girls. No gender differences were noticed on personal identity.

KEYWORDS : Adolescence, Social Identity, relational identity, collective identity, personal identity, socioeconomic status

INTRODUCTION

Identity is the construct that defines who or what a particular person is. At adolescence, a variety of important changes occur in the realm of identity (Harter, 1999). The adolescent may wonder who he or she really is and where he or she is headed. Coming to terms with these questions may involve a period of experimentation-a time of trying on different personalities in an attempt to discover one's true self. The parents, teachers and family members are expected to be responsive to the Needs of the adolescents and help them achieve their goals and aspirations that provide him or her meaningful identity. Although important changes in identity occur during childhood, the adolescent is far more self- conscious about these changes and feels them more acutely. (Marcia.1980)

Identity is not given to the individual by society, nor does it appear as a maturational phenomenon; it must be acquired through sustained individual efforts. Refusal to work on one's own identity formation carries with it the risk of role diffusion, self-doubt which may result in isolation and a lasting sense of confusion and the adolescent may indulge in self-destructive one-sided concern or activity. Such an adolescent may continue to be morbidly preoccupied with what others think of them, or may depart and no more care about themselves and others further it may lead to ego diffusion, personality confusion and can be found in the delinquent and in psychotic personality disorganization. Erickson (1968) .Diverse aspects comprise the identity of an individual which can be classified into personal identity, social identity, relational identity and collective identity (Cheek, 1989). These are also called identity orientation, which are external and internal elements of self. Forming a identity orientation introduces stability over a lifetime and enables individuals to draw meaning from life experiences Erickson (1968). As adolescents try out different roles young people are influenced by factors, such as their environment, culture, religion, school, and the media .Adolescents have to internalize a comprehensive and consistent set of affirmations regarding their own strong points, limitation, principles, and career choice. The positive control of family and influence of friends is important in this process, but the assurance must be made by adolescents as individuals. This process requires much experimentation and exploration, particularly in personality and vocational roles Brogan (2009)

OBJECTIVE:

- To study identity as a developmental issue among rural adolescent boys and girls from Low ,Middle and High SES groups

HYPOTHESES:

- There is no significant difference among rural adolescent boys and girls belonging to lower , middle and upper SES group on personal identity
- There is no significant difference among rural adolescent boys and girls belonging to lower , middle and upper SES group on social identity
- There is no significant difference among rural adolescent boys and girls belonging to lower , middle and upper SES group on relational identity
- There is no significant difference among rural adolescent boys and girls belonging to lower , middle and upper SES group on collective identity

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:

List of schools in Belthangady Taluk was collected from the BEO. A few schools were selected from the list. From the selected schools Stratified random sampling was employed from each stratum a purposive method of sampling was adopted to select 180 adolescents

Inclusion criteria:

- Adolescents studying in state syllabus schools were included in the study

Exclusion criteria:

- Adolescents from urban background studying in rural schools were excluded

VARIABLES:

Independent variable: Socioeconomic status and gender

Dependent variable: Personal identity, social identity, relational identity and collective identity

Adolescent Identity Questionnaire: Cheek et al., (2002) developed AAQ IV which contains 45 items. The questionnaire measures four aspects of identity they are:

Collective identity: represents the importance that is placed on social categories to which an individual belongs. The following questions measure CIO 4, 7, 10, 13, 24, 29, 38, 42.

Personal identity: describes the importance that is placed on one's private conception of self and subjective feelings of continuity, uniqueness, traits, values and abilities. The question which measures PIO are 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 21, 25, 27 and 32.

Social identity: describes adolescent's social roles and reputations and its importance in defining self, one's public image as presented through social roles and relationships. The questions which measures SIO are 3,

6, 9, 12, 15, 17, and 20.

Relational identity: represents the importance that is placed on other people who are in direct personal contact. 22, 26, 28, 31, 34, 35, 37, 39, 41 and 43 these are the question numbers which measures RIO.

Overall the questionnaire measures Identity that defines who or what a particular person is and what constitutes the person's identity. The questionnaire is a likert's scale and each answer can be scored from 1 to 5, with each rating indicating 1= they are of no importance to me; 2= They are of little importance to me; 3= they are of some importance to me; 4= they are of great importance to me; 5= they are of the utmost importance to me. Scoring: Score for each scale is the total of the scores for all the items listed under that scale.A high score indicates high value placed on that aspect of identity when constructing self-definition.

Reliability: the inner reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the sub-scales was: 0.84 (Personal Identity), 0.86 (Social Identity), 0.68 (Collective Identity), and 0.74 (Relational Identity)

Validity: The English version of the scale shows apparent validity.

Socio economic status scale: Kuppuswamy's Socioeconomic Status Scale-Updated For 2007 by N. Kumar, C. Shekhar, P. Kumar and A.S. Kundu (2007) was used to select the participants based on the SES

PROCEDURE:

Data was collected from 5 different schools of Belthangady Taluk, Mangalore. Heads of all the five schools were contacted personally by the researcher. After each head of the institutions approval to conduct the research,, the purpose of the study, sample required, time period to carry out the research was explained. Later respective Class teachers would introduce the researcher to the class after which she would take over and, explain the purpose of the research along with the benefits of participating in it. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information obtained from them and they were also informed that they could withdraw from the research any time. Later consent form was distributed to the willing participants and their written consent was obtained. Socio-demographic data sheet was distributed each item in the data sheet was explained and the participants were given 45 minutes to fill it. While collecting back each form was carefully observed to check whether all questions were answered. After collecting the socio economic status data sheet students who fulfilled the criteria were selected.. Assessment was done in groups of five. Sincere effort was made to establish rapport with each student so that the participants would give their honest response.

ANALYSIS OF RESULT

The hypotheses were tested employing two way analysis of variance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Table-1 Mean, SD and Analysis of Variance for Factors of Identity

Variable	SES	Mean and SD		F and p- value		
		Male	Female	Between Gender	Between SES	Interaction
Personal Identity	Low	32.93 ± 5.55	35.00 ± 4.33	O.163 NS	6.703**	2.567 NS
	Average	33.40 ± 5.89	33.90 ± 4.45			
	High	37.33 ± 3.82	35.60 ± 2.97			
	Total for Gender	34.56 ± 5.49	34.83 ± 5.56			
Relational Identity	Low	35.47 ± 5.57	33.37 ± 5.05	5.48*	0.23 NS	0.03 NS
	Average	35.47 ± 7.73	33.10 ± 5.36			
	High	35.87 ± 7.48	34.10 ± 3.39			
	Total for Gender	35.60 ± 6.92	33.52 ± 4.65			
Social Identity	Low	24.87 ± 4.79	23.13 ± 4.21	19.87**	3.55*	2.13 NS
	Average	25.43 ± 5.16	22.90 ± 4.28			
	High	28.63 ± 5.00	23.50 ± 4.75			
	Total for Gender	26.31 ± 5.20	23.18 ± 4.38			
Collective Identity	Low	31.97 ± 5.69	30.37 ± 3.15	9.92**	5.46*	5.11*
	Average	30.00 ± 5.95	30.23 ± 4.49			
	High	35.20 ± 3.27	30.33 ± 2.95			
	Total for Gender	32.39 ± 5.49	30.31 ± 3.55			

NS= Not significant, * = significant at 0.05 level, **= significant at 0.01 level

Table -2 Mean difference and significance valve of Post hoc analysis on areas of identity among adolescents belonging to high, low and mid socio economic status.

Areas	Variable		Mean difference	Significance
Personal Identity (PI)	Low SES	Avg SES	.13	.799
	High SES	Avg SES	1.38	.009
	High SES	Low SES	1.25	.018
Social Identity (SI)	Low SES	Avg SES	.17	.847
	High SES	Avg SES	1.90	0.29
	High SES	Low SES	2.07	.017
Collective Identity (CI)	Low SES	Avg SES	1.05	.195
	High SES	Avg SES	2.65	.001
	High SES	Low SES	1.60	.049

Discussion

In Personal identity F for gender and interaction are not significant hence we accept the null hypothesis. F for SES is significant. Post-hoc analysis employing LSD reveals that participants from high SES have significantly higher level of personal identity when compared to participants from average and low SES families, whereas there is no significant difference between participants from low and average SES families. This finding is similar to the findings of Reddy and Gibbons (1999) who found students from high SES schools to have significantly higher personal identity orientation than those from a lower SES schools. Harter, (1999) found out that the pattern of adolescent self concept development with an increasing emphasis on personal traits and qualities is seen to hold best for the males from the elite social class in India. The majority of the individuals in his study, i.e., the females and the males from the lower social classes, did not show this developmental trend, suggesting that Western conceptualization of the process of self-concept development does not hold across cultures and progresses differentially across sub-groups within a culture .

The observed F for gender and interaction are not significant for SI hence we accept the null hypothesis. F for SES is significant. Post-hoc analysis employing LSD reveals that participants from high SES have significantly higher level of Social identity when compared to partici-

pants from average and low SES families, whereas there is no significant difference between participants from low and average SES families. This finding is in accordance to the findings of Cetin et al., (2011) who explored the relation of the self-image with identity status among 364 Turkish adolescents of varied socioeconomic status. The results show that adolescents from low socioeconomic status have more negative self-images on all measures and those from upper socioeconomic status are differentiated from those of middle and lower SES by having a more positive sense of identity.

For Relational identity F for SES and interaction are not significant hence we accept the null hypothesis. F for gender is significant examination of means shows that boys have significantly higher relational identity when compared to girls. Hence we reject the hypothesis.. The present findings seem to support earlier research which suggests that the typical progression from a diffused identity to an achieved identity may be more difficult for females than males (Hodgson & Fischer, 1979) as mentioned by Buckler (2005). Erikson (1968) puts forth the point that the reason females show a delay in the identity vs. identity diffusion stage is because their identity development is partially based on their connection to a male counterpart. More specifically, he explained that a woman tends to define her identity through the selective nature that she uses to seek out a male partner Therefore, Erikson suggests that it is difficult for a woman to achieve identity without being in a relationship with a significant other. Consequently, this viewpoint would suggest that a woman's identity might be moderated by her intimate connections.

F for gender is significant in collective identity examination of means shows that boys have significantly higher collective identity when compared to girls. Hence we reject the hypothesis... F for SES is significant Post-hoc analysis employing LSD reveals that participants from high SES have significantly higher level of collective identity when compared to participants from average and low SES families, whereas there is no significant difference between participants from low and average SES families.

Gender and SES produce a combined effect to determine the collective identity of adolescents. Boys from high SES have significantly higher collective identity compared to girls from all the three SES. This study contradicts the findings of Reddy and Gibbons (1999) who reported significantly higher collective identity orientations among students from a lower SES schools than those from a high SES schools.

CONCLUSION

- Participants from high SES have significantly higher level of personal identity, social identity and collective identity when compared to participants from average and low SES families.
- In relational identity it was observed that adolescents from three SES have same identity orientation.
- Gender differences on different aspects of identity reveals that boys have significantly higher relational identity, collective identity and social identity when compared to girls.
- No gender differences were noticed on personal identity.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The present study findings highlight the need for counsellors, teachers, parents and policy makers from various sectors to gain a comprehensive understanding of contemporary young people's lives and focus on facilitating adolescents especially from low SES to develop good personal identity.

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