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The Correlation of Personality Characteristics and Social Factors with Identity Styles in Adolescents of Golestan, Iran

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The present study aims to examine the relationship between personality characteristics, social factors, and identity styles in adolescents. A correlational method was employed. Statistical population in this research consists of all high-school and pre-university students living in Golestanprovince during the year this research was being conducted.The sample included students (n=380) aged 17 and 18.In this study, the stratifiedrandom sampling method was used.Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires (identity styles, including: informational identity style, normative identity style, diffuse/avoidance style, commitment and social factors, including: family relationship, school and peer group relationship and personality characteristics, including: agreeableness, neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience.Descriptive and inferential statistics such as Mean, Standard Division, and Pearson correlation were used. The findings showed that there were significant correlations between personality characteristics and identity styles in adolescents. Significant correlations between social factors and identity styles in adolescents were also observed. In addition according to the results, a moderate and positive correlation was observed between informational and normative styles, informational style and

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commitment, normative style and commitment, as well as commitment and neuroticism. Additionaly, the results of the study supported theories like social cognitive theory, General other theory, and triat approach. The results shed new light on the processes involved in the personality characteristics and social factors of adolescents' styles of identity exploration.

Keywords: personality characteristics, social factors, and identity styles

The issue of identity has been discussed in various sub-fields of psychology, such as social, developmental, pathological and personality. This fact indicates the relevance of identity to various fields of study while also demonstrating the vastness of the topic. Identity is an organized sense of self-recognition that includes the values, beliefs and goals to which individuals are committed (Berzonsky, 1998a). Identity helps people to define themselves. A person whose self-definition contradicts with his/her social reality will exhibit lack of experience, stress and behavioral problems. Many psychologists believe that adolescents' typical behaviors are their natural attempt to define themselves and explore their identity (Lotfabadi, 2007).

Berzonsky (1998a) defines identity as an organized sense of self that includes the values, beliefs and goals to which an individual is committed. People differ in their use of social-cognitive processes to solve private issues, make decisions and form their identity, and they apply these processes in different ways(Berzonsky, 1998b). One of these ways is through the diffuse-avoidant identity style. People exhibiting this style avoid confronting personal issues and decisions. If they delay confronting these issues for a sufficiently long time, they will exhibit behavioral reactions and will be controlled by situational demands and motives(Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000).Anotheridentity style that is called informational style entails a willingness to investigate multiplesolutions to a given problem and to explore

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several options before committing to anyone. The normative style represents growth by conforming to social and familial expectations and a high degree of commitment to authority and to the exercise of judgment (Berzonsky, 1993). These individual differences in approaching important life decisions are referred to as identity styles (Smits, 2009).

It is important to distinguish identity styles from other relatively stable individual differences such as personality characteristics, values and attitudes. Personal characteristics describe what people are like, while values and attitudes describe what people consider as important, and identity styles describe how people make identity-relevant decisions. In this respect,Berzonsky (1990) points out that identity styles should be considered as developmental outcomes. According to him, adolescents interact within environmental contexts; they develop a preference for a particular identity style. This preference may be further reinforced by the life events and social relationships that are elicited by this identity style. As adolescents enter adulthood, their identity style is thought to become relatively stable although stressful life events or therapeutic interventions may still affect their identity styles.

Among all social factors, parents and family have the most crucial effect on individual identity and how it forms. In addition, school, political system and socioeconomic status of the society have a great role in identity formation (Aghamohammdian, 2003). Some researchers have shown Iranian adolescents'identity styles were on risk such as: Jomenia (2009) and Jabbari&Ghorbani (2007) showed that most people were experiencing diffuse identity style. Ghorbani (2005) showed that people mostly belong to diffuse style.

A related literature review in this area clearly shows that the

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two most significant factorsof personality characteristics and social factorsaffectidentity formation among adolescents(Bartle-Haring, 1997; Campbell et al., 1984; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Kamptner, 1988; Kerpelman et al., 1997; Kerpelman, 1988; Markstrom- Adams, 1992; Matos et al., 1999; Schultheiss & Blustein, 1994; Sigelman, 1999; Waterman, 1992). Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship of personality characteristics andsocial factors withidentity styles.

Research Hypotheses

H_1: There isa significant relationship between the adolescents' personality characteristics and their identity styles.

H_2: There isa significant relationship between social factors and the adolescents' identity styles.

Method

Research Design

This study used questionnaires to collect data andcorrelational techniques to analyze the data. This study was conducted in schools; therefore, the researcher did not manipulate the situation and minimally interfered with the normal practices of the schools. The respondents were required to answer the questions.

Population of the Study

Statistical population in this research consisted of all high-school and pre-university students living in Golestanprovince during the year this research was being conducted. There were 30817 adolescents of 17 and 18 years old who studied in high schools and pre-university schools in the province of Golestan in 2010 (Educational organization of Golestan State, 2010).

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Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The sampling method utilized for this study was the stratified multistage random sampling one based on the urban and rural areas in the province. Consequently, 4 out of 12areas (cities or towns was determined to be 380 was proportioned according to the population of each selected area.Next, a list of students from the selected high schools and pre-university centers was provided to determine the proportion of sample students from each school. Finally, the samples were chosen randomly from the list, regarding their level of education and their field of study.

The first component of the stratification included the cities of Kordkooy, Bandargaz, Ramyan, Azadshahr, Galikesh and Aghghala with populations of 46226-117261. The second component included the cities of Minoodasht, Kalalahe, Aliabad, and Bandarturkman with populations of 117262-188296. The third component had no cities. The fourth component consisted of only one city, Gonbad with a population of 259332-401401. The Fifth component comprised one city, Gorgan. The cities that were finally selected were Bandargaz, Gorgan, Aliabad and Gonbad.

The province of Golestan comprises twelve towns. These towns were divided into five groups. No town was allotted to the third group. Therefore, four groups were formed in this study. Out of the four groups, four towns (including its rural areas) were selected randomly. In the next step, the researcher referred to the education department in each city and found out about the number of urban and rural schools in the eleventh grade and pre-university classes. In each town and its rural areas, girl and boy schoolswere chosen randomly. After selecting the schools on the basis of gender, grade and educational fields, the researcher referred to the selected schools and chose the samples randomly

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from the teacher's list of students' names.

This study uses Cochran's second suggestion that is using a pilot study result. The total number of students in the school year (2010) was 13993. Thus, based on the Cochran's formula (1977), the minimum required sample size was calculated to be 374 and 10 respondants were added for the attrition rate consideration.Decreasing the four uncompleted questionnaires, the final sample included in the data analysis was 380 respondents.

Instruments

The research instruments used in this study was a questionnaire. A well-established method of collecting data in social science research is using questionnaires (Dillman, 2000). The questionnaire in this study was adapted from a number of well-established instruments available in the related literature.

The questionnaire consisted of four main sections developed specifically for separate domains. It included 140 questions.

The first section concerned the informants' demographic characteristics. Specifically, they were asked to provide details such as, gender and age.

The second section aimed at the identity styles. This section comprised 40 items which were adapted from a well-established questionnaire (Berzonsky, 1990). This section was divided into four parts, including informational identity style (11 items), normative identity style (9 items), diffuse/avoidance style (10 items) and commitment (10 items). The items followed a five-point Likert scale where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree.

The third section concerned the domain of social factors. The items of this section were adapted from Zaki's (2003) Questionnaire of Socialization Elements. This instrument is

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known as a valid tool and has been used in two major research projects in Iran by Zaki himself. It has been tested for its validity and reliability. The 30 items of this questionnaire that were adapted in this study can be divided in the three parts of family relationship (10 items), school (10 items) and peer group relationship (10 items) factors. The items also followed a 5-point Likert scale where 5= very much, 4= much, 3=middle, 2= low and 1= very low.

In the fourth section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to express their perceptions about their personality. The 60 items in this section were adapted from Costa and McCray(1990). The items could be divided in five parts, including agreeableness (12 items), neuroticism (12 items), extraversion (12 items) conscientiousness (12 items) and openness to experience (12 items).

Identity Styles

It is important to note that questions 9, 11, 14, and 20 have reverse marks. A person with informational identity style can score on items 2, 5, 6, 16, 18, 25, 26, 30, 33, 35, and 37. As a matter of fact, the raw scores need to be changed into Z standard scores and the highest score that one has achieved in each part would be considered as one's identity style.

In the questionnaire, normative identity style was measured by items 4, 10, 19, 21, 23, 28, 32, 34 and 40; while confusion identity style was measured by items 3, 8, 13, 17, 24, 27, 29, 31, 36 and 38. Finally, commitment was measured by items 1, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 20, 22, 38 and 40. In the present research, the commitment scores that the students achieved represent their degree of commitment to their personal roles, values and beliefs.

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Social factors

The third section of the questionnaire concerned the social factors. It is important to note that questions 3, 12, 14, 15, 20,22,23,25 have reverse marks. The items that covered the family relationship subscale were questions 1, 9, 13, 16, 20, 23, 24, 26, 29 and 30. Furthermore, the level of education subscale was measured by questions 2, 4, 5, 8, 12, 15, 18, 21, 22 and 25. Finally, peer group relationship subscale was covered by questions 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 17, 19, 27 and 28.

Personality characteristics

In this part of the questionnaire, agreeableness was measured by questions 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34, 39, 44, 49, 54, and 59. Neuroticism was evaluated by questions 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 26, 31, 36, 41, 46, 51, and 56. Questions 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37, 42, 47, 52, and 57 accounted for the next component of personality, extraversion. In addition, conscientiousness was measured by questions 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, and 60. Finally, openness was evaluated by questions 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38, 43, 48, 53, and 58.

Results

H_1: There is a significant relationship between the adolescents' personality characteristics and their identity styles.

The relationship between the perceived identity styles (as measured by the ISI6 scale) and perceived personality characteristics (as measured by the perceived NEO scale) of the participants was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were applied to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Table 1 displays the results of correlation

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tests. Due to the large sample size, analysis attained high power.

Table 1

Correlation between Identity Styles and Personality Characteristics

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Informational								
2.Normative	.46**							
3.Diffuse/avoidant	.07	.00						
4.Commitment	.45**	.48**	.09					
5.Neuroticism	-.22**	-.30**	-.09	.38**				
6. Extraversion	.30**	.39**	-.13**	.26**	-.38**			
7. Openness	.16**	.01	-.17**	.05	-.01	-.00		
8. Conscientiousness	.31**	.44**	.11*	.40**	-.45**	.46**	-.06	
9. Agreeableness	.12*	.21**	.14**	.21**	-.34**	.30**	-.06	.28**

**. Correlation is significant at the.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

There was a positive correlation between the first two variables of informational and normative styles, (r=.46, n= 380, p< .01), which is similar to the result gained by Berzonsky (1990). Nurmi, Berzonsky, Tammi and Kinney (1997) found that, among young adults, information oriented individuals reported the highest levels of self-esteem. Beaumont and Zukanovic (2005) showed that for theearly, middle and older adults, informational individuals were found to have similar reported levels of self-worth. The tendency to actively seek out new experiences causes the individual to benefit from more opportunities for personal growth (Kashdan, Rose, &Fincham, 2004). Positive correlations were found between informational style and commitment (r=.45, n=380, p<.01), that is similar to the results gained by Beaumont (2009), Berzonsky (2003), Seaton and Beaumont (2008). Also, there was a small and negative correlation between informational style and neuroticism (r= -.22, n=380, p<.01). Small andpositive correlations were observed between informational style and

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openness to experience(r= .16, n=380, p<.01), which is in accordance with the results gained by Duriez et al. (2004), Duriez and Soenens (2006) and Dollinger (1995). These results suggest that a person who achieves high scores on openness to experience has more tendencies to seek out, process and utilize relevant information rather than to procrastinate decisions. Informational style and extraversion were found to have a medium andpositive correlation (r= .30, n=380, p<.01). The correlation between informational style and agreeableness was found to be small andpositive (r= .12, n=380, p<.01). This was in line with the result gained by Duriez et al., (2004). As for informational style and conscientiousness, a mediumand positive correlation (r= .31, n=380, p<.01) was observed. In addition, there was a small and positive correlation between informational style and agreeableness (r= .12, n=380, p<.01). The informational style is the most adaptive of the three identity styles, it includes "active informational style, independent judgment and decision-making, exploration, flexible commitment, and high levels of self-esteem" (Berzonsky, Macek, &Nurmi, 2003, P. 114; Schwartz, 2001, P. 22). People with informational style search for, elaborate, and evaluate information related to identity before making decisions (Berzonsky, 1989) and are able to revise parts of their identity if encountered with information or interpersonal feedback that are not in harmony with their self-concept (Berzonsky, 2004a). It can be assumed that individuals with a predominantly informational style have a great ability to process, organize, and examine complex information about the self, others, and interpersonal relationship (Fonagy, Gergely, Jurist, and Target (2002). Research generally indicates that the informational style is positively related to psychological well-being (Berzonsky et al., 2003) and is negatively correlated with, for example,

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debilitative anxiety and external locus of control (Berzonsky, 1989).

There was a positive correlation betweennormative style and commitment (r=.48, n=380, p<.01), which was similar to the results gained by Dollinger (1995); Seaton and Beaumont (2008); Berzonsky (2003). Also a medium andnegative correlation (r= -.30, n=380, p<.01) was reported between normative style and neuroticism. There was a small andpositive correlation between normative style and agreeableness (r=.21, n=380, p<.01), which is in accordance with the result the study by Dollinger (1995). Also a medium andpositive correlation between normative and extraversion was observed (r= .39, n=380, p<.01), which was similar to the result of Dollinger (1995). In addition a medium and positive correlation (r= .44, n= 380, p<.01) was found between normative and conscientiousness, similar to the results of the studies by Duriez et al. (2004) and Dollinger (1995), this suggests that, when choices need to be made, conscientious people don't tend to rely on the expectations and prescriptions of others and, as a consequence, are less likely to delay their choice until the situation dictates what to do. Beaumont and Zukanovic (2005) showed that among early, middle and older adults, normative individuals were found to have the highest perceived levels of self-worth and lowest levels of reported distress.

People who dominantly use normative style in their information processing focus on "internalized conventions, standards, and expectations and are more concerned with conforming to the normative standards and prescriptions held by significant reference others" (Berzonsky, 1989, pp. 268-269). In case of identity issues, they react by meeting the expectations of referent group and significant others (Berzonsky et al., 2003).

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Individuals with a normative style avoid or even defend themselves against the information and experiences that contradict with their self-concept, values, and belief system (Berzonsky, 2004a; Berzonsky et al., 2003; Schwartz, 2001).

The correlation between diffuse/avoidant and extraversion was small and negative ($r= -.13$, $n=380$, $p<.01$), and between diffuse/avoidant and agreeableness was small and positive ($r= .14$, $n=380$, $p<.01$). This is opposed to the results obtained byDuriez and Soenens (2006) and Duriez et al. (2004). It can be inferred that, agreeable people may make such decisions with more ease or they, at least, report being able to do so. The use of a diffuse/avoidant is characterized by low agreeableness and conscientiousness (Berzonsky, 1993; Berzonsky et al., 1999 and Dollinger, 1995). There was a small andpositive correlation between diffuse/avoidant and conscientiousness ($r= .11$, $n=380$, $p<.01$). This contradicts with whatDuriez and Soenens (2006) found. Additionally, a small and negative correlation was observed between diffuse/avoidant and openness to experiences($r= -.17$, $n=380$, $p<.01$) which corresponds to the results of Berzonsky and Sullivan, (1992); and Duriez et al. (2004).Beaumont and Zukanovic (2005) showed that among early, middle and older adults, diffuse individuals were found to have similar levels of life distress.

An individual with a predominantly diffuse/avoidant style typically avoids behavioral reactions until they are forced by affective cues in special situations to make decisions about them. Problem solving is impulsive, ad hoc, focused on the short term and generally postponed “until situational consequences and rewards dictate a course of action” (Berzonsky, 1989). Coping deals with emotions and is primarily aimed at reducing emotional stress immediately rather than solving the problems under emotional stress or eliminating the stress factor

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(Berzonsky, 2004a). Ultimately, behavior is often determined by hedonic cues and situational consequences. Moreover, people with a diffuse identity style engage indisorganized exploration and pay insufficient attention to long term consequences of their own choices (Jørgensen, 2009).

There was a medium and positive correlation between commitment and neuroticism observed (r= .38, n= 380, p<.01). There was a medium and positive correlation between commitment and conscientiousness (r= .40, n= 380, p<.01), also a small andpositive correlationbetween commitment and agreeableness (r= .21, n=380,p<.01). In addition there was a small and positive correlation between commitment and extraversion (r= .26, n= 380, p<.01). Commitment includes the individual's devotion to certain long term goals, values and ideals, and to a strong and stable set of beliefs. It gives the individual a feeling of purpose and continuity. Strong commitments would stabilize the individual's self-concept and identity (Jørgensen, 2009).

Between neuroticism and agreeableness there was a negative correlation (r= -.34, n=380, p<.01). Between neuroticism and conscientiousness there was a negative correlation (r= -.45, n= 380, p<.01). In addition, between neuroticism and extraversion there was medium and negative correlations (r= -.38, n= 380, p<.01). This was opposed to the results obtained by Duriez et al., (2004). There was a medium andpositive correlation between extraversion and conscientiousness observed (r= .46, n= 380, p<.01). In addition a medium andpositive correlation between extraversion and agreeableness was observed (r= .30, n= 380, p<.01). Finally, there was a small andpositive correlation between conscientiousness and agreeableness (r= .28, n= 380, p<.01).

In summary, there were correlations among almost all

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variables. It means that personality characteristics can improve adolescents' identity styles in Golestan. Since human's personality is formed during childhood, parents can take it as an opportunity to lead them into forming a more suitable personality. A proper personality makes the path for forming better identity styles in adolescents. Having a proper personality prevents adolescents from getting involved in abnormal and deviant behaviors in the future. These results were in accordance with the findings of some other studies.Dollinger et al. (1996) showed a meaningful relationship between identity formation and personality characteristics, and these were later confirmed by authors such as: (Adams et al., 1989; Asendorpf & van Aken, 2003; Berzonsky, 1990; Berzonsky, 1992; Berzonsky, 1993; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992; Bianchi, Lášticová, & Šramová, 2007; Clancy & Dollinger, 1993; Costa & McCrae, 1985; Dollinger et al., 1996; Dollinger, 1995; Duriez & Soenens, 2006; Duriez et al., 2004; Macek et al., 1999; McCrae & Costa, 1997; Moghanloo &Vafaie, 2008; Roberts et al., 2001; Soenens, Duriez, & Goossens, 2005; Sramova & Fichnova, 2008). Accordingly, it can be concluded that there is a close relationship between personality characteristics and adolescents' identity styles in Golestan, so personality characteristics can predict identity styles.

H_2: There is significant relationship between social factors and the adolescents' identity styles.

The relationship between the perceived identity styles (as measured by the ISI6 scale) and the perceived social factors (as measured by the perceived SFS scale) was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were applied to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Correlations are

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displayed in Table 2 due to the large sample size, analysis attained high power.

Table2

Correlation between Identity Styles and Social Factors

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Informational						
2.Normative	.46**					
3.Diffuse/avoidant	.07	.00				
4.Commitment	.45**	.48**	.09			
5.Family relationship	.25**	.48**	.07	.28**		
6. Level of education	.35**	.38**	.07	.37**	.35**	
7. Peer Group relationship	.34**	.50	.02	.53**	.17**	.18**

**. Correlation is significant at the.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 2, a significant, large and positive correlation (r= .53, n=380,p<.01) was found between commitment and peer group relationship. Additionally, significantly moderate and positive correlations were observed between informational and normative styles (r=.46, n= 380, p<.01), informational style and commitment (r=.45, n=380, p<.01), informational style and level of education (r=.35, n=380, p<.01), informational role and peer group relationship (r=.34, n=380, p<.01), normative style and commitment (r= .48, n= 380, p<.01), normative style and family relationship (r= .48, n= 380, p<.01), normative style and level of education (r= .38, n= 380, p<.01), as well as family relationship and level of education (r= .35, n=380,p<.01). Finally, significant but small and positive correlations were reported between informational style and

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family relationship (r= .25, n=380, p<.01), commitment and family relationship (r= .28, n=380,p<.01), commitment and level of education (r= .37, n=380,p<.01), family relationship and peer group relationship (r= .17, n=380,p<.01), as well as level of education and peer group relationship (r=.18, n=380, p<.01).

Almost all variables are correlated with each other. Family has the most important role in the formation of identity. The second most affective role is that of level of education, including schools and teachers and the third is peer group relationship.

Similar with results gained by Adams and Jones (1983), Allen (1976), La Voie (1976), Marcia (1983) and Matteson (1974) parenting style which involve feelings of warmth, closeness, security, support, acceptance, and praise would help the process of identity formation during adolescence. Some parental styles seem to be more helpful for identity development than others (Smits, 2009). Parent can have considerable influence on identity development (Berzonsky, 1990; Goossens and Phinney, 1996). Conversely, adolescents who have experienced rejection from family or those with indifferent, inactive and rejecting parents perform poorly on identity assessments (Jordan, 1970, 1971; Matteson, 1974). This latter group of adolescents also experience lack of confidence in parental supports (Marcia, 1983).

In addition, families who provide for individuality and autonomy, and who apply little parental control, also help the process of identity formation in their adolescents (Adams and Jones, 1983; Grotevant, 1983; Grotevant and Cooper, 1985; Marcia, 1983). Adolescents, who are allowed by their parents to practice individuality and autonomy within the family, would have more opportunity to explore identity alternatives, so that they can achieve identity consolidation (Marcia, 1983; Matteson, 1974; Orlofsky et al., 1973). Individuals need to

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explore and try different social roles, beliefs, and other choices available to them, so that they can decide upon and integrate these identity options into their own identity. Adolescents find out their interests, skills and abilities and their unique personal characteristics by exploring and experimenting with identity options (Kamptner, 1988).

Adolescents who experience both feelings of connectedness and individuality may have more opportunities for exploring identity alternatives. Adolescents who have experienced the feeling of connectedness would benefit from security and self-esteem that is needed in order to be able to take risks and explore identity alternatives (Grotevant, 1983; Marcia, 1983). Marcia (1983) states that adolescents would have difficulty in achieving a real identity if they lack support, security, and encouragement for meaningful exploration and experimentation. A similar point is made by Smith and Smith (1976), who propose that feeling of connectedness in early years of life, would facilitate the separation-individuation process during adolescence, which, according to Josselson (1980), is a basis for the development of autonomy in adolescents. As discussed above, autonomy or individuality is an important, if not necessary, component of the identity formation process. An adolescent who experience individuality in the family relationships, is able to develop a unique self (Grotevant, 1983). When parents consider their adolescents' need for autonomy, they would give the adolescents more freedom to explore identity alternatives by allowing them to be exposed to different models and options (Hartup, 1979). Conversely, families who do not consider their adolescents' need for autonomy may hinder their ability to explore identity options.

Diffuse/ avoidant is the result of negative parenting styles, achievement is associated with positive parenting styles, and

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foreclosure results from both positive parenting styles and a family climate of enmeshment that hinders the separation individuation process (Smits, 2009).

As conclusion, there were significant, large and positive correlations between almost all variables. It means that social factors can be improving adolescents' identity styles in Golestan. Family relationship, level of education and peer group relationship has great influence on identity styles. Families apply such effect by proper parenting styles, giving correct and logical answers to their children's questions and establishing a good parent-child relationship. Schools do this through having a suitable educational environment, good educational content and professional teachers and peer groups apply this effect by interacting with good friends. Therefore, the more these social factors are coordinated in terms of their ideas, values and behavioral patterns, the more desirable identity would be formed in adolescents. The result of this hypothesis was in consistence with the finding of several previous studies such as: Aghamohammdian and Shekhrohani (2003) showed social factors have the most crucial effect on individual identity and how it forms and these were later confirmed by authors (Adams et al., 2006; Allison & Furstenberg, 1989; Bartle-Haring, 1997; Bartle, Anderson, &Sabatelli, 1989; Berzonsky, 2003; Berzonsky, 2004b; Campbell et al., 1984; Doran, 2003; Grotevant, 1987; Grotevant& Cooper, 1985; Grotevant& Cooper, 1986; Hajikhayat, 2003; Kamptner, 1988; Kerpelman et al., 1997;Kerpelman, 1988; Kroger, 1997; Lotfabadi, 2007; Marcia, 1980; Markstrom- Adams, 1992; Markstrom-Adams, 1992; Matos et al., 1999; Neli-e-Ahmmadabadi, 2003; Schultheiss&Blustein, 1994; Sigelman, 1999; Smits et al., 2008; Soenens et al., 2011; Sramova, 2006; Waterman, 1992).

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Discussion

This study, being the first of its kind to field-test this subject, aimed at therelationship between personality characteristics, social factors, and identity styles in adolescents. This study also made some contributions to theoretical and conceptual understandings of identity styles, personality characteristics and social factorsamong adolescents.

The utility of the concept of personality characteristics and social factors variables in looking at identity development in adolescence has been reasonably well established. Findings of this study provide support for the existing conceptualizations about identity styles, personality characteristics and social factors.

Simultaneous with writing the article, other studies were exploring the construct of personality; other studies had conceptualized identity styles and personality characteristics by focusing on one particular area for instance: identity styles and their relationship with mental health, social health (Jomenia 2009), relationship mental health, socioeconomic status and identity (Ghorbani, Mohammadiayra, & Kochaki, 2005), relationship between social health, economical-social and identity styles (Jabbari & Ghorbani, 2007), Identity style, parental authority, and identity commitment (Berzonsky, 2004b), examine the extent to which three dimensions of perceived parenting style, parental identification and interaction between parenting and identification accounted for variation in the identity processing styles (Soenens et al., 2011), parental attachment and identity in Portuguese late adolescents (Matos et al., 1999). Parent-adolescent relation, identity and emotional adjustment in adolescence (Meeus et al., 1999), identity-processing style, psychosocial resources, and adolescents' perceptions of parent-adolescent relations (Berzonsky, Branje,

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& Meeus, 2007), identity development in late adolescence: Causal modeling of social and familial influences (Kamptner, 1988). Identity formation and parent-child value congruence in adolescence (Knafo& Schwartz, 2004). Perceived parenting dimensions and identity styles: Exploring the socialization of adolescents processing of identity-relevant information (Smits et al., 2008). Identity styles in adolescence: Measurement and associations with perceived parenting, personal well-being, and interpersonal functioning (Smits, 2009). Identity as a moderator of intervention-related change: Identity style and adolescents' responses to relationships education (Kerpelman et al., 2008). Familial correlates of identity formation in late adolescence: A study of the predictive utility of connectedness and individuality in family relations (Campbell et al., 1984). Psychosocial resources in first-year university students: The role of identity processes and social relationships (Adams et al., 2006), patterns of interaction in family relationships and the development of identity exploration in adolescence (Grotevant& Cooper, 1985). Gender and identity: The intersection of structure, content, and context (Kroger, 1997).

No previous study was found to collectively focus on personality characteristics, social factors and identity styles. Findings of this study provided support for the existing conceptualizations of personality characteristics, social factors and identity styles.

Implications of the Study (Theory and Practice)

This study has identified several significant contributing factors such as personality characteristics, social factors that relate to the development of identity styles of adolescents. Hopefully, the results of the present study would enrich the body

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of literature on social psychology, psychology and sociology theories. Since identity style is the key factor in social psychology, psychology and sociology, thus, highlighting this concept could contribute to the literature. The research has important implications for future study on identity styles, both at theoretical and practical levels. The finding showed there isa significant relationship between the adolescents' personality characteristics and their identity styles, the results showed that most variables correlated with each other. The relationship between personality characteristics and identity styles as mentioned in further research was confirmed. Identity styles can be predicted using the relationships found in this study.

In addition, there isa significant relationship between social factors and the adolescents' identity styles. The results showed that there were correlations among most variables of this study.

Social factors including family relationship, level of education and peer group relationship greatly affected the identity styles; as it has always been the fact and many scholars agree upon, family relationship has an enormous role on identity style. Family relationship, thefundamental social unit of society, can be expected to exert influential impacts on the development of social behaviors such as adolescents' identity styles (Rouholamini, 2002).Family, friends, teachers and all of the people who interact with adolescents can affect the formation of their identity(Aghamohammdian & Shekhrohani, 2003; Doran, 2003; Hajikhayat, 2003; Neli-e-Ahmmadabadi, 2003). Parents and teachers should encourage adolescents to look for information and use it only after evaluating it. The foundation of a person's personality is formed in his/her family. Therefore, family is the first factor to train children and form their personality and identity. Lack of coordination between social institutions especially family, school, and university can cause

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diffusion in the adolescent and lead to Anomic condition, as Durkheim points out. Adolescents with a diffuse identity should be able to improve their self-esteem and self-efficacy by participating in social groups. They should be able to develop assertiveness to manage peer pressure and to make right choices in finding friends. They should be helped to develop life skills and increase their abilities. Parents should be helped in their roles to support their children with diffuse identity and be informed on this situation.Parents also should be taught about adolescent's development.

One of the most important problems students face in their process of identity formation is to receive proper information and analyze them correctly in order to solve their problems. Individuals can use social cognitive processes for resolving their identity and experience a better process of identity formation. Therefore, adolescents should be encouraged to search for information and to evaluate the information before using them. Learning life skills helps adolescents to better solve identity formation problems.

The findings of this investigation can assist government in the design and implementation of identity development in adolescents. It is expected that the findings of this study could be utilized by the government system for their future follow-up studies and reassessment of identity styles for identity development.

Recommendations for Future Research

Findings of this study could be used as guidelines to develop measuring scales for identity styles in other areas of concern. As an example, regarding the great impact of mass media on identity formation, further research can focus on the effect of mass media on different dimensions (e.g., national and religious)

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of identity. Also, the experience of studying at university and its effects on identity formation is worth investigation. Moreover, further studies can examine whether proper sociocultural environment (e.g., mass media, internet, educational textbooks) can play any role in improving adolescents' identity.

Future research is also needed to explore identity styles using other approaches and theories. This research focused on high school graduates and pre-university students aged 17 and 18 years old. Future research can be conducted on different educational grades and ages and on other samples. Future research can compare the role of mothers and fathers separately in adolescents' identity formation. Finally, it remains for future research to determine the factors that moderate identity styles in different` cultural contexts.

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