

Original Article: Relationship between Primary Maladaptive Schema with Identity Crisis of High School Juniors and Seniors, Sirjan, Iran

Rahim Garoosi¹, Farzaneh Shiralinejad², Azam Hamedi³, Hamideh Ahmadi⁴

¹Master student of Clinical Psychology, Sirjan University of Research Sciences, Sirjan, Iran

²Department of Psychology, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

³Master of student Clinical Psychology, Expert of Mental Health at Sirjan University of Medical Sciences, Sirjan, Iran

⁴Master of general psychology Azad university of Zarand, Iran



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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and crises in students who are studying the third and fourth-grade high school students in Sirjan. This study is a kind of correlational study. The statistical population covers all third and fourth-grade high school students in Sirjan. Cluster random sampling was used to select 150 students (80 girls and 70 boys). The short form of Young's Schema Questionnaire (SQ-SF) and personal identity questionnaire were used for measurement. Pearson correlation coefficient and multivariate analysis of variance were utilized to analyze the data. The results indicated that there is a positive correlation between the identity crisis and initial maladaptive schemas ($r = 0.45$, $p = 0.001$). Identity crisis causes a major disorder to adolescents' personal adaptability, social relationships, academic and career advancement.

Introduction

Both adolescents and parents have considered adolescence more difficult compared with childhood. Aristotle declared in 300 years BC that adolescents are passionate and enthusiastic and ready to be dominated by instincts [1-3]. Adolescence continues about 8 years and covers not only the changes related to pubertal periods in the body but also the growth and

development of mental talents, desires, trends, personal relationships, emotional growth, employment, and educational relationships and abilities, and religious and ethical growth and development [4-6]. Obtaining identity is one of the characters of personal and social growth during adolescence and it can be stated that finding a practical answer to the question Who am I? is one of the main tasks of adolescents in society. But adolescent has the most significant growth task to obtain an independent identity and adapt

*Corresponding Author: Rahim Garoosi (Email: Rahim.garoosi@gmail.com)

him/herself for starting adulthood. Presently, suppose he/she cannot obtain the identity properly in this period. In that case, the adolescent will be misled about the role and will encounter problems such as low self-esteem, low independence, difficulty in decision making, feeling lonely and empty, helplessness, failure, etc. [7-9]. Identity has been acquired from the Latin word (*iden*), indicating the same and includes his/her continuous individuality and compliance and uniformity over time and following different conditions [10]. According to Marcia (1980), the internal organization's identity is spontaneous and dynamic, which results from the individual's drive, abilities, beliefs, and past experiences. Identity is the distinction and difference that a person makes between him/herself and others; identity is a psychological structure [11].

Identity crisis is recognized as a conflict of adolescent social role in a process that he/she can perceive and express. Identity crisis has no sense of personal similarity and time association when it causes an inability to perform the role that the person considers society expects of him/her to perform [12-15]. Many adolescents experience feelings of absurdity, alienation, loneliness when they encounter an identity crisis. Stopping education or the inability to choose a job is frequently a sign of an identity crisis or confusion concerning social roles. Some psychologists believe, whenever one has insecurities and doubts in finding him/herself, he/she encounters a crisis, confusion, aimlessness, and a kind of hopelessness and depression, and at the same time, he/she suffers from a negative self-image, which is recognized as an identity crisis. The power concerning forming the identity also depends on cognitive development because the person is labeled, and others recognize him/her by that label. Identity crisis generates 4 types of problems, which are:

- 1- The time and carelessness disorder in affairs that the adolescent assumes that time has no importance, and he/she has too much time for anything;
- 2- Great feeling towards him/herself that the adolescent's mind is always involved with physical, occupational, or role features;
- 3- Forming a negative identity that the adolescent ridicules of family, social, educational values, and everything is presented to him/her by such channels in

the form of biological and educational instructions;

4- Problems that drive social perception to stagnation and pause Various studies have recognized that identity and its crisis is related to mental health and personality, individuals' behavior, beliefs, and attitudes, income, age and gender, communication skills and migration, religion and social support, emotional abuse and damaging experiences, and schema [12-14].

Adler (1929) used early maladaptive schemas for the first time. He believed that psychopathology reflected unhealthy and neurosis schemas, which are considered a base of lifestyle. Schemas are ordinarily defined as structures, templates, or frameworks [15-17]. The schema represents the distinctive features of an event in an abstract form, in other words; the outline of the prominent elements of an event is described Schema. Early maladaptive schemas are self-damaging emotional and cognitive patterns that have been formed at the beginning of development in mind and are repeated during life. Schemas are created because of non-satisfying the fundamental emotional needs, which include:

- 1- Secure attachment to others;
- 2- Self-rule, adequacy, and identity;
- 3- Freedom in expressing healthy needs and emotions
- 4- Spontaneity and fun
- 5- Realistic limitations and self-control. Consequently, schemas can be consistent or inconsistent/maladaptive, positive or negative, and can also be established in the early periods of life or next course

Early maladaptive schemas include

- 1- cracking - instability
- 2- emotional deprivation
- 3- distrust - to be hurt
- 4- inability- shame
- 5- social isolation - alienation
- 6- dependence - inadequacy
- 7- vulnerability to injury or illness
- 8- Confusion- undeveloped
- 9- failure
- 10- deserving - nobility
- 11- inadequate self-discipline
- 12- sacrifice

- 13- self-sacrifice
- 14- seeking to be confirmed and accepted
- 15- Optimism- pessimism
- 16- emotional inhibition
- 17- unfair standards - extreme reproach
- 18- punishment. Horowitz (1997) used the personal schemas instead of early maladaptive schemas and considered it as an unconscious pattern of person's perspective about oneself and others formed from the remaining memories of childhood experiences.

It is possible to say, according to the stages of Erikson's psychosocial growth, that the successful solution of each stage starts a consistent schema, while failure in that stage creates a maladaptive schema [18-20]. Some authors also believe that there is also a consistent schema for each early maladaptive schema. Bad behavior in childhood causes a cognitive vulnerability in adolescence and dysfunctional schemas [21-24]. Studies show early maladaptive schemas are significantly related with many disorders such as personality disorders, eating disorders, and perfectionism [5] depression and anxiety repetitive thoughts, emotional disorder, and suicide psychosis and mental illness social isolation and trust, abnormal dimensions of personality and bipolar disorder, drug use, alcoholism disorder and eating disorder [25].

As mentioned, maladaptive schemas that are provided during life greatly affect the whole life and cause many disorders. Also, one of the problems of adolescence is to create an independent and efficient identity. All injuries related to childhood, interpersonal relationships, etc., can affect identity formation. No research has been conducted to investigate the relationship between the identity crisis and maladaptive schemas due to the degree of identity and maladaptive schemas, and there is a research gap in this field. Conducting such research can be a starting point to reduce maladaptive schemas that result in the identity crisis and vice versa [26].

Research Methodology

This study is descriptive research, and the method applied in the study is correlational. The research population included all boys and girls who are studying in high school in Sirjan. The research sample comprised 150 people (75 girls and 75

boys), and a multi-stage sampling method was used to choose them among high school students.

Instruments

Ahmadvand Identity Crisis Questionnaire: This questionnaire covers 30 items. Various diagnostic dimensions of the crisis have been categorized to organize this questionnaire as follows:

- 1- Problems in long-term objectives.
- 2- Doubt in choosing a job
- 3- No proper model for friendship
- 4- Improper sexual behavior
- 5- difficulties and problems in religious cognition and knowledge
- 6- No attention to ethical values
- 7- Non-observing group commitment
- 8- Having a negative view of yourself
- 9- No effort and initiative spirit
- 10- Disruption of timing. In the research conducted by Bouali Dad and Kamani (2001), the calculated Cronbach's alpha was 0 equal to a coefficient of 89%. Furthermore, this questionnaire's credit coefficient was 95% in the method of halving, which indicated a very satisfactory credit coefficient.

Young's Schema Questionnaire (SQ-SF): This questionnaire was created to assess EMS for a shorter time. SQ-SF holds 75 items from the main version containing 205 items. The first comprehensive research was conducted on the psychometric features of the Young's Schema Questionnaire by Smith, Jones, Young, and Telch (1995), and the results showed that it was reported for each initial maladaptive schema from 83% to 96%. Also, the test-retest coefficient in the non-clinical population was achieved between 50% to 82%. Abbasian and Fathizadeh (2003) translated and standardized this questionnaire, and about 94% of internal consistency was reported for it. Moreover, this questionnaire's convergent validity with the unreasonable belief's questionnaire was reported by 36%, and 12 specific experts confirmed its face validity. Furthermore, Ahi (2005) conducted the norm of this questionnaire in Iran on 387 students of Tehran universities, including 252 females and 135 males. They were randomly selected using a multi-stages method from Allameh Tabatabai University, Azad University, and Science and research. This questionnaire's internal

consistency was obtained by 97% using Cronbach's alpha for females and 98% for males.

Data analysis

In this study, the Pearson correlation method was used in order to analyze the data and investigate the

relationship between identity crisis and the dimensions of maladaptive schemas, and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine the differences between these variables in girls and boys.

Table 1. indicates the mean, standard deviation, age, identity crisis, and female and male students' maladaptive schemas.

Group	Variable	age	Identity crisis	Maladaptive schemas
Girls	Mean	17/14	22/03	1/12
	Standard deviation	0/73	1/79	4/98
	Number	78		
Boys	Mean	17/54	17/38	1/04
	Standard deviation	0/6	1/32	4/81
	Number	68		

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Table 2 indicates the correlation between identity crisis and maladaptive schemas and the

dimensions of maladaptive schemas in the considered sample.

Table 2. Correlation between identity crisis and maladaptive schemas and dimensions of maladaptive schemas

Maladaptive schemas	Identity crisis	Significant level
Social isolation	0/45	0/001
Emotional deprivation	0/21	0/008
Abandonment	0/31	0/001
Distrust	0/48	0/001
Defect	0/43	0/001
Failure	0/36	0/001
Dependence	0/28	0/001
Vulnerability	0/30	0/001
Undeveloped Self	0/38	0/001
Obedience	0/44	0/001
Sacrifice	0/11	0/17
Inhibition	0/35	0/001
Strict criteria	-0/02	0/8
Merit	0/23	/004
Self-control	0/33	0/001

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Table 2 shows that there is a positive correlation between identity crisis and early maladaptive schemas ($r = 0.45$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that maladaptive schemas are increased by increasing the identity crisis and vice versa. There is also a significant positive relationship between identity crisis and emotional deprivation, abandonment, distrust, defect, failure, dependence, vulnerability,

confusion, obedience, inhibition, merit, and self-control at the mentioned levels. This means that the mentioned variables are also changed in the same direction by increasing and decreasing the identity crisis, and vice versa. But no significant relationship was observed between identity crisis and self-sacrifice ($P = 0.8$).

Table 3. Results from multivariate analysis of variance on the mean scores of the two groups in research variables

Test name	Value	Df Theory	Df Error	F	sig
Pillai's effect/trace	0/026	4	288	0/93	0/44
Wilks' Lambda	0/97	4	286	0/93	0/44
Hotelling's trace	0/02	4	284	0/93	0/44
Roy's Largest Root	0/02	2	144	1/89	0/15

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As the test results show, there is no significant difference between the two groups in terms of research variables. ($P > 0.05$).

Table 4. Results of one-way analysis of variance in Manova text on the scores of identity crisis and maladaptive schemas of female and male students

Variable	Sum of squares	Freedom degree	Mean of squares	F	Sig
maladaptive schemas	2110/55	2	1055/27	0/43	0/64
identity crisis	958/81	2	479/4	1/89	0/15

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According to the mentioned significant levels ($P > 0.05$), no significant difference was observed between male and female students regarding identity crisis and maladaptive schemas.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results, there is a significant positive relationship between early maladaptive schemas and identity crisis. This result is similar to that of Poursharifi *et al.* (2011); Ryan *et al.* (2016); and Raphael *et al.*, (2019). The identity crisis is one of the most significant crises during the life that happens in adolescence and creates major disorders in adolescents' personal adaptability, social relationships, academic progress, and occupational planning. Individuals with identity crises have no clear future and objective, and they can be somehow considered confused persons who have no plan and goal; therefore, it can be stated that individuals with identity crises experience problems in terms of cognitive, psychological, occupational, and religious aspects that can influence their behavior and future.

We can explain these findings by stating that since the early maladaptive schemas are rooted in early life and different educational styles, not realizing emotional needs cause them. The original environment is an effective factor in shaping and dominating an individual's cognitive thoughts. Normally, these schemas are created in families that

are separated, cold, rejecting, isolated, explosive, offensive, and abandoning, and individuals with these schemas consider society, and others in the environment, as individuals with such features (Like their parents) and consequently, the importance of training methods and attitudes and behaviors of parents with their children becomes obvious again. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the effects of instructional methods (especially childhood) and contradictory relationships and rejections can be observed not only in childhood, but their results can be observed in adolescence, youth, and even adulthood [27].

Considering that one of the effective factors in shaping an identity crisis is an individual's cognitive styles and especially early maladaptive schemas, these schemas affect other aspects of life such as personality disorders, cognitive problems, and many disorders in addition to an identity crisis [28].

Moreover, it can be said that according to the features and signs of an identity crisis as well as various maladaptive schemas and also according to the obtained scales, the most important sub-factors from maladaptive schemas that can play a role in developing an identity crisis from early include:

- 1- Defects and shame: Individuals with this type of schema believe that they are imperfect, unacceptable, bad, humble, and worthless people in the most important aspects of their personality and

- 2- distrust and misconduct: These individuals assume that others hit them, misbehave, humiliate, and lie; these beliefs and opinions can create problems in adolescent interpersonal and friendly relationships, and instead of interacting and communicating with peers and friends, these individuals treat them conservatively and dubiously, which in turn causes them to distance from these individuals, and consequently, loneliness. The results of this research are in agreement with this opinion are the findings of Ogbu (1987), Oyserman, Bybee and Terry (2003), and Steele (1997), who stated that there is a positive relationship between the quality of interaction and relationship with others and identity. Kellstedt, Smid (1991), and Duriez (2003) also showed that conservativeness and mistrust influence adolescents' identity types.
- 3- Failure: These individuals believe that they have failed and will also fail in the future. This schema can make aimlessness and lack of motivation in adolescents because he/she has no trust in him/herself that he/she can seek a purpose and achieve it because he/she believes he/she will fail. The research conducted by Saroglou (2002) and Duriez (2003) explained that cognitive and belief variables such as closed-minded opinions, low motivation, and intolerance of failure are connected with an identity crisis. Also, and Ames (1992); Dweck and Legget (1988); Elliot, 1999; Nicholls, 1984; Urdan, 1977 and Uthman, 1997 stated that there is a significant relationship between realizing the objective and characteristics such as self-confidence, employing learning strategies, self-regulation, ability to cope with difficulty and failure, and generally positive feelings.
- 4- Social isolation/alienation: A feeling in which a person believes that he or she has eliminated the world and is different from others and does not belong to a special group or society that this type of schema can form the signs of identity crisis such as alienation from society, loneliness, which the results of Flanagan (2003); Pancer (2007), and Schmidt (2007) also revealed that there is a significant and positive relationship between the degree of social responsibility

(sense of duty to others) and civic responsibility (the belief that a person can be effective for society) as well as the belief that a person achieves a position for him/herself in society and the formation of individuals' personal identity.

Thus, in general, it can be said that the role and significance of family efficiency and the relationship between parents and child is obvious in all aspects of life and, as pronounced, their development can be continued during childhood and the profound influence of these schemas on creating an identity crisis can be considered the root of the formation of this crisis in early childhood relationships based on the formation of cognitive schemas. Kamkninz *et al.* (2001) conducted research that is consistent with this statement and mentioned that the foundation of adolescent problems in interpersonal communication and family pathology. Therefore, it is likely to prevent the development of early maladaptive schemas and identity crisis in adolescence and following problems by constructing a sense of self-esteem, self-efficacy, sense of attachment and belonging, emotional attachment, and realism in your child considering the principle of primary prevention, which is the most important principle of health psychology [30-32].

This research faced some limitations such as the limited sample to a group of high school students in Sirjan, which should be conducted in regular repetitions in different cities and other age groups with other assessment tools and compare the findings.

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