

# Investigating the Role of Identity Styles in Predicting Responsibility and Academic Self-regulation of Third Grade Male High School Students in Zahedan

By

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## Abstract

*The present study examined the role of identity styles in predicting responsibility and academic self-regulation among third grade male high school students in Zahedan, districts 1 and 2. The research method was descriptive-correlational. The population of the study included all third grade male high school students in Zahedan, districts 1 and 2, in the academic year of 2013-2014. Samples (N=319) were selected using stratified sampling. To determine the sample size, Cochran's formula was used. To collect data, Berzonsky's Identity Styles Inventory (ISI-6G), Kordlou's (2010) Students' Responsibility Assessment Questionnaire and Connell and Ryan's (1987) Academic Self-regulation Questionnaire were used. The validity of the questionnaires was checked in terms of their content and their reliability was estimated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which for the above three questionnaires was 0.81, 0.82 and 0.79, respectively. Data analysis was performed with SPSS software program, using the Pearson correlation test and stepwise regression. Results indicated that there was no relationship between avoidant/diffuse orientation and students' academic self-regulation. However, there was a positive significant relationship between information orientation, normative orientation and avoidant commitment and academic self-regulation. Results showed that regarding the priorities of predictor variables of self-regulation among high school students, in the first step, information orientation had the highest predictive power, in the second step, commitment entered into the prediction model and in the third step, the normative orientation entered into the prediction model. Results also indicated that there was no correlation between avoidant/diffuse orientation and students' responsibility. However, there was a positive significant relationship between information orientation, normative orientation and avoidant commitment and responsibility. Results showed that regarding the predictor variables of responsibility among high school students, in the first step, information orientation had the highest predictive power. In the second step, normative orientation entered into the prediction model and in the third step, commitment entered into the prediction model.*

**Keywords:** Identity Styles, Responsibility, Self-Regulation

## 1. Introduction

Basically, to regulate and gain a control of life, people need to grow a fixed meaningful structure of identity helping them maintain a sense of continuity in all times and situations and provide a framework for decision making, problem solving, and interpreting experiences and information of self (Berzonsky et al, 2011). Achieving commitment based on discovery and awareness is important for identity development and mental health. A well-formed, coherent identity structure creates a sense of meaningfulness and orientation in individuals that will ultimately help them with decision-making, problem-solving, and effectively coping with the requirements of everyday life and adapting to new environments (Berzonsky and Cook, 2005) (Norouzi, 2011, as cited in Berzonsky and Cook, 2005).

Ericsson believes that personal identity formation in adolescence occurs over time based on experiences resulted from correct social exposures and that adolescents should be able to recognize the self and separate it from the others to ensure a mental balance. However, when adolescents confront frustration and distrust and instead of communicating with people and choosing mobility tend to isolation and inaction and instead of self-awareness and identity formation, they encounter with role ambiguity, they

will lose behavioral coordination and balance and will face abnormalities and identity crisis (Aghajani, Farzad, Shahrarai, 2008, as cited in Schultz, 2000).

Identity is unique to human beings. This uniqueness is followed by a deep feeling of responsibility on the basis of what we are going to develop our existence.

Responsibility refers to commitment and responsibility is an individual feels towards his/her own (beliefs, values, family job obligations), others and the community (Tabatabai et al, 2011). According to Gauff's theory (1968), conscientiousness, responsibility, trustworthiness, acting according to rules and regulations, and believing the fact that logic and reason should dominate life are all among individuals' relatively stable interpersonal and intrapersonal personality traits. Gauff believes that although responsibility is partly correlated with reserve and socialization, values and controls which are the specific important factors in individuals' lives should be emphasized (Tabatabai and et al, 2008 as cited in Marnatte, In Pasha Sharifi, 1999).

Students, who have learned responsibility at school, learn how to think to help each other and to solve or at least confront with problems in a more serious situation. The education system should link students to each other to teach them how to think and solve problems as socially responsible individuals (Glaser, 2005).

On one hand, academic self-regulation is one of the interesting discussions favored by many educators and psychologists so that in recent years experts such as Boukartz, Pintriche and Zayender (2000) and Zimmerman and Shank (2001) have extensively used this concept in the context of learning (such as assessing performance) and other forms of learning (cognitive, motor and social skills). In this regard, Pintriche and Degroot (1990) believe that self-regulated learning addresses cognition, and behavior regulation and is considered as one the most important components of students' learning and academic performance. In self-regulated learning, students possess skills of designing, controlling and directing their own learning. Besides having the willingness to learn, they are able to evaluate the whole learning process (Soleimani Nejad, Shahrarai, 2001, as cited in Zimmerman Martinez -Pones, 1986). On the other hand, self-regulated learning theories consider how individual students activate, change or maintain their own learning process. Therefore, self-regulated learning explains students' attempts to independently manage and optimize their own learning experience in the classroom (Khademi & Noshadi, 2006).

Since adolescence is the crucial period of identity formation, given the importance of responsibility and academic self-regulation in adolescence and regarding the fact that students are the biggest human capital in each society such that they form more than half of the population in developing countries, especially in our beloved country, therefore, the correct understanding this enormous class of individuals' educational shortcomings and trying to solve its problems are of great importance. Students who are currently studying in educational centers are potential administrators. They can combine youth, knowledge and skills to mobilize the wheels of progress and development. Globally a large proportion of annual national income is spent on education, but much of that cost is wasted. Students' responsibility and self-regulated learning are regarded by teachers and parents of those students, therefore, the present research study aims to investigate the predictive power of identity styles on responsibility and academic self-regulation variables of third grade male high school students in Zahedan.

## **2. Research Background**

Saadati Shamir (2004), in a research study entitled "Investigating the Relationship of Berzonsky's Identity Styles with General Health and Responsibility", indicated a positive significant correlation between identity styles and general health. Subjects with information styles among other styles had the highest level of general health and responsibility; however, subjects with diffuse/ avoidant identity style had the lowest level of general health and responsibility.

Tabatabai (2007), in his M.A. thesis entitled "The Relationship of Identity Styles and Responsibility in 15 to 18 Years-Old Adolescents' Academic Achievements", concluded that there was a significant relationship between identity styles and responsibility with high school learners' academic achievement and the relationship between identity styles and responsibility with academic achievement was a function of gender.

Abdi Zarrin (2010) investigated the relationship between identity styles and female students' psychological well-being and concluded that there was a positive significant relationship between information and normative identity style with psychological well-being and commitment ( $p < 0.01$ ), and there was a negative significant relationship between avoidant/diffuse identity styles and psychological well-being and identity commitment ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Barghi Moghaddam et al. (2009) examined the relationship of identity styles with motivating factors and the feeling of success among elite young boys in football and karate. They found that the two groups were significantly different in normative and avoidant/diffuse identity styles as well as non-motivating factors and external control. They also found positive and negative significant relationships between identity styles and motivating factors and the feeling of success.

Hejazi (2009) investigated the relationship between identity styles and academic self-efficacy through identity commitment and found that identity processing styles indirectly affected academic self-efficacy through identity commitment. Additionally, identity processing styles had a direct significant effect on commitment and identity commitment had a direct significant effect on academic self-efficacy.

Getzel et al. (1985) investigated the relationship between identity development and strength of interpersonal relations and indicated a direct relationship between identity development and strength of interpersonal relations. Men who have undeveloped identity may remain single in their life.

Berzonsky and Cook (2005) indicated that students with information style compared to students with normative and diffuse identity styles reported higher scores on measures of academic autonomy, self-efficacy, effective life management skills, respect and tolerance of different people, establishing intimate relationships, emotional independence and self-confidence. Also students with diffuse identity style compared to students with information and normative identity styles showed higher scores on measures of academic goals, realism, long-term plans for life, stable goals and relations with peers. In addition, the results showed that students with information identity compared to students with diffuse style reported higher scores in lifestyle.

### **3. Methods**

Given that the present study aimed to investigate the role of identity styles in predicting responsibility and academic self-regulation among third grade male high school students in Zahedan, districts 1 and 2, students' views and attitudes were assessed. Therefore, the research was conducted in the form of a survey. Regarding its purpose, it is a practical study and considering its methodology, it is descriptive-correlational study. The population of the study included all third grade male high school students in Zahedan, districts 1 and 2, in the academic year of 2013-2014.

Zahedan has two educational districts containing 232 highland conservatory schools with 1,869 male third graders. Subjects of this study consisted of third grade male high school students in Zahedan in the academic year of 2013-2014. Samples ( $N=319$ ) were selected using stratified sampling. To determine the sample size, Cochran's formula was used. To collect data Berzonsky's Identity Styles Inventory (ISI-6G), Kordlou's (2010) Students' Responsibility Assessment Questionnaire and Connell and Ryan's (1987) Academic Self-regulation Questionnaire were used.

**Berzonsky's Identity Styles Inventory (ISI-6G)**

Identity style inventory was developed by Berzonsky to assess individuals' identity orientation in 1989 and was reviewed in 1992. This scale is a self-report tool which has 4 sub-scales, three of which include identity styles and the fourth subscale is related to commitment. Students-specific form (ISI-6G) which is standardized on sixth grade high school students and is very similar to the original questionnaire is implemented and standardized in Iran by Ghazanfari (2004) on a sample of 1832 high school students (968 females and 864 males). Test results indicate a desirable reliability. The following table presents information concerning the reliability of the test and its subscales.

Scale	Ghazanfari (1383)	Researcher
Total questionnaire	0.73	0.81
Information identity style	0.67	0.70
Normative identity style	0.52	0.82
Avoidant/diffuse identity style	0.62	0.80
Commitment	0.57	0.85

**Students' Responsibility Assessment Questionnaire (Kurdou, 2010)**

This questionnaire contains five subscales. In the first subscale, students' activities inside and outside of the school are asked. In this subscale, a score is allocated to each item and the sum of scores given to all items represents student's activities. The second subscale examines students' responsibilities at home. The third subscale, questions subjects' absence and delays. The fourth and fifth subscales assess responsibility, sense of security, self-esteem and dependency.

After modifying necessary changes in the questionnaire, it was implemented on a sample of 104 subjects who were selected through cluster random sampling. Information obtained from 104 questionnaire forms were statistically analyzed using SPSS software and Cronbach's alpha coefficient. For the third time, the questionnaire was completed by 482 students in Tehran. Results indicated that the test has a high reliability ( $r=0.90$ ). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was estimated to be 0.82.

**Connell and Ryan's Academic Self-regulation Questionnaire (1987)**

The academic self-regulation questionnaire was developed by Connell and Ryan in 1987 to assess children's self-regulation. The questionnaire addresses why children and adolescents do not do their homework. This scale is designed for middle school and high school students. Thus, it is completely different from adults' self-regulation questionnaire. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was estimated 0.79.

In this study, data analysis was performed using SPSS software program with the Pearson correlation test and stepwise regression.

**Data Analysis**

Question 1: Can academic self-regulation of high school students be predicted based on identity styles? To assess predictor variables of academic self-regulation, stepwise regression was used. The results are presented in the following table:

**Summary of the regression model of identity styles to predict students' academic self-regulation**

step	Variable	R	R 2	F	$\beta$	t	sig
1	information Orientation	0.35	0.12	12.40**	0.347	3.50**	0.000
2	information Orientation + Commitment	0.44	0.18	12.40** 8.10	0.34 0.27	3.61** 2.88**	0.000
3	information Orientation + Commitment + Normative orientation	0.51	0.24	12.40** 8.10 7.50	0.43 0.25 0.26	4.38** 2.70** 2.70**	0.000

N=319, \* $p<0.05$ , \*\* $p<0.01$

The table indicates that regarding the priorities of predictor variables of high school students' academic self-regulation, in the first step, information orientation has the most predictive power and can alone predict 12% of changes in the students' academic self-regulation. In the second step, commitment entered into the model. These two variables together predict 18% of students' academic self-regulation. In the third step, normative orientation entered into the predictive model of academic self-regulation. These three variables together predict 24% of high school students' academic self-regulation. The standard beta coefficient indicates that information orientation has a beta coefficient value of 0.43, the variable of commitment has a value of 0.25 and the value of normative orientations is 0.26.

Question 2: Is there any significant relationship between identity styles and self-regulation among high school students?

### Results of correlation between identity styles and high school students' academic self-regulation

Variables	diffuse / avoidant Orientation	information Orientation	Normative orientation	Commitment
R	-0.06	0.35**	0.27**	0.30**
Sig	0.56	0.000	0.000	0.000

The results indicates that the correlation coefficient between avoidant/diffuse orientation and high school students' academic self-regulations  $r=-0.06$  which is not statistical at 95% confidence level ( $P>0.05$ ). Therefore, statistically the relationship between avoidant/diffuse orientation and academic self-regulation is negative, but not significant.

The table also shows that the correlation coefficient between information orientation and high school students' self-regulation is  $r=0.35$  which is significant at 99% confidence level ( $P<0.01$ ). Therefore, there is a statistically positive significant relationship between information orientation and students' academic self-regulation.

The table also demonstrates that the correlation coefficient between normative orientation and high school students' self-regulation is  $r=0.27$  which is significant at 99% confidence level ( $P<0.01$ ). Therefore, there is a statistically positive significant relationship between normative orientation and students' academic self-regulation.

The table also shows that the correlation coefficient between commitment and high school students' self-regulation is  $r=0.30$  which is significant at 99% confidence level ( $P<0.01$ ). Therefore, there is a statistically positive significant relationship between commitment and students' academic self-regulation.

Question 3: Can high school students' responsibility be predicted based on identity styles?

To examine predictor variables of high school students' responsibility, stepwise regression was used. The results are presented in the following table:

### Summary of the regression model of identity styles to predict students' responsibility

Step	Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	$\beta$	t	sig
1	information Orientation	0.52	0.26	34.50**	0.52	5.98**	0.000
2	information Orientation + Commitment	0.64	0.40	34.50** 22.20	0.43 0.27	5.35** 4.79**	0.000
3	information Orientation + Commitment + Normative orientation	0.66	0.41	34.50** 22.20 3.98	0.42 0.31 0.18	5.30** 3.65** 2.01**	0.000

N=319, \* $p<0.05$ , \*\* $p<0.01$

The table indicates that regarding the priorities of predictor variables of high school students' responsibility, in the first step, information orientation has the most predictive power, and can alone predict 26% of change in the students' responsibility. In the second step, normative orientation entered the model. These two variables together predict 40% of students' responsibility. In the third step, commitment entered into the predictive model of responsibility. These three variables together predict 42% of high school students' responsibility. The standard beta coefficient indicates that information orientation has a beta coefficient value of 0.42, and normative orientation has a value of 0.31 and the value of commitment is 0.18.

Question 4: Is there any significant relationship between identity styles and responsibility among high school students?

**Results of correlation between identity styles and high school students' responsibility**

Variables	diffuse / avoidant Orientation	information Orientation	Normative orientation	Commitment
R	-0.15	0.52**	0.38**	0.21**
Sig	0.18	0.000	0.000	0.000

The results indicates that the correlation coefficient between avoidant/diffuse orientation and high school students' responsibility is  $r=-0.15$  which is not statistical at 95% confidence level ( $P>0.05$ ). Therefore, statistically, the relationship between avoidant/diffuse orientation and responsibility is negative, but not significant.

The table also shows that the correlation coefficient between information orientation and high school students' responsibility is  $r=0.52$  which is significant at 99% confidence level ( $P<0.01$ ). Therefore, there is a statistically positive significant relationship between information orientation and students' responsibility.

The table also demonstrates that the correlation coefficient between normative orientation and high school students' responsibility is  $r=0.38$  which is significant at 99% confidence level ( $P<0.01$ ). Therefore, there is a statistically positive significant relationship between normative orientation and students' responsibility.

The table also shows that the correlation coefficient between commitment and high school students' responsibility is  $r=0.21$  which is significant at 99% confidence level ( $P<0.01$ ). Therefore, there is a statistically positive significant relationship between commitment and students' responsibility.

**4. Discussion and Conclusions**

Question 1: Can academic self-regulation of high school students be predicted based on identity styles? Regarding the priorities of predictor variables of high school students' academic self-regulation, the results showed that in the first step, information orientation had the most predictive power. In the second step, commitment entered the model. And then in the third step, normative orientation entered into the predictive model of academic self-regulation.

Question 2: Is there any significant relationship between identity styles and self-regulation among high school students?

The results demonstrated that there was a negative but not significant relationship between avoidant/diffuse orientation and academic self-regulation.

The results indicated that there was a statistically positive significant relationship between information orientation and students' academic self-regulation.

The results showed that there was a statistically positive significant relationship between normative orientation and students' academic self-regulation.

The results also indicated that there was a statistically positive significant relationship between commitment and students' academic self-regulation.

The results are consistent with Barghi Moghaddam et al (2009). They examined the relationship of identity styles with motivating factors and the feeling of success among elite young boys in football and karate. They found that the two groups are significantly different in normative and avoidant/diffuse identity styles as well as non-motivating factors and external control. They also found positive and negative significant relationships between identity styles and motivating factors and the feeling of success.

Individuals with information identity style adopt problem-oriented strategies, feel themselves integrated, often defer judgments, have high academic and occupational goals and performance expectations, and are committed to their stable objectives. Accordingly, it could be argued that these individuals tend to organize issues through selecting and applying an appropriate strategy. In other words, these individuals are able to choose an optimal strategy. They use a referential framework and as a result have greater self-regulation. To justify the other two styles, it could be argued that:

Individuals with normative identity style internalize others' values and criteria, need external organization, tend to find information which is in accordance with their values, have closed mind, attend to advices by power sources in decision-making, and automatically and without self-evaluation internalize values and beliefs.

Commitment causes the clarity of criteria, objectives, opinions and values in which people are interested and their preservation are demanded. Thus, individuals feel purposiveness and oriented. Meaningful commitment and clear criteria have effective roles in individuals' adaptability. Self-regulation is one of the important constructs in motivation issues by which students organize their learning. Self-regulation is one of the most important predictors of academic success in the learning environment.

Question 3: Can high school students' responsibility be predicted based on identity styles?

Regarding the priorities of predictor variables of high school students' responsibility, the results revealed that in the first step, information orientation had the most predictive power. In the second step, normative orientation entered the model. And then in the third step, commitment entered into the predictive model of responsibility.

Question 4: Is there any significant relationship between identity styles and responsibility among high school students?

The results indicated that there was a negative but not significant relationship between avoidant/diffuse orientation and responsibility.

The results showed that there was a statistically positive significant relationship between information orientation and students' responsibility.

The results demonstrated that there was a statistically positive significant relationship between normative orientation and students' responsibility.

The results also indicated that there was a statistically positive significant relationship between commitment and students' responsibility

The results are consistent with Saadati Shamir (2004), Tabatabai (2009) and Abdi Zarrin (2010). Conscientiousness, responsibility, trustworthiness, acting according to rules and regulations, and believing the fact that logic and reason should dominate life are all among individuals' relatively stable interpersonal and intrapersonal personality traits. Gauff believes that although responsibility is partly correlated with reserve and socialization, values and controls which are the specific important factors in individuals' lives should be emphasized.

An individual with high responsibility sacrifices his/her own needs for others. These individuals accept the consequences of their behavior and feel committed to larger social structures. They are trustworthy and are not necessarily leaders, but they are honest and adhere to their words. According to Gauff, anti-social individuals are not responsible since they constantly care about their own needs. However, individuals with jobs requiring responsible behavior as well as loyalty are responsible individuals. Gauff believes that responsible individuals are committed to social, ethical and civil values (Marnatte, In Pasha Shaifi, 1999). According to the above features, it could be argued that there is a relationship between information and normative identity style, commitment and responsibility.

Furthermore, individuals with avoidant/diffuse identity style have low self-esteem, negative self-concept and deficient self-regulation. Their assignment performance is too poor. They usually leave tasks incomplete. They are less successful in life and education and have less independence and individuality (Adams and Shea, 2001).

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