

Psycho-Social Predictors of Identity Formation in Adolescence

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The study was conducted on 600 Indian adolescents with an aim to understand the various psychosocial variables which predict high or low identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion in adolescents. Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status-2 (Bennion & Adams, 1986); Emotional Autonomy Scale (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986); Family Environment Scale-Form R (Moos & Moos, 1986); California Psychological Inventory (Gough, 1975); Terrance Test of Creative Thinking (Torrance, 1966); and Standard Progressive Matrices (Raven, 1983), were used. Discriminant analyses revealed that variables predicting higher identity achievement, higher moratorium, lower diffusion, and lower foreclosure scores were emotional autonomy, family environment characterized by cohesion, positive interpersonal relationships, encouragement for personal growth and organisation, personality patterns portraying interpersonal/intrapersonal maturity, character, achievement potential and superior intellect modes, and cognitive patterns. However, lower identity achievement, lower moratorium, and higher diffusion scores are predicted by conflict in the family and fluency of ideas on creativity tasks.

Keywords: Identity Formation, emotional autonomy, creative thinking, family environment, personality

Adolescence is a stage characterised by changes in different aspects of individual development and in different social contexts. Erikson's (1968) framework of identity formation as a major

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developmental task of adolescence has stimulated a large body of research. Erikson (1968, p. 95) defined identity as "the accrued confidence in the inner sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others". In Erikson's view, individuals construct a sense of identity as they make choices, decisions and commitments within their societal context.

Building upon Erikson's bipolar framework of identity vs. role confusion, Marcia (1966) outlined quadratic status model of identity, defined along the dimensions of exploration and commitment. Identity Achieved adolescents have made a personal commitment to various life tasks following a period of crisis or exploration. In Moratorium status, the person is currently exploring alternatives but no commitments have been made. Foreclosed adolescents have determined identity commitments without exploring the options themselves. Identity diffusion is marked by confusion, disorganization, and lack of exploration or commitment to any relevant life-tasks.

Identity serves as the conceptual framework within which adolescents interpret personal experiences and negotiate issues relevant to the meaning, purpose, and direction of their lives. Various researchers have tried to discover what drives the construction and reconstruction of identity. These viewpoints range from research on child development to the cybernetic model of control processes, and each model highlights how an individual is compelled to select a value-base that underlies meaning. Early research on child development (Dignan, 1965; Fenichel, 1953) suggests that identifications with significant persons of his/her past contribute to an individual's ego identity formation. At the time of adolescence, childhood identifications are restructured into the matrix of self-images which then gradually assimilate new social and vocational roles. During adolescence, ego resynthesizes all childhood identifications, including those with the mother, with recent libidinal changes, emergent aptitudes, and current social and occupational demands and thus a unique configuration comes up.

Psychoanalytic theory places the driving mechanism of identity formation in the form of conflict and emotional resolution (Blos, 1962), that leads to deidealization of the ego-ideal and to autonomy. Blos (1979) described adolescence as 'a second individuation process' in which the adolescents must seek new love or attachment objects outside the family. Cognitive and life-span development theorists have placed identity formation within dissonance and dialectics (e.g. Riegel, 1976). Inhelder and Piaget (1958) stress that

the changes that occur in personality and in the social arena during adolescence are a result of the development of formal structures. Berzonsky (1988) proposes that self-constructs and schemata provide the basis for interpreting self-relevant information and for guiding and directing personal choices and problem-solving. These adaptive efforts, in turn, may provide dissonant information, creating the need to accommodate aspects of the identity structure. On the other hand, sociologists (e.g. Bush & Simmons, 1981) have tended to approach identity formation as the gradual product of life long socialization processes that tend to shape the individual into cultural molds.

The control theory has proved to be a useful framework from which to examine micro processes involved in identity formation (Burke, 1991). Identity from a control theory perspective is based on a mechanistic model that suggests that the individual is an active information-based organism that includes a system for control or regulation of biological, cognitive, or psycho-mechanical processes. Control, within a cybernetic model, has been thought to provide steering, guiding, or governing functions. Kerpelman, Pittman, and Lamke (1997) view that a desirable internal standard or self-definition is governed through control processes.

Validating the previously established models, recent researches also suggest an important role of various psycho-social factors in the development of identity. Review suggests that the development of emotional autonomy vis-à-vis parents has been characterized as a process of individuation, and that as the adolescent develops a sense of oneself as a self-governing, separate individual, he moves towards identity development (Graf, 2003). However, emotional autonomy has also been confused with rebellion and described as a 'double edged sword' for psychosocial development of adolescents (Garber & Little, 2001; Frank, Pirsch, & Wright, 1990).

Contemporary researches have also revealed that patterns of family environment are different for individuals in high and low identity statuses (Bhushan, 1993; Sartor & Youniss, 2002). A family environment characterized by parental involvement in adolescents activities, opportunities for growth, and high quality of expressiveness and communication in the family facilitates healthy identity formation in adolescents. However, research shows mixed results regarding the role of independence, control, cohesion, and familial conflict in the development of identity (Kumru & Thompson, 2003; Matos, Barbosa, Almeida, & Costa, 1999; O'Connor, 1995; Willemssen & Waterman, 1991; Zimmerman & Becker-Stoll, 2002).

Also, identity formation has been found associated with various personality patterns indicative of autonomous, mature functioning of an individual (Cramer, 2000). Grotevant (1987) has also hypothesized that certain personality dimensions like self-esteem, ego resiliency and openness to experience facilitate identity exploration. Review of recent literature on identity formation suggests its strong link with well-being. Generally, there is a consensus regarding the relationship of well-being with identity achievement and diffusion. Identity achievement has been found to be associated with indices of high mental health, while diffusion has been reported to accompany lower well-being ranging from debilitating emotional states to psychopathology (Berzonsky, Macek, & Nurmi, 2003; Goldman, Masterson, Locke, & Groth, 2002; Sandhu & Tung, 2003). However, the relationship of moratorium and foreclosure statuses with well-being remains unclear.

Significant studies in the last few years also emphasize the importance of cognitive variables in identity formation. Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, and Orlofsky (1993) have demonstrated positive correlation between many formal operational skills and the degree of identity attained. Berman, Schwartz, Kurtines, and Berman (2000) have also demonstrated a relationship between identity and creativity.

Seemingly, such a large number of variables are associated with identity formation that it becomes difficult to study the concept of identity in isolation, or by ignoring any of its important correlates. Also, the relative importance of these correlates in predicting identity statuses is lesser known in Indian culture, which traditionally has encouraged connection and embeddedness, rather than autonomy, and where self has had little meaning except in relation to family (Kakar, 1978). However, recent socioeconomic changes and changing socialisation patterns are paving way towards individualism (Biswas, 1992). It has also been suggested that Indian society is in transition, searching for an identity--neither willing to abandon completely its traditions nor acquiescing unconditionally to the values of the west (Sapru, 1998). Unfortunately, very few studies have been conducted to understand the identity development of Indian adolescents. Thus, it becomes imperative to study this aspect, as generalising the conclusions of western studies to the crying needs of Indian adolescents would be erroneous. It would here be interesting to know the importance of various psychosocial variables in predicting high or low identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion in Indian culture.

Method

Sample

The total sample consisted of 600 adolescents (300 boys and 300 girls) of age ranging between 13 to 21 years (Mean age = 17.09, $SD = 2.59$), belonging to various schools and colleges of the city of Amritsar (Punjab, India). Care was taken that the schools and colleges so chosen were more or less homogeneous with regard to socio-economic, cultural background, and academic milieu.

Instruments

Following tests were used in the present study to collect the required information from the subjects. Prior to the data collection of the present study, the test-retest reliabilities of various psychological measures were determined on Indian adolescents.

Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status2 (EOMEIS-2). It is a self-report measure (Bennion & Adams, 1986) that can be used for research and clinical or educational assessments of identity formation. The instrument assesses the identity formation of an individual across two domains - ideological and interpersonal. Ideological domain has items which cover areas like occupation, religion, politics, and philosophical life style; while, interpersonal domain includes items on friendship, recreation, dating, and sex roles areas of identity formation. Both domains measure each subject on four identity statuses namely identity Achievement (A), Moratorium (M), Foreclosure (F), and Diffusion (D). Items are 64 in number—32 for each domain. In the present study, only 48 items were used. 16 items of interpersonal domain i.e., Dating and Sex roles were eliminated, because of their inappropriateness for adolescents of Indian culture. The 'Dating' items were removed as the teachers and other school personnel objected to such items in the questionnaire, as such issues are not openly discussed in Indian society. 'Sex roles' items were removed because they are largely seeking information pertinent to marriage---an issue which is not very significant for school and college going adolescents in India.

The subject responded by giving their degree of agreement with each item on a six-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Raw subscale scores were computed for both the domains

by summing up the items relevant to each status. For each domain, an individual's score on identity Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, and Diffusion statuses were obtained. Then the scores of four identity statuses on both the domains were combined to yield four global identity status scores. Higher score on a particular identity status reflected greater presence of that status in individual. The test-retest reliability of the tool over a 15 days period was found to range from .72 to .87 for various statuses.

Emotional Autonomy Scale (EAS). The scale (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986) consists of 2 items based on BLOSS theory of individuation and has been designed to assess four components of emotional autonomy-Perceiving parents as people, Parental de-idealization, Nondependency on parents, and Individuation. The participants are asked to indicate their response to each test item on a 4-point likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The four subscale scores can be added to yield one single score of Emotional Autonomy (EA). Test-retest reliability over a 15 days period was found to be .79.

Family Environment Scale (FES). This scale comprised of 10 subscales that measured the social environmental characteristics of all types of families, and the individual's perceptions of his or her family environment (Moos & Moos, 1986). Ten FES subscales assessed three underlying domains, or sets of dimensions: the Relationship dimension (Cohesion, Expressiveness, Conflict), Personal growth dimensions (Independence, Achievement Orientation, Intellectual Cultural Orientation, Active Recreational Orientation, Moral Religious Emphasis), and System Maintenance dimensions (Organisation and Control). Test-retest reliabilities for different dimensions ranged from .76 to .94 over a 15 days period. Higher score on a particular dimension meant greater prevalence of that kind of environment in the family.

PGI-Well Being Scale (WBS). This 20 item scale measured subjective well-being or positive mental health (Verma, Moudgil, Kaur, Paul, Dubey & Gupta, 1986). The subject has to 'tick' the item which was relevant to him or her. The total number of marked items is the total score. Test-retest reliability was found to be .84, over a 15 days period.

California Psychological Inventory (CPI). It is a paper and pencil personality test, and its scales are addressed to personality characteristics important for social living and social interaction (Gough, 1975). The subscales of CPI used in the study were Sociability, and Self-Acceptance (these dimensions are a measure of poise, ascendancy, self-assurance, and interpersonal adequacy), Responsibility and Self-Control (these are measures of socialization, responsibility, intrapersonal values, and character), Achievement via Independence and Intellectual Efficiency (these are measures of achievement potential and intellectual efficiency), Psychological-mindedness and Flexibility (these are measures of intellectual and interest modes). Test-retest reliabilities for different dimensions were found to range from .76 to .91 over a 15 days period.

Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking Figural Form A (TTCT). The TTCT (Torrance, 1966) is an index of creativity and the three activities of picture construction, picture completion, and parallel lines are used to assess creativity. The picture construction activity required the subject to draw something clever and unusual using a green egg-shaped piece of paper as a basis of the picture. The picture completion activity presented the test-taker with a variety of abstract lines or designs which have to be sketched into unusual pictures or objects. In the parallel lines activity, the subject was to draw unusual pictures on straight parallel lines. Scoring was done according to the directions provided in the scoring guide, which contained the weights and categories to be given to each drawing. The first activity was scored only for Originality and Elaboration, while the other two are scored for Originality, Elaboration, Fluency, and Flexibility. Fluency is often referred to as the quantitative aspect of creativity, while the other three are the qualitative criteria of creativity. The scores for Fluency, Originality, Flexibility, and Elaboration were summed separately across all activities. Test-retest reliabilities were found to range from .77 to .89, over a 15 days period.

Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM). It (Raven, 1983) was constructed for comparing people with respect to their immediate capacities for observation and clear thinking. The scale consisted of 60 problems divided into five sets of 12, which yielded a person's capacity for intellectual activity. A person's score on the test was the total number of problems he solved correctly when he was allowed to work quietly through the series from the beginning to the end. A

person's total score provided an index of his intellectual capacity. Test-retest reliabilities over a 15 days period was found to be .83.

Procedure

Before administering the above scales, a rapport was established with the respondents. The respondents were assured that the information was being collected purely for research purpose and would be kept confidential. Tests were administered in groups of 15-20 subjects. To avoid fatigue, the testing was done on three consecutive days. In the first session, EOMEIS-2, EAS, PGI, WBS, and FES were presented to the participants. The participants took around one and a half hour to complete the entire set. In the second session, CPI and SPM were presented. The average time taken to respond was around one and a half hour. In the third session, the TTCT-Figural Form A was presented.

Results

Discriminant analyses was applied to the raw data. The respondents were divided into various groups on the basis of high and low scores on Identity Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, and Diffusion.

As the objective of the study was not just to predict which variables are related to each identity status, but also to find differences between groups on the basis of these variables, therefore the analyses was done with the dual purpose of examining the discriminant coefficients of all the variables so as to identify the groups which are best predicted by the different variables under study and also to see the accuracy of classifying the subjects into different groups on the basis of the obtained results. To make very clear distinctions between groups, only extreme groups were chosen on the basis of quartiles. Therefore, only 300 subjects were selected which qualified for the upper and lower quartiles. Remaining 300 subjects falling in the middle were ignored. The classification was done to check the effectiveness of variables in discriminating between the extreme groups. Classification is based on discriminant functions, which can be called an index of the appropriateness of the discriminant function.

The results of the discriminant analyses of are presented in Tables 1, 3, 5 and 7 respectively. The variables along with their discriminant coefficients are arranged in descending order in the tables i.e., variable having maximum weight in predicting group membership is placed at the top while variable at the lower end is having minimum weight.

Table 1

Variables along with the Discriminant Coefficients for Group I (Low Identity Achievement) and Group II (High Identity Achievement)

Variables significant for Group I	Discriminant Coefficients	Variables significant for Group II	Discriminant Coefficients
Conflict	.081	Emotional autonomy	.43
Fluency	.005	Independence	.41
		Achievement orientation	.40
		Intellectual cultural orientation	.39
		Active recreational orientation	.38
		Self-acceptance	.30
		Originality	.29
		Organisation	.29
		Sociability	.28
		Expressiveness	.28
		Flexibility	.27
		Well-being	.27
		Elaboration	.26
		Intellectual capacity	.25
		Self-control	.21
		Responsibility	.19
		Intellectual efficiency	.19
		Control	.17
		Psychological-mindedness	.16
		Achievement via independence	.10
		Cohesion	.10
		Moral religious emphasis	.098
		Flexibility	.07

Wilk's Lambda = .022. $p < .001$.

The two groups significantly different at $p < .001$ level.

Table 2

Classification of Cases (Number) Obtained on the Basis of Low or High Identity Achievement

	Group I	Group II	Total
Group I	150	0	150
Group II	0	150	150

Note. Group I = Low Identity Achievement Group; Group II = High Identity Achievement Group.

Group I consists of subjects lower on identity achievement, whereas Group II refers to high identity achievement.

Table 3

Variables along Discriminant Coefficients for Group I (Low Moratorium) and Group II (High Moratorium)

Variables significant for Group I	Discriminant Coefficients	Variables significant for Group II	Discriminant Coefficients
Conflict	.03	Independence	.41
Fluency	.005	Achievement orientation	.39
		Emotional autonomy	.38
		Intellectual cultural orientation	.38
		Active recreational orientation	.38
		Originality	.35
		Expressiveness	.34
		Elaboration	.28
		Self-acceptance	.25
		Flexibility	.24
		Sociability	.23
		Organisation	.22
		Achievement via independence	.20
		Well-being	.19
		Intellectual efficiency	.17
		Intellectual capacity	.16
		Flexibility	.14
		Responsibility	.13
		Control	.12
		Psychological-mindedness	.10
		Self-control	.09
		Cohesion	.08
		Moral-religious emphasis	.06

Wilk's Lambda = 0.027. $p < 0.001$.

Group I in Table 3 consists of subjects low on moratorium scores, whereas subjects in Group II are high on moratorium scores. The results of discriminant analysis (Table 3) of low moratorium group (Group 1) and high moratorium group (Group 2) shows the value of Wilk's Lambda (0.027) significant at $p < .001$ level.

Table 4

Classification of Cases (Number) Obtained on the Basis of Low or High Identity Achievement

	Group I	Group II	Total
Group I	150	0	150
Group II	0	150	150

Note. Group I = Low Moratorium Group; Group II = High Moratorium Group.

Group I consists of subjects lower on identity achievement, whereas subjects in Group II are higher on identity achievement scores.

Table 5

Variables along Discriminant Coefficients for Group I (Low Foreclosure) and Group II (High Foreclosure)

Variables significant for Group I	Discriminant Coefficients	Variables significant for Group II	Discriminant Coefficients
Emotional Autonomy	.23	Control	.08
Fluency	.21	Cohesion	.07
Sociability	.15	Moral religious emphasis	.07
Flexibility	.12		
Intellectual efficiency	.12		
Expressiveness	.11		
Self-acceptance	.10		
Active recreational orientation	.10		
Independence	.10		
Conflict	.09		

Continued...

Variables significant for Group I	Discriminant Coefficients	Variables significant for Group II	Discriminant Coefficients
Psychological-mindedness	.09		
Well-being	.08		
Elaboration	.07		
Intellectual cultural orientation	.06		
Flexibility	.06		
Intellectual capacity	.06		
Originality	.06		
Achievement orientation	.06		
Responsibility	.05		
Organisation	.05		
Achievement via independence	.02		
Self-control	.01		

Wilk's Lambda = .027. $p < .001$.

In Table 5, Group I consists of subjects lower on foreclosure scores and Group II consists of subjects higher on foreclosure scores. The results of discriminant analysis in Table 5, shows the value of Wilk's Lambda (.027) to be significant at $p < .001$ between low foreclosure group (Group 1) and high foreclosure group (Group 2).

Table 6

Classification of Cases (Number) Obtained on the Basis of Low or High Foreclosure

	Group I (Low foreclosure)	Group II (High foreclosure)	Total
Group I (Low foreclosure)	150	0	150
Group II (High foreclosure)	0	150	150

Note. Group I = Lower Identity Foreclosure; Group II = Higher Identity Foreclosure.

Group I consists of subjects low on identity achievement, whereas subjects in Group II are high on identity achievement scores.

Table 7

Variables along Discriminant Coefficients for Group I (Low Diffusion) and Group II (High Diffusion)

Variables significant for Group I	Discriminant Coefficients	Variables significant for Group II	Discriminant Coefficients
Moral religious emphasis	.51	Conflict	.26
Achievement orientation	.43	Fluency	.20
Responsibility	.38		
Elaboration	.42		
Organisation	.41		
Cohesion	.41		
Intellectual cultural orientation	.41		
Control	.41		
Expressiveness	.37		
Active recreational orientation	.37		
Independence	.36		
Originality	.34		
Self-control	.32		
Well-being	.32		
Intellectual capacity	.31		
Emotional autonomy	.29		
Flexibility	.27		
Sociability	.26		
Self-acceptance	.24		
Achievement via independence	.19		
Intellectual efficiency	.18		
Psychological-mindedness	.16		
Flexibility	.04		

Wilk's Lambda = .039. $p < .001$.

In Table 7, value of Wilk's Lambda (.039) achieved through discriminant analysis between Group 1 (Low diffusion group) & Group 2 (High diffusion group) found to be significant at $p < .001$ level.

Table 8

Classification of Cases (Number) Obtained on the Basis of Low or high Diffusion

	Group I	Group II	Total
Group I	150	0	150
Group II	1	149	150

Note. Group I = Lower Diffusion; Group II = Higher Diffusion.

Classification of cases in Group I and II show unequal distribution of cases in Table 8.

Discussion

The value of Wilk's Lambda for four different identity statuses, is significant at .001 level in all cases, suggesting that the groups of (a) lower identity achievement scores and higher identity achievement scores (Wilk's Lambda = .022, $< .001$) (b) lower moratorium scores and higher moratorium scores (Wilk's Lambda = 0.027, $< .001$) (c) lower foreclosure scores and higher foreclosure scores (Wilk's Lambda = .027, $< .001$) (d) lower diffusion scores and higher diffusion scores (Wilk's Lambda = .039, $< .001$) can be significantly discriminated on the basis of emotional autonomy, family environment, well-being, cognitive, and personality variables in the study. As far as the classification on the basis of discriminant function scores are concerned (Table 2, 4, 6, and 8), almost all cases are correctly classified in all the four status analyses.

In the present analyses, the results imply that Conflict in the family environment is the main predictor of lower identity achievement (discriminant weight, .081), lower moratorium (.03), as well as higher diffusion (.26) in adolescents (see Table 1, 3 and 7). This suggests that adolescents from families which openly display anger and aggression, do not reveal high identity achievement, plus there is lesser exploration about identity issues, and there may be more of indifference to various identity relevant issues. Researches have suggested that disturbed and conflicting family patterns polarize parents and adolescents and thus the latter do not get the security and

support required for exploration of selves, without a secure home base (Ainsworth, 1982). Taylor and Oskay (1995) have also reported similar relationship between parent-adolescent conflict and diffusion.

Also, fluency of thoughts and ideas on the creativity tasks is predicting lesser identity achievement (.005), lesser moratorium (.005), and higher diffusion (.20) in adolescents. Such adolescents seem to be shifting their focus from few relevant issues and drifting in a flow of ideas, rather than tackling those few, qualitatively. It can be suggested that adolescents who are producing lots of ideas may be lost in their own imaginative world as a defence against some stress of focusing on real life issues practically. Typical to this might be the cognitive patterns of diffused adolescents when they procrastinate, avoid, or shun identity decisions. They might be experiencing identity formation as overwhelming, and thus, escape seems to be the suitable strategy. Torrance (1966) has also suggested that generating too many ideas at the cost of their quality is considered a characteristic of banal and impulsive thinkers, and even nonthinkers.

It is further revealed from the analysis that Emotional Autonomy is a significant predictor of higher identity achievement (.43), higher moratorium (.38), lower foreclosure (.23), and lower diffusion (.29) scores in adolescents. It conveys that adolescents' ability to take control over their lives without being dependent on their parents, supports the foundation of an independent and effective personality. During adolescence, realization of some sort of parental inadequacies may compel adolescents to individuate or to look for new ideologies and lifestyles of their own, rather than adopting those defined by their parents. Psychoanalysts (Blos, 1979; Bloom, 1980) also say that it is important to be weaned in a psychological sense from the emotional dependence upon parents in order to develop a healthy sense of identity. It needs to be added here that emotional autonomy does not seem to be an index of adolescent maladjustment or dysfunction in Indian adolescents, as it is associated herewith identity achievement, which is a positive milestone in adolescent development, and it further generates the virtue of fidelity, as proposed in eight stage theory of Erikson (1968).

Family environment also seems to be a major predictor of various identity statuses. Personal growth dimensions characterizing Independence, Achievement Orientation, Intellectual Cultural Orientation, Active Recreational Orientation, along with others like Expressiveness and Organisation are predicting higher identity achievement, higher moratorium, lower foreclosure, and lower diffusion scores (Tables 1, 3, 5, and 7). An atmosphere characterized

by freedom to act, express, and execute, encouragement to excel not only in academic framework but also in other activities, introduces adolescents to the outside world and propels their search and commitment to life issues, rather than avoiding them or deciding about them according to parental expectations. Similarly, Matos et al. (1999) and Sandhu (2004) have found that familial opportunities for self-exploration and individuation facilitate higher levels of identity formation in adolescents.

Also, it is evident from Table 5 that high foreclosure scoring adolescents belong to families which exert a high Control (.08) on their children, where members are strongly bonded to each other (Cohesion, .07), and which lay a strong emphasis on ethical religious values (Moral Religious Emphasis, .07). These kinds of parental practices may not give opportunities and space to the adolescents to look beyond familial beliefs, choices, and ideology. Though such familial practices are also predicting high identity achievement, moratorium and lesser diffusion (see Tables 1, 3, and 7), but they are in conjunction with indices of openness and encouragement for independence in the family.

Furthermore, Tables 1, 3, 5 and 7 suggest that various personality dimensions indicating Self-acceptance or personal worth, capacity for independent thinking and action, interpersonal/ intrapersonal maturity, achievement potential, and refined interest modes (Self-acceptance, Sociability, Responsibility, Self-control, Achievement Independence, Intellectual Efficiency, Psychological-Mindedness, Flexibility), are predicting higher identity achievement, higher moratorium, lesser foreclosure, and lesser diffusion scores in adolescents. Adolescents of enterprising, responsible, and dependable nature are not prone to directionlessness, rather they face challenges. Grotevant (1987) identifies some personality features like ability to take risks, to consider options, to monitor oneself, to response flexibly, and to be open to experience, which facilitate the process of exploration of identity.

In addition to these, other predictors of higher identity achievement, higher moratorium, lesser foreclosure, and lesser diffusion scores in adolescents are Intellectual Capacity, capacity to think originally and creatively (Originality, Flexibility, Elaboration), and Well-being. Superior cognitive functioning and positive life orientation may enable adolescents to question their direction in life and chalk out their novel and unique pattern of choices energetically, rather than shunning important tasks or depositing this responsibility on someone else's shoulders. Erikson (1968) has also emphasized the

role of cognition in identity formation and it has also been demonstrated that the ability to see all possibilities as one aspect of formal reasoning is most important to identity formation. Also, if viewed from control theory perspective (Burke, 1991), an individual is an information-based organism and tries to reach an internal standard when faced with any incongruence.

Overall, the discriminant analyses suggests that the groups of identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion can be discriminated significantly on the basis of various variables taken in the study. All psychosocial aspects of adolescents' functioning occupy unique positions in the development of identity in adolescents. It appears from the results that identity formation fosters in conjunction with several indispensable issues, out of which family environment and emotional autonomy serve as the important predictors. It is also visible that high identity achievement is fostered in families that serve as the combination of connection, regulation and independence. Identity achievement is being predictive by both cohesion and emotional autonomy. Also occupying noticeable positions in the prediction of identity, are cognitive capacities and personality patterns.

Conclusion

Thus, we can conclude that identity formation cannot be simply viewed in terms of one aspect, rather should be studied in relation to a number of areas. It is worth mentioning here that various psychosocial variables which foster identity in western adolescents, seem to be important in Indian context also.

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