



Exploring Identity Styles and Their Impact on Mental Health among Law and Political Science Students

Abdul Khabir Abed¹, Mohammad Jawad Mirzaee²

^{1, 2}Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Kabul, Afghanistan

Received: Aug 05, 2025

Revised: Oct 05, 2025

Accepted: Oct 18, 2025

Published: Oct 31, 2025

Keywords

- Mental Health
- Identity Styles
- Informational Style
- Normative Style
- Avoidant Style
- Commitment

Abstract: This study explores the relationship between identity styles and mental health among students of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences at Kabul University. A total of 196 participants were selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected through the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28) and Berzonsky's Identity Styles Questionnaire, and analyzed using Pearson correlation to examine the associations between variables. Findings reveal a statistically significant negative correlation between informational identity style and GHQ-28 scores ($r = -0.203$, $p = 0.004$) and between normative identity style and GHQ-28 scores ($r = -0.196$, $p = 0.006$). Since higher GHQ-28 scores indicate greater psychological distress, these negative correlations suggest that students with higher informational or normative identity style scores tend to experience better mental health. Commitment identity style also showed a significant negative relationship with GHQ-28 scores ($r = -0.268$, $p < 0.001$), while the diffused/avoidant style had no significant association ($r = 0.076$, $p = 0.29$). Implying that this style may lack a stable influence on psychological outcomes. These results indicate that adopting an informational or normative identity style may improve mental health among university students. The results suggest that promoting informational and normative identity styles could be a valuable strategy for enhancing mental health support programs for university students in Afghanistan.

To Cite this Article: Abed, A. K., & Mirzaee, M. J. (2025). Exploring Identity Styles and Their Impact on Mental Health among Law and Political Science Students. *Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 2(4), 155-169.
<https://doi.org/10.62810/jssh.v2i4.165>



Copyright © 2024 Author(s). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

INTRODUCTION

The psychological well-being of university students is a critical global concern that demands particular attention in unique socio-cultural contexts such as Afghanistan. Students at Kabul University's Faculty of Law and Political Sciences navigate their identity formation during a period of profound national transition, facing distinctive challenges that merit comprehensive scholarly investigation. These future legal and political leaders stand at the intersection of traditional Afghan values and modern educational demands, creating a dynamic context for

✉ Corresponding author E-mail: khabirabed1@gmail.com

identity development that remains substantially unexplored in contemporary psychological literature.

The theoretical foundation of this research draws from seminal works in developmental psychology. Identity formation, conceptualized as the integration of skills, worldviews, and internalized identifications into a coherent sense of self (Erikson, 1968), represents a central developmental task during emerging adulthood. Berzonsky's (2011) identity processing model further elaborates this concept by distinguishing three primary identity styles: informational (characterized by active exploration and critical evaluation), normative (marked by adherence to traditional values), and diffuse-avoidant (characterized by procrastination and avoidance of identity issues). The World Health Organization's (2014) holistic definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being" provides the framework for understanding mental health in this study, emphasizing the absence of psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and social dysfunction.

International research consistently demonstrates the significance of identity styles as predictors of mental health outcomes. Studies across Western contexts (Schwartz et al., 2015; Crocetti et al., 2021) have established that informational and normative styles correlate with better psychological adaptation, whereas diffuse-avoidant styles are associated with higher distress levels. Recent investigations continue to highlight how identity, commitment, and exploration processes can mitigate psychological distress (Samaey et al., 2025), while strong social and cultural identities serve protective mental health functions (Branje et al., 2023; Coupe & Coupe, 2018). Regionally, studies from Iran (Zamani et al., 2020; Livarjani et al., 2015) confirm similar patterns using validated instruments like the GHQ-28, suggesting the cross-cultural relevance of these relationships.

However, despite this substantial body of international research, a critical gap persists in the literature regarding the Afghan context. Previous studies have predominantly examined these relationships in stable Western environments or regional settings with different socio-political circumstances. The unique Afghan environment—characterized by decades of conflict, profound political transformation, strong religious and traditional structures, and specific pressures facing future legal professionals—remains virtually unexamined. Existing research fails to address how these distinctive contextual factors might fundamentally alter the established relationships between identity styles and psychological well-being.

This gap is particularly significant for several reasons: First, the extreme conditions of social and political transition in Afghanistan may create unique challenges in identity formation not captured by existing models. Second, the mechanisms through which identity styles influence mental health—such as informational style promoting active problem-solving, normative style reducing internal conflict through value adherence, and diffuse-avoidant style increasing stress through decision avoidance—may operate differently in this context. Third, students in law and political sciences face particular pressures as future leaders in a rebuilding nation, potentially altering the typical dynamics between identity processes and mental health. This research, therefore, addresses these critical gaps by

providing the first comprehensive examination of identity-mental health relationships within Afghanistan's unique socio-cultural environment. The study explicitly investigates how identity styles correlate with mental health outcomes among Law and Political Science students at Kabul University, while accounting for the moderating effects of distinctive Afghan cultural factors, including family structures, religious influences, and ongoing social insecurities.

The significance of this investigation extends beyond theoretical contributions to substantial practical applications. By establishing the specific relationships between identity processing styles and mental health in this specialized population, the study provides a foundation for developing targeted support services, identity-focused counseling programs, and culturally sensitive mental health initiatives at Afghan universities. Furthermore, understanding these dynamics can inform educational policies that address the unique psychological needs of students navigating identity formation during Afghanistan's ongoing transition. The present study employs a quantitative cross-sectional design, using standardized instruments, including the Identity Style Inventory and GHQ-28, to assess 280 undergraduate students from Kabul University's Faculty of Law and Political Sciences. The findings will contribute to both cross-cultural psychological theory and practical applications in supporting Afghan students' psychological well-being during this critical developmental period.

Conceptual Framework

Based on theoretical foundations and prior studies, this research's conceptual model examines the relationships among identity styles (informational, normative, diffused/avoidant, and commitment) and mental health. In this model, identity styles are treated as predictor variables, while mental health is the outcome variable. This model is grounded in the assumption that different identity styles can play a significant role in enhancing or diminishing university students' mental health. The proposed conceptual model is presented in Figure 1.

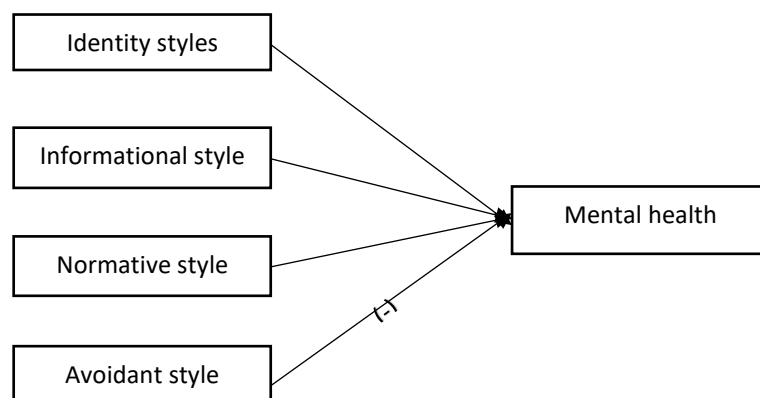


Figure 1. *Conceptual model of the relationship between identity styles and mental health in students of the faculty of Law and Political Sciences, Kabul University*

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- To investigate the relationship between informational identity style and mental health.
- To investigate the relationship between normative identity style and mental health.
- To investigate the relationship between diffused/avoidant identity style and mental health.
- To examine the relationship between identity commitment and mental health.

Moreover, based on the theoretical foundations and prior studies, the following hypotheses were formulated. It should be noted that in the GHQ instrument, higher scores represent greater psychological distress; therefore, a negative correlation with GHQ scores reflects better mental health.

H₁: There is a significant negative relationship between informational identity style and GHQ scores, indicating that students with higher informational identity style experience better mental health.

H₂: There is a significant negative relationship between normative identity style and GHQ scores, suggesting that students with higher normative identity style report better mental health.

H₃: There is a significant negative relationship between identity commitment and GHQ scores, meaning that more substantial commitment is associated with better mental health.

The diffuse/avoidant identity style was not formulated as a formal hypothesis. Instead, its relationship with mental health was examined in an exploratory manner due to inconsistent findings in the literature (Crocetti et al., 2013; Berzonsky & Luyckx, 2008).

RESEARCH METHOD

Population and Sampling

This study employed an applied, descriptive-correlational design. The statistical population consisted of all students enrolled in the Faculty of Law and Political Science at Kabul University during the 2024 academic year (N = 464). Using Cochran's formula with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample size of 196 participants was determined. To maintain the structural proportionality of the sample with the statistical population, a stratified random sampling method was employed (Kothari, 2004). In this method, the population was divided into four distinct strata based on academic year (first to fourth year). Then, using a complete list of students obtained from the faculty administration, a simple random sample was selected from each stratum proportional to its share in the main population.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted in person between March and May 2024. The research questionnaires were distributed during scheduled class hours after obtaining necessary permissions from relevant faculty authorities. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and all respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their information. Along with the questionnaires, comprehensive guidelines including research objectives and questionnaire completion methods were provided to participants. Out of 220 distributed questionnaires, 196 usable questionnaires were returned. Demographic information for participants, including gender, age, marital status, and academic year, was recorded. Accordingly, 83% of respondents were single and 17% were married. The age range of participants was 18 to 30 years, with a mean of 21.9 years. The sample distribution across academic years was as follows: first year (24%), second year (19%), third year (24%), and fourth year (32%).

Instrumentation

All constructs were measured using well-established instruments. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Instruments were translated into Dari and Pashto using the back-translation method (Brislin, 1970) to ensure cultural and linguistic validity. Specifically, questionnaires were first translated from English to Dari/Pashto by two independent bilingual experts. Subsequently, another group of bilingual experts, unaware of the original version, re-translated the Dari/Pashto version back into English. The back-translated versions were compared with the original, and discrepancies were discussed and resolved to ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence.

- **Mental Health:** The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28; Goldberg, 1972) was used to measure somatic symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction, and depression. The Dari version of this tool has been validated in Afghanistan, demonstrating excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 93.8\%$). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) confirmed the four-factor structure of the GHQ-28 within the Afghan population (Neyazi et al., 2023). The reported model fit indices were satisfactory (e.g., CFI > .90, RMSEA < .08), supporting the tool's validity in this context. In this study, Cronbach's α was 0.938, composite reliability (CR) was 0.938, and average variance extracted (AVE) was 0.62.
- **Identity Styles:** The Identity Style Inventory (ISI-6G; Berzonsky, 2008) was used to assess informational, normative, diffuse-avoidant, and commitment identity styles. While this tool has not been directly validated in Afghanistan, studies in neighboring countries with similar cultural contexts have reported Cronbach's alphas ranging from 0.66 to 0.84 for various identity styles (Afzal et al., 2021). Given the linguistic and cultural similarities, these findings support the use of the ISI-6G in the Afghan context.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS (version 27). The following analytical procedures were applied:

1. **Measurement Model Assessment:** The reliability and validity of the constructs were examined. Internal consistency [how consistently the items of a scale measure the same concept] was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). Convergent validity [the degree to which items of a single construct are positively correlated] was evaluated using the average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity [the extent to which a construct is distinct from other constructs] was checked using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio.
2. **Control Variables:** To minimize potential confounding effects on the relationship between identity styles and mental health, the following demographic variables were included as control variables in all analyses: age (in years), year of study (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th), and marital status (0 = single, 1 = married). These variables were entered as covariates in the regression analyses to adjust for their possible influence on mental health outcomes statistically. Previous studies have shown that age, educational stage, and marital status may impact mental health (Nguyen, 2025; Magakwe, 2025; WHO, 2025). Controlling for these variables ensures that demographic factors do not confound the observed relationships between identity styles and mental health. Control variables (age, marital status, and year of study) were entered into the analyses to account for potential demographic influences. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.
3. **Hypothesis Testing:** Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses were performed to test the hypothesized relationships between identity styles and mental health. The level of statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.
4. **Exploratory Analysis:** The diffuse/avoidant identity style was analyzed in an exploratory manner rather than as a formal hypothesis, given prior studies' inconsistent findings regarding its association with mental health (Crocetti et al., 2013; Berzonsky & Luyckx, 2008).

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of research involving human subjects. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences at Kabul University. Participants were provided with a detailed information sheet explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were strictly maintained throughout the research process; no identifying information was collected, and data were used solely for academic purposes.

FINDINGS

The study surveyed 464 students from the Faculty of Law and Political Science, with a final sample of 196 students across four academic years: 47 first-year, 39 second-year, 47 third-year, and 63 fourth-year students.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–20	50	25.5
	21–23	110	56.1
	24–26	34	17.3
	27–30	2	1.0
Year of Study	1 st	47	24
	2 nd	39	19
	3 rd	47	24
	4 th	63	32
Marital Status	Single	163	83
	Married	33	17

This table provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the study sample, including age, year of study, and marital status. The highest frequency was observed in the 21–23 age group and among fourth-year students, with the majority of participants being single (83%). Presenting demographic variables in a single table allows readers to understand the sample's overall profile quickly.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Identity Styles and Mental Health

Variable	Mean	SD
Informational Identity	37.55	6.07
Normative Identity	30.57	5.45
Diffused/Avoidant Identity	29.56	5.35
Commitment	34.57	6.04
Mental Health	30.31	11.20

This table shows descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum scores for each identity style and mental health. The highest means were observed for informational identity and commitment, while mental health scores showed the most significant variability, indicating a wide range of scores in the sample.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Between Identity Styles and Mental Health

Identity Style	Mean	SD	Pearson r with Mental Health	p-value
Informational Identity	37.55	6.07	-0.203**	0.004
Normative Identity	30.57	5.45	-0.196**	0.006
Commitment	34.57	6.04	-0.268**	<0.001
Diffused/Avoidant Identity	29.56	5.35	0.076	0.29

This table provides an overview of the correlations between all identity styles and mental health. Informational, normative, and commitment styles showed significant negative correlations with mental health, whereas the diffused/avoidant style did not show a significant relationship. Combining all styles into a single table provides a clearer view of the sample's relationships and eliminates the need for multiple tables.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation between Informational Identity and Mental Health

Variable	Mean	SD	R	P
Informational Identity	37.55	6.07	-0.203**	0.004
Mental Health	30.31	11.20		

A weak but statistically significant negative correlation was found between Informational Identity and Mental Health ($r = -0.203$, $p = 0.004$). Meaning higher informational identity scores are slightly associated with lower mental health levels.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation between Normative Identity and Mental Health

Variable	Mean	SD	R	p
Normative Identity	30.57	5.45	-0.196**	0.006
Mental Health	30.31	11.20		

Normative identity also showed a weak but significant negative correlation with mental health, indicating that increased normative identity is associated with a slight decrease in mental health ($r = -0.196$, $p = 0.006$).

Table 6: Pearson Correlation between Commitment and Mental Health

Variable	Mean	SD	R	P
Commitment	34.57	6.04	-0.268**	<0.001
Mental Health	30.31	11.20		

Commitment showed the strongest significant negative correlation with mental health. Higher commitment scores are associated with a more noticeable decrease in mental health (weak to moderate negative relationship) ($r = -0.268$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 7: *Pearson Correlation between Diffused/Avoidant Identity and Mental Health*

Variable	Mean	SD	R	P
Diffused/Avoidant Identity	29.56	5.35	0.076	0.29
Mental Health	30.31	11.20		

No significant correlation was found between diffused/avoidant identity and mental health, indicating this identity style does not have a measurable effect on mental health in this sample. ($r = 0.076$, $p = 0.29$).

DISCUSSION

This study provides empirical evidence regarding the relationship between identity styles and mental health among Afghan students, addressing a significant gap in the cross-cultural literature on identity development. The findings demonstrate both consistencies and divergences from established theoretical models, highlighting the importance of cultural context in understanding the dynamics between identity and mental health.

The study's first hypothesis, positing a negative relationship between informational identity style and psychological distress, was strongly supported ($r = -0.203$, $p = 0.004$). This finding aligns with Berzonsky's (2011) social-cognitive model, which characterizes the informational style as an adaptive approach to identity formation through active exploration, critical evaluation, and cognitive flexibility. In Afghanistan's challenging socio-political environment, where students navigate complex transitions between traditional values and modern educational demands, the informational style's emphasis on evidence-based decision-making appears particularly beneficial. The significant correlation suggests that students who actively seek information and thoughtfully process identity-related issues develop more effective coping strategies, resulting in reduced psychological distress. The second hypothesis, concerning normative identity style, also received support ($r = -0.196$, $p = 0.006$), though with a somewhat weaker effect size. This finding can be understood through the theoretical lens of cultural psychology, which emphasizes how collectivist values shape identity processes. In the Afghan context, where family and community ties remain strong despite political instability, adherence to traditional norms may provide psychological security and reduce identity-related anxiety. As Crocetti et al. (2008) noted, normative identity processes can offer protective benefits in contexts where social norms provide clear guidance for behavior and decision-making. The third hypothesis regarding commitment demonstrated the strongest negative correlation with psychological distress ($r = -0.268$, $p < 0.001$), supporting contemporary research emphasizing the crucial role of identity commitment in psychological well-being (Samaey et al., 2025; De Lise et al., 2023). This finding suggests that in environments characterized by uncertainty and transition, having clear commitments and life directions serves as a particularly important protective factor against psychological distress.

The differential strength of relationships between identity styles and mental health reveals important insights. The stronger association of commitment with mental health outcomes suggests that in contexts of social and political instability, having established

commitments may be more crucial for psychological well-being than the processes through which these commitments are formed. This may reflect the particular need for stability and direction in environments characterized by uncertainty. The relatively weaker but still significant relationship between normative style and mental health indicates that while traditional values provide some protection, they may not fully address the complex identity challenges faced by students navigating between traditional Afghan society and modern educational environments. This tension between preservation and adaptation appears to moderate the protective effect of normative identity processes.

When compared with international studies, several important patterns emerge. The protective role of informational and commitment styles shows remarkable consistency with findings from Western contexts (Schwartz et al., 2015; Crocetti et al., 2021) and regional studies in Iran (Zamani et al., 2020; Livarjani et al., 2015). This cross-cultural consistency suggests that specific identity processes may have universal benefits for psychological functioning. However, the non-significant relationship between diffuse-avoidant style and mental health represents a notable departure from most previous research. While studies in Western contexts typically find strong positive correlations between avoidant styles and psychological distress (Berzonsky & Luyckx, 2008; Crocetti et al., 2013), our findings suggest this relationship may be culturally moderated. As Beaumont (2020) theorized, in collectivist societies with strong family networks, the negative impact of avoidant identity strategies may be buffered by external support systems. This interpretation aligns with Branje et al.'s (2023) research, which emphasizes how social belonging can compensate for individual-level vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the strength of the commitment-mental health relationship in our study exceeds that reported in many Western samples, suggesting that identity commitment may be particularly salient in contexts where external social structures are in flux. This enhanced importance of personal commitment in uncertain environments represents an important contribution to identity theory.

These findings have important implications for the development of identity theory. They suggest that while the adaptive benefits of informational and commitment styles may be universal, the relationship between avoidant styles and mental health appears culturally contingent. Additionally, the findings highlight the need to consider how macro-level factors, such as political instability and social transition, interact with individual identity processes. The decisive protective role of commitment in our sample supports recent theoretical work emphasizing the importance of identity consolidation in contexts of social change (Crocetti, 2022). The results also contribute to understanding how different identity styles function within specific cultural contexts. The preservation of mental health despite avoidant identity strategies challenges the universal applicability of Western models. It underscores the need for culturally sensitive approaches to identity research and mental health intervention.

CONCLUSION

The present study demonstrated that informational, normative, and commitment identity styles were all positively associated with students' mental health (reflected by negative correlations with GHQ scores). Students with a commitment style tended to experience greater stability and belonging, which reduced identity-related stress and enhanced emotional resilience. Those with an informational style benefited from active exploration, careful decision-making, and reflective thinking, promoting confidence, problem-solving skills, and adaptive coping. Similarly, the normative style, characterized by adherence to shared values and commitments, was associated with slightly better mental health, likely by providing stability and a sense of belonging in the Afghan socio-cultural context. In contrast, the diffused/avoidant style did not show a significant relationship with mental health in this study.

These findings highlight the importance of considering individual identity development in promoting mental health among university students. By fostering adaptive identity styles — particularly informational, normative, and commitment — students can better manage stress, clarify personal goals, and develop a stronger sense of self, which may contribute to overall psychological resilience and academic success. These results have practical implications for psychological counseling and university-based personal development programs. Interventions and workshops can focus on encouraging active information-seeking, critical thinking, constructive commitments, and adherence to positive social norms, providing students with tools to strengthen adaptive identity styles and improve their mental well-being.

Limitations

This section addresses the most important methodological and conceptual limitations of the present study.

1. The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to infer causal relationships.
2. The sample was limited to students from a single university, reducing generalizability.
3. Reliance on self-report measures may introduce social desirability bias.
4. Some potential mediating or moderating variables, such as social support, personality traits, and socioeconomic factors, were not examined.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the study's findings and identified limitations.

1. Future research should adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to examine causal relationships better.
2. Studies should include more diverse student populations across universities and regions.
3. Qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, should be incorporated to explore cultural, familial, and social influences.

4. Additional mediating and moderating variables, including coping strategies, personality traits, and social support, should be examined.
5. Universities and mental health practitioners should develop interventions, workshops, or counseling programs aimed at promoting adaptive identity styles, particularly informational and commitment styles, to enhance students' psychological well-being and resilience.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

- Abdul Khabir Abed and Mohammad Jawad Mirzaee conceptualized the study
- Abdul Khabir Abed, Mohammad Jawad Mirzaee designed the study
- Abdul Khabir Abed, Mohammad Jawad Mirzaee prepared the material for the study
- Abdul Khabir Abed collected and processed the data
- Mohammad Jawad Mirzaee and Abdul Khabir Abed analyzed and interpreted the data
- Abdul Khabir Abed, Mohammad Jawad Mirzaee reviewed the literature
- Abdul Khabir Abed wrote the first draft
- Mohammad Jawad Mirzaee wrote the final draft

FUNDING INFORMATION

No funding is available for the manuscript.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data of this research are accessible upon reasonable request from the corresponding author.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Faculty of Law and Political Science at Kabul University for facilitating this research. We also thank all the students who participated in this study for their valuable time and cooperation.

REFERENCES

- Adams, G. R., Munro, B., Doherty-Poirer, M., Munro, G., Petersen, A. M. R., & Edwards, J. (2001). Diffuse-avoidance, normative, and informational identity styles: Using identity theory to predict maladjustment. *Identity*, 1(4), 307–320. https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532706XID0104_01
- Afzal, A., Iqbal Malik, N., & Atta, M. (2021). Translation and adaptation of Identity Style Inventory for Pakistani adolescents. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 36(2), 301–317. <https://doi.org/10.33824/pjpr.2021.36.2.17>

- Beaumont, S. L. (2020). Identity styles and their relevance to psychological functioning in cultural context: A review. *Identity*, 20(1), 1–15.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2019.1697271>
- Berzonsky, M. D. (1992). Identity style and coping strategies. *Journal of Personality*, 60(4), 771–788. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1992.tb00273.x>
- Berzonsky, M. D. (2008). Identity style and coping strategies. *Journal of Personality*, 76(2), 771–778. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2008.00505.x>
- Berzonsky, M. D. (2011). A social-cognitive perspective on identity style. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp. 73–90). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9_4
- Berzonsky, M. D., & Ferrari, J. R. (2009). A diffuse-avoidant identity processing style: Strategic avoidance or self-confusion? *Identity*, 9(2), 145–158.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15283480802683607>
- Berzonsky, M. D., & Luyckx, K. (2008). Identity styles, self-reflective cognition, and identity processes: A study of adaptive and maladaptive dimensions of self-analysis. *Identity*, 8(3), 205–219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15283480802181806>
- Berzonsky, M. D., Macek, P., & Nurmi, J. (2003). Interrelationships among identity process, content, and structure. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 18(2), 112–131.
- Brance, J., Peitz, M., & Mulder, J. (2023). Social identity and mental health: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 103, 102245.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2022.102245>
- Branje, S., de Moor, E. L., Spitzer, J., & Becht, A. I. (2021). Dynamics of identity development in adolescence: A decade in review. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 31(4), 908–927. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12678>
- Branje, S., de Moor, E. L., Spitzer, J., & Becht, A. I. (2023). Social identity and mental health in adolescence: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 52(4), 789–802. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-022-01707-0>
- Coupe, N. M., & Coupe, N. (2018). Whānau, identity, and mental well-being: The importance of Māori cultural identity. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 6, 319.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2018.00319>
- Crocetti, E. (2022). Identity development in context: The role of social and cultural factors. *European Journal of Personality*, 36(3), 345–362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08902070211072766>
- Crocetti, E., Meeus, W., & van der Gaag, M. (2021). Identity processes and mental health in adolescence and emerging adulthood: A systematic review. *Developmental Review*, 61, 100981. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2021.100981>
- Crocetti, E., Rubini, M., & Meeus, W. (2008). Capturing the dynamics of identity formation in various ethnic groups: Development and validation of a three-dimensional model. *Journal of Adolescence*, 31(2), 207–222.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2007.09.001>

- Crocetti, E., Sica, L. S., & Schwartz, S. J. (2013). Identity styles and processes in Italian emerging adults. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 28(1), 78-101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558411435857>
- Czyżowska, N. (2022). Identity processing style and meaning in life among emerging adults: Mediatonal role of commitment. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(11), 6585. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19116585>
- De Lise, F., Crocetti, E., & Meeus, W. (2023). Identity processes and mental health: A longitudinal study. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 20(4), 541–560. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2022.2145678>
- Dehghani, B., & Dabbaghi, P. (2014). Investigating the relationship between coping styles and mental health among soldiers. *Journal of Nurse and Physician in War*, 5, 195–200. (In Persian)
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Ghamari Givi, H. (2008). *Spirituality, Identity, and Mental Health in Life Context*. Psychology and Religion, 2, 4–45. (In Persian)
- Kessler, R. C., et al. (2002). Short screening scales to monitor population prevalences and trends in non-specific psychological distress. *Psychological Medicine*, 32(6), 959–976. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291702006074>
- Khosravi, D., Bahi, S. R., & Madadlou, Q. (2016). Personality from the Perspective of Psychologists. *Third Global Conference*, 56–72. (In Persian)
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd ed.). New Age International Publishers.
- Livarjani, S., Najjarpour, O. S., Zafaranchi, M., & Asamkhani, A. H. (2015). The study of relationship between general health, coping strategies and identity styles. *Women & Study*, 8(2), 77-95. <https://doi.org/10.22051/jwsps.2015.2049>
- Luyckx, K., Schwartz, S. J., Berzonsky, M. D., Soenens, B., Vansteenkiste, M., Smits, I., & Goossens, L. (2013). Capturing ruminative exploration: Extending the four-dimensional model of identity formation in late adolescence. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 47(1), 58–69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2012.10.004>
- Magakwe, T. S. S. (2025). Association between educational attainment and mental health: Evidence from African countries. *Scientific Reports*, 15(1), 5831. *Nature Publishing Group*. [Link](#)
- Nazifi, M., Mokarami, H., Akbaritabar, A. K., Faraji Kujerdi, M., Tabrizi, R., & Rahi, A. (2013). Reliability, validity and factor structure of the Persian translation of General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28) in hospitals of Kerman University of Medical Sciences. *Journal of Epidemiology and Global Health*, 3(4), 253–258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jegh.2013.10.005>
- Neyazi, A., Mohammadi, A. Q., Rahimi, B. A., et al. (2024). Afghanistan National Depression Screening (ANDs) scale: Development and psychometric testing. *Discovery Psychology*, 4, 60. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44202-024-00172-z>

- Nguyen, D. (2025). Age–period–cohort analysis of different mental well-being. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 343, 34–45. Elsevier. [Link](#)
- Phillips, T. M., & Pittman, J. F. (2007). Adolescent psychological well-being by identity style. *Journal of Adolescence*, 30(6), 1021–1034. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2007.03.002>
- Samaey, C., Bastin, M., & Luyckx, K. (2025). Identity processes as mediators between contextual factors and mental health outcomes. *Developmental Psychology*, 61(2), 234–248. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0001678>
- Samaey, C., Lambrechts, S., Lecei, A., Achterhof, R., Hagemann, N., Hermans, K. S. F. M., ... & van Winkel, R. (2025). The role of identity in the development of depressive, anxiety and psychosis symptoms in adolescents exposed to childhood adversity: A process-oriented approach. *BMC Psychiatry*, 25, 194. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-025-06649-y>
- Samimi Rudseri, M. (2007). The Relationship between Lifestyle and General Health among Students. *Scientific Information Database (SID)*. (In Persian)
- Schwartz, S. J. (2006). Predicting identity consolidation from self-construction, eudaimonistic self-discovery, and agentic personality. *Journal of Adolescence*, 29(5), 777–793. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2005.11.008>
- Schwartz, S. J., Luyckx, K., & Vignoles, V. L. (Eds.). (2015). *Handbook of identity theory and research*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-9186-7>
- Shams Esfandabadi, H., Kakavand, A., & Torabi, Z. (2011). Assessment of Mental Health among Medical Students of Hamedan University in 2006. *Journal of Development and Transformation in Medical Education*, 1(1), 44–52. (In Persian)
- Shariati, S., Fakuri, N., & Omid, M. (2014). The relationship between identity styles to happiness and mental health of students. *Journal of Behavioral Sciences in Asia*, 2(12), 86–97.
- Skinner, B. F. (1991). *Beyond freedom and dignity* (A. A. Seif, Trans.). Roshd Publications. (Original work published 1971)
- World Health Organization. (2015). Mental health atlas 2014. [Link](#)
- Zamani, S., Hadian, A., & Gorji, Y. (2020). Predicting mental health based on identity styles, parent–child relationships and religious attitudes of adolescent girls. *Applied Family Therapy Journal*, 1(2), 23–47. <https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.aftj.1.2.2>