IDENTITY PROCESSING STYLE, WELL BEING AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL STATES IN SPANIARDS EMERGING ADULTHOOD


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BACKGROUND

Erikson (1968) has pointed-out that the major task facing adolescents is to create stable identity. From this seminal work, researchers have showed that identity formation and strength of commitment are related with personal adjustment (Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2014; Meeus, 1996; Meeus et al. 1999, Meeus,2011). However most recent conceptualizations delay identity achievement until 20’s, a period called emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Berzonsky’s socio-cognitive model of identity formation highlights three identity processing styles. These styles are reported preferences in the social-cognitive processes and strategies individuals use to engage or attempt to construct and maintain a coherent sense of identity (Berzonsky 2011). Thus “individuals with an INFORMATIONAL IDENTITY STYLE are self-disciplined with a clear sense of commitment and direction. They are self-reflective, skeptical, and interested in learning new things about themselves[...]; Although individuals with a NORMATIVE IDENTITY Style are also conscientious, self-disciplined and possess a strong sense of commitment, they tend to internalize and adhere to the goals, expectations, and standards of significant others or referent groups in a relatively more automatic manner; finally, individuals with a DIFFUSE-AVOIDANT Style procrastinate and try to avoid dealing with identity conflicts and decisions as long as possible. Their commitments are likely to be volatile and quickly accommodated in light of changing situational demands, rewards, and circumstances” (Berzonsky et al., 2013; pg 894).

HYPOTHESIS

We expected to find positive relationships between Strength of Commitment, Informational Style and Normative Style, and well-being variables (Flourishing, Emotional intelligence and Optimism); we also expect to find negative relationship between these identity styles and negative emotional states (Depression, Anxiety and Stress). We expected to find negative association between Diffuse-avoidant Style and well-being variables; and positive relationship between Diffuse-avoidant style and negative emotional states.

In line with Berzonsky and Cieciuch (2014), we expected to find that Strength of Commitment would mediate the relationship between identity processing styles and personal adjustment.

METHOD

Project: Transition to Adulthood in Spain (TAE)

N = 278 young adults

Instruments:

Berzonsky Identity Style Inventory revised (ESI-5; Berzonsky, Soenens, Lyubomirsky, et al., 2013)

Informational Style (α = .75)

Normative Style (α = .68)

Diffuse-avoidance Style (α = .71)

Strength of Commitment (α = .72)

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Table 1. Pearson correlations between identity processing styles and psychological well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Flourishing</th>
<th>Emotional Intelligence</th>
<th>Optimism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informational Style</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.29***</td>
<td>.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Style</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffuse-Avoidance Style</td>
<td>-.22***</td>
<td>-.18**</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Commitment</td>
<td>.43***</td>
<td>.31***</td>
<td>.29***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Figure 1. Mediation role of Commitment in the relationship between Informational Style and Optimism

Table 2. Pearson correlations between identity processing styles and negative emotional states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informational Style</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Style</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffuse-Avoidance Style</td>
<td>.30***</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of Commitment</td>
<td>-.37***</td>
<td>-.29***</td>
<td>-.28***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Figure 2. Mediation role of Commitment in the relationship between Diffuse-avoidance Style and Depression

REFERENCES


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