Developmental Perspectives on Identity its Nature and Formation

Abstract

By identity, we mean who we are, the way we think about ourselves. In the way with which we view the world and its characteristics that defines us, called identity. Identity is an ambiguous term. We can think of identity as self-concept. In general, we respond to our in daily life are influenced by our identities. It is a combination of our self-concepts. It is a sense of self with our own experiences.In another way of portraying identity is that it is something we uniquely possess what identify us from other. Identity implies a relationship with society with our own human existence. In this paper we have discussed the concept of identity, nature of identity, the process of identity formation, factors contributing to Identity Formation and stages of identity formation.

Keywords: Identity, Self-Concept, Identity Formation, Personality.

Introduction

By identity, we mean who we are, the way we think about ourselves. In the way with which we view the world and its characteristics that defines us, called identity. Identity is an ambiguous term. We can think of identity as self-concept. In general, we respond to our in daily life are influenced by our identities. It is a combination of our self-concepts. It is a sense of self with our own experiences. In another way of portraying identity is that it is something we uniquely possess what identify us from other. Identity implies a relationship with society with our own human existence. So far as cognitive approach is concerned, it is in the form of well-organized with abstract version, which helps to organize the knowledge about the self, which provides answer who I am. Schemas which play a vital role which are in the systematic manner provides information about the position in society. In group, it impacts in the form of identification. Bauman (2004) indicates that identity is highly negotiable avoiding the impact of stability and the importance of routine activity. This another aspect of identity is called fluidity of identity. Also, identities have its own self-concept, i.e. what comes to our mind when we think about ourselves (Neisser, 1993).Self – images, self – feelings, and senses like what we feel like, what we sound like, a sense of movement are also ways with which we know ourselves. To Fivush (2011), we know ourselves as we have various experiences with ourselves.

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Definitions

1. Identity is "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others" (Hogg, M. A., & Abrams, D. (1988).
2. "Identity is used in this book to describe the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture" (Deng 1995)
3. Identity "refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities"
4. Identities are "relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self" (Wendt 1992)
5. "The term (identity) (by convention) references mutually constructed and evolving images of self and other" (Katzenstein 1996)

Review of Literature

Identity is not static psychological structure rather a dynamic.There are two approaches that explain the formation of identity.

1. G. Stanley Hall, in his classic account of adolescence, symbolizes the adolescence age as a stage of "storm and stress". It is the period of psychological conflicts, mood swings and risk taking mentality. Such kind of psycho-biological behavior may results to drug addiction, delinquency, depression and sexual deviance (Hall , 1906).

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2. Erikson which has discussed about the identification formation has said the identity formation takes place in different stages of life. Identity formation is considered by some psychologists as identity crises because an adolescent passes through different stages of life. Erick Erickson which lay emphasis on the development stages of life I.e. interaction in the society which effects on the identity formation of adolescents, furthermore Erickson said biological characters, physiological needs and the persons social and cultural context due to the combination of these factors identity formation takes place. Another person who is credited for his outstanding contribution in scientific investigation.

3. Marcia (1994) proposed a practical conceptualization of ego identity development is called 'Ego Identity Status model'. The model consists of four identity statuses sequentially. Those are :

Identity Diffusion

It is the phase of identity formation when adolescences do not have the sense to choose correct alternatives and so he/she hasn't made any choices.

Identity Foreclosure

It is the second phase when adolescences are setting to commit some relevant roles for the future. They allow others in choosing the correct roles.

Identity Moratorium

In this phase, individuals are facing the crisis. They become capable to make choices but have not made any choices yet.

Identity Achievement

In this phase, adolescence has gone through an identity crisis and achieved a sense of identity.

Social identity and identity theorists which study identity formation in two ways: Role Identity and Personal Identity, role identities means to adopt the behavior for ourselves in order to perform the functioning in the society according to his social position. (Brewer, 2001; Oyserman et al., 2003). Sometimes they focus on the distinction between the in-group and out-group (Brewer, 2001). Social identity and identity theorists also study two other kinds of identities - *role identities* and *personal identities*. By

Role identities, we mean to adopt a character that we devise for ourselves to perform our social position. Role-identities influence people's everyday lives by serving as their primary source of personal action plans McCall & Simmons (1966). (e.g. student, parent, professional) It requires another person to play a complete our role. For example, we cannot be a teacher without students, a captain without team. *Personal identities* reflect characteristics different from our social and role identities. It may link to some or all of these identities (Owens et.al, 2010). So, we can think that personal identities are related by one-to-one correspondence with self-concept to some extent.

Factors Affecting Identity Formation

In adolescence period, the formation of identity which is influenced by various factors, the family environment, the societal values, cultural influence and the economic and social position in the society.

Personality

Personality features effects both in the identity formation, those adolescents which are in the stage of confusion always lack confidence. Furthermore those adolescents who always thinks believe in rational thinking helps this dimension to appreciate and use rational thinking which helps them to pursue the vocational and educational goals of life.

Social Factors

Since birth and during the whole life we try to develop our own set of values. There is significant number of factors and things that effects in developing sense of identity. Some of them have positive impact where other has negative impact. Factor related to social aspects are mainly media, family and peers.

Family

Family is one of the important institution for the adolescent, where an adolescent gets the maximum chances to interact with the family members, he understands each and everything in the family, he understands the importance of the values and morals in the family. Family teaches the adolescents how to behave in the society due to the interaction of family members which helps an adolescent to develop the identity.

Peers

The impact of peers on adolescents cannot be underestimated. The right peer's presence in tough times can reinforce positive values and enhance the entire process of identity formation. The wrong peers influence us into extremely negative way.Peers help us to explore options by providing emotional support. They assist in identity development with friendships attitude with other. It enables us to learn much about ourselves.

School and Community

School and community which are vital organs of the society helps to developIdentity formation. In school there is chance for every child to explore rich and wider opportunities. Schools could be also a factor in identity formation in many ways like the classroom that promotes high level thinking extra-curricular, community activities, in process of socialization in school, various interactions with peers, teachers. The experience of future societal

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experience in school helps us to develop a sense of identity that enable teenagers to talk on responsible.

Society

Society which plays a distinct role in the development of the identity, because society acts a mirror for the adolescents. The activities which an adolescent is doing those activities are reflected in the society which helps to develop the identity.

Media

In present days, Media becomes a very importance factor of identity.

Aim of the Study

In adolescence period, the formation of identity is influenced by various factors, the family environment, the societal values, cultural influence and the economic and social position in the society. In this the Personality features effects both in the identity formation, those adolescents which are in the stage of confusion always lack confidence. Furthermore those adolescents who always thinks believe in rational thinking helps this dimension to appreciate and use rational thinking which helps them to pursue the vocational and educational goals of life. This effect in the social life of the adolescence. The effect of disturbance of social life is very dangerous which can not be seen at the early stage of effect. Since birth and during the whole life we try to develop our own set of values. There is significant number of factors and things that effects in developing sense of identity. Some of them have positive impact where other has negative impact. Factor related to social aspects are mainly media, family and peers. Here family and peer group plays an important role. And therefore the need of the study arises.

Conclusion

The amount of time that American adolescence spends in various forms of media is approx 6.5 hrs in a day (Arnett,2010, p.338). We use to interact with media and its different methods of entertainment. This interaction not only becomes a way to divert ourselves, this becomes an important input that effects on our thinking level. A rich amount of knowledge is transmitting through media and that influence us to choose proper role in life. It also indicates what's going on outside, what more can be done, how these can be done etc. These help us in forming identity.

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