

The Role of Interpersonal Identity Statuses in Predicting the Attitudes of Married People toward Love

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The present study examined the role of identity statuses in predicting attitudes toward love among married people. For this purpose two hundred married people (96 males and 104 females) from five different regions across Qazvin City were selected by convenient method. They answered the 24-item love attitude scale of Hendrick & Hendrick and the 32-item Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity status-2nd version (EOM-EIS-2). The result from administrating the Pearson's correlation test and analysis of stepwise regression showed that there is direct correlation between achievement of identity with the types of love attitudes like Eros, Storage, Agape and Pragma. There were significant correlations between Moratorium with Ludus and Agape, and between foreclosure identity status and Storage. The results also showed that achievement and foreclosure identity statuses were able to predict love attitudes in married women and achievement identity status was able to predict the attitudes toward love in married men. So, the predictive role of identity statuses for love attitudes of married men and women was confirmed. This research demonstrated that identity statuses were correlated with love attitudes as a basis of intimacy and thus it reconfirms Erikson's theory about the role of identity in the formation of the fundamental basis of intimacy (love) in married people, so a strong ego development is basic to form mutual successful relationships.

Keywords: identity statuses, love attitudes, married people.

Adolescents enter adulthood with a mature desire and capacity for intimacy based on a solid sense of self (Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010). So, emerging adulthood is described as a time of identity exploration:

exploration to find a future direction in love (Wängqvist, 2013). Identity can be defined as each individual's perception of self, including values and behaviors, and the influences one has on others (Wang, 2013). Identity formation versus role confusion, as Erikson's fifth stage occurs during late adolescence and/or early adulthood. Marcia's (1966) delineation of the four identity statuses according to dimensions of exploration and commitment is remarkable in adolescent psychosocial development and lifespan identity development. Marcia and colleagues' studies result in four Identity Statuses like: foreclosure, identity diffusion, moratorium, and identity achievement. The foreclosure status is formed when a commitment is made without exploring alternatives, which are based on accepted parental ideas and beliefs without challenge. Identity diffusion is the mark of those who have neither explored nor made commitments across life-defining areas. Moratoriums denote those who are struggling and concerned. The most mature status, achievement identity, is characterized by a successful exploration of identity choices and commitment to preferred options. By extending Marcia's identity status approach to women's development, Josselson (1996) suggested that the identity status of young women predicts the ways in which they deal with challenges throughout adulthood, a period in which topics such as love, intimacy, and jobs and so on become more important.

The human being has a general desire to love and belong to someone, which is usually satisfied within an intimate relationship (Perlman, 2007). As individuals enter adulthood, they begin to face the challenge of establishing intimate relationships with others (Cherry, 2013). This stage was described by Erikson (1968) as the crisis of intimacy versus isolation. During this period, the focus of emerging adults is on developing close, intimate relationships with others. The positive outcomes of this stage are the development of close friendships, loving and sexual relationships. Erikson believed that it is vital that people develop close and committed relationships with others. Success leads to strong relationships, while failure results in loneliness and isolation. Therefore, love is an important

factor in the identity explorations of adults and explorations of love in emerging adulthood. The adults tend to be involved in a deeper level of intimacy, and the implicit question is more identity focused: given the kind of person I am, what kind of person do I wish to have as a partner through life (Arnett, 2000). This is a time when two individuals are eager and willing to share thoughts and behaviors that seem to provide a sense of definition for who they are, or in Erikson's (1963) words, to "fuse one's identity with that of other's", perhaps the most visible marker of these identity changes (and intimacy as a result of love) is through marriage (Cook & Jones, 2002).

Erikson (1968) believed that having a fully formed sense of self is essential to being able to form intimate relationships. Studies have demonstrated that those with a poor sense of self tend to have less committed relationships and are more likely to suffer emotional isolation, loneliness, and depression (Cook & Jones, 2002). On the other hand, knowledge of self in relation with another in romantic relationships is important for identity formation that everyone attempts to construct a coherent sense of self that embodies physiological, psychological, and social-emotional attributes. Therefore, people try to attain a balance between what they think of themselves, their perceptions of what others expect them to become, and what they will reveal to others for achieving a healthy sense of identity. So, self-knowledge can result in love as a basis of intimate relationships.

Zick Rubin (1970) suggested that romantic love as an interpersonal attitude is formed by *attachment*, *caring* and *intimacy*. By comparing styles of love to the primary color wheel, John Lee (1973) suggested three primary styles of love such as Eros (a passionate physical and emotional love), Ludos (a love that is played as a game) and Storge (an affectionate love that slowly develops from friendship), he gained another three different secondary love styles from combining primary colors to create complementary colors, like Mania (Eros + Ludos) (love that is driven rationally and realistically), Pragma (Ludos + Storge) (possessive love),

Agape (Eros + Storge) (selfless altruistic love). Love as an index of intimate relationship, in its various forms acts as an important facilitator of marital relationships, the variable that can be predicted by everyone's self-knowledge.

Because of limited studies in the field of love and identity correlation, many of the studies cited here, are about intimacy as a result of love relationships. Some researches emphasize the empirical importance of considering relationship characteristics when examining emerging adult identity process (Johnson, 2012), however, the interest of researchers in studying identity and merging it with intimacy is an indication of strong conceptual relations between the developmental stages. A strong identity prepares the adolescent for succeeding in intimacy and love stages. (Markstrom & Kalmanir, 2001); Frisén& Wängqvist (2011) found that the position in the identity formation process is related to romantic relationships. The study of Kacerguis & Adams (1980) showed that ego identity and more advanced stages of identity development were associated with higher levels of intimacy formation. Some studies showed that there is a direct correlation between achievement identity and foreclosure identity with triple love components. Likewise, identity status is capable of predicting intimacy and commitment (Mansoobifar, Mujembaria & Keybollahib, 2012). Achievement moratorium, and prohibited identities have an effective role in attitudes of intimate relationships (Keybollahi, Mansoobifar & Mujembari, 2012). In a meta-analysis of the relationship between identity and intimacy, Årseth, Kroger, Martinussen & Marcia (2009) concluded that identity and intimacy interact with each other. In a longitudinal study, Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke (2010) found that identity achievement as an integrative identity construct measured at age 24, fully mediated the association between earlier ego development and later intimacy, at age 25. Also, intimacy with a partner was strongly predicted by ego development during adolescence. Bosch & Curran (2011) found that a balanced identity style was associated with positive relationship quality, whereas an accommodative identity style

(like achieved identity status) was associated with negative relationship quality (lower commitment, lower satisfaction, lower love, higher conflict, and higher ambivalence) in couples. Montgomery (2005) found greater intimacy in both males and females was associated with less self-consciousness but more passion, commitment-related beliefs, and psychosocial identity. Schiedel and Marcia (1985) also examined the connection of identity and intimacy in females and found that males and females did not differ in their levels of identity status, but results of Buckler's study (2005) indicated that intimacy was a predictor of identity in males but not in females.

According to this literature, the goal of this research is studying the relationship between identity statuses and love attitudes, and the role of identity statuses in predicting love attitudes in married men and women. To achieve this goal, this research is going to answer this question: is there a significant relationship between identity statuses and love attitudes, and to what extent can identity statuses predict the love attitudes in married men and women?

Method

The research method is descriptive and makes correlations. The research population includes all married people living in Qazvin City (Iran). The sample size was two hundred married people, 96 of which were male (ranging in age from 24 to 72) and 104 were female (ranging in age from 22 to 70) who were selected from five different regions of Qazvin City (Iran) through a convenience method. The Pearson's correlation coefficient and analysis of stepwise regression used to analyze the data had been collected by the following scales that were administered individually by going to the homes of the research subjects.

Measures

Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status-2nd version. EOM-EIS-II is a self-report questionnaire which contains 64 items that reflect each of the four identity statuses (identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, diffusion) for two ideological domain areas (politics, religion, occupation, and lifestyle) and interpersonal domain areas (friendships, dating, gender roles, recreation). Because of studying the love attitudes of married men and women, in this study, the second part of this scale consists of interpersonal domains in which 32 items were used. Each participant's four status scores are converted to standard scores, and the status with the highest standard score becomes the participant's classification. The reliability of the whole questionnaire in Rahimy-nezhad's study (2001) with using Cronbach's alpha was .76. In this study, using Cronbach's alpha, reliability of scale obtained .79. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for subscales were given in Table 1.

The Love Attitude Scale. Attitudes towards love were assessed using the short form of the Love Attitude Scale created by Hendrick and Hendrick (1986), based on Lee's (1973) colors of love model. The questionnaire combines attitudes toward one's current partner with attitudes about love in general. This scale is broken into 6 subscales (7 items each) each of which represents a different love style: Eros (passionate love), Ludos (game-playing love), Storage (friendship love), Pragma (practical love), Mania (possessive, dependent love), and Agape (altruistic love). The LAS-Short form has 24 items that require the respondent to indicate how much he/she agrees or disagrees with the statement on a five-point Likert scale. Each participant receives six subscale scores, based on the mean score for a particular subscale. The reliability of this scale in Noori & Janbozorgi's research (2012) using Cronbach's alpha was 0.89. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated at 0.82 for in a high range of intra-consistency. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for subscales were given in Table 1.

Result

Table1
Love attitudes & Identity statuses: Descriptive Statistics (N = 200)

Sex		Eros	Ludus	Storage	Pragma	Mania	Agape	Identity achievement	Moratorium	Foreclosure	Identity Diffusion
Female	M	16.36	11.91	14.12	15.08	14.55	15.76	37.15	26.61	27.36	23.91
	SD	3.65	3.71	4.69	3.46	4.09	4.08	6.10	7.35	8.30	6.64
	N	104									
Male	M	17.35	12.35	15.47	15.13	15.26	17.88	36.88	27.26	25.8	25.94
	SD	3.80	4.02	4.53	3.42	3.76	2.67	7.05	8.76	10.29	8.33
	N	96									
Total	M	16.84	12.12	14.77	15.11	14.89	16.78	37.02	26.92	26.65	24.89
	SD	3.74	3.85	4.65	3.43	3.94	3.62	6.56	8.05	9.32	7.55
	N	200									
Subscales Details	Range	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6
	n of items	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
	α	.79	.49	.80	.50	.63	.81	.68	.69	.80	.68

In Table 1 the mean proportion for women and men in love attitudes (Eros=16.36, 17.35. Ludus=11.91, 12.35. Storage= 14.12, 15.47. Pragma= 15.08, 15.13. Mania=14.55, 15.26. & Agape=15.76, 17.88) and identity statuses

(Identity achievement= 37.15, 36.88. Moratorium= 26.61, 27.26. Foreclosure=27.36, 25.8 and Identity Diffusion=23.9, 25.94) is respectively reported.

Table 2
Correlations of Identity Status & Love Attitudes

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Eros	—									
2.Ludus	.071	—								
3.Storage	.61**	.18*	—							
4.Pragma	.301**	.14*	.37**	—						
5.Mania	.161*	.29**	.15*	.30**	—					
6.Agape	.38**	.05	.39**	.10	.30**	—				
7.Identity achievement	.29**	.16*	.24**	.27**	.13	.18**	—			
8.Moratorium	-.03	.22**	.08	.09	.09	.18**	.01	—		
9.Foreclosure	.11	-.07	.17*	.11	.06	.13	.04	.28**	—	
10.Identity Diffusion	-.02	.12	.06	.04	.08	.11	-.15*	.56**	.34**	—

** $P \leq 0.01$ * $P \leq 0.05$

The results from the participants show that there was a strong positive linear correlation between achievement identity and love attitudes like Eros (N: 200=.29, P≤.00), Storage (N: 200=.24, P≤.00), Agape (N: 200=.27, P≤.00) & Pragma (N: 200=.18, P≤.00), also table [2] shows significant correlation between Moratorium with Ludus (N: 200=.22, P≤.00) & Agape (N: 200=.18, P≤.00) and there is positive correlation between Foreclosure with Storage (N: 200=.17, P≤.00).

Table 3
Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Identity Status Predicting Love Attitudes in Men & Women

Women (N: 104)	Predictor	R	R ²	B	□
	Constant			62.51	
1	Identity achievement	.30	.09	.68**	.30
2	Identity achievement	.40	.15	.68**	.30
	Foreclosure			.43**	.25
Men (N:94)	Predictor	R	R ²	B	□
	Constant			62.73	
1	Identity achievement	.40	.16	.83**	.40

**P≤.01

The results of Table 3 indicate predictive role of achievement identity status in attitudes toward love in married women [R²=.30, F (1,102) = 10.09 P ≤.02], also, achievement & foreclosure identity statuses are able to predict love attitudes in married women [R²=.40, F (2,101) = 9.38 P ≤.00]. The correlation of achieved & foreclosure identity statuses is direct in

women. The results of this table also show the predictive role of achievement identity status in attitudes toward love in men [$R^2=.16$, $F(1, 94) = 18.43$ $P \leq .00$]. The correlation of achieved identity statuses with love attitudes is also direct in men.

Discussion & Conclusion

The current study found that there is a significant relationship between identity statuses and love attitudes in married men & women. It was observed that identity achievement has a strong correlation with friendship, passionate, dependent and altruistic love. The foreclosure status has a significant correlation with practical love.

A passionate lover is sentimental and very relaxed with his partner. Lovers with manic and storage love attitudes place much importance on commitment and relationship, and avoid infidelity to preserve the trust in the marital relationship. Agapic lovers will also remain faithful to their partners: for them marriage and children are sacred trusts. On the other hand, individuals with identity achievement take on new challenges, an ever-evolving sense of self also characterized by moderate or high levels of well-being, and they are active in forming, evaluating, and strengthening their commitments. Foreclosure and achievement lovers tended to be associated with the lowest levels of health risk behaviors like engaging in high risk relationships. Also, in collectivist and traditional cultures like Iran, where arranged marriage is common, practical love can be correlated with a foreclosure status. Thus, we can establish positive and direct relationships between identity status and the attitudes of love.

Another finding was that the predictive role of achieved and foreclosed identity statuses for love attitudes in women and the role of achieved identity status in predicting love attitudes in men was confirmed. Gilligan (1982) suggested that identity and intimacy were fused psychosocial constructs in females, where identity development depended partially on their relationship with a love partner, as the female identity and intimacy

developed several years ago, she believes "...in all women's descriptions, identity is defined in a context of relationship and judged by a standard of responsibility and care...", but Schiedel and Marcia (1985) believed that females have the ability to overcome issues regarding intimacy prior to their identity development. This is fairly strong evidence for Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial personality development, that achieving identity predicts intimacy for men. The predictive role of foreclosure status in the love attitudes of women can be explained according to Josselson (1996) that females, more than males, have made identity commitments without exploration. These commitments are primarily an extension of parental or childhood choices. These people have a high need for security, which is derived from maintaining close connections with family. Women with foreclosure status have a strong desire to satisfy others; they try to hold traditional views of their family.

According to the human developmental theory of Ericson (1968), a coherent sense of identity should be achieved before one can commit to love involvement. The finding of Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke's study (2010) highlights the integrative function of relational identity for later mature intimacy. According to a love definition that involves intimacy and commitment to long-term relationships, which is defined by high levels of communication and closeness, we can see that previous research into love and identity formation revealed that identity formation was related to love styles, love attitudes and love factors like intimacy, commitment and attachment. So, according to Arnett, (2000) since the process of identity exploration in adults is different from that of adolescents, love as the key component in creating and maintaining lasting relationships is mutually closely connected. The findings of Årseth et al. (2009) also support this idea that identity and intimacy have interaction and that the one amplifies the other. According to Ericsson, the transition from identity crisis and achieving a successful identity requires intimate relationships with the love partner, the love that led to a revision of the previous identity, so,

everyone evaluates his identity through his love partner's attitudes. Erikson's hypothesis about the sequencing of identity and intimacy (as a result of love) was confirmed in this research.

Additionally, according to Wängqvist (2013) when people are involved in close relationships, they also get to see themselves through the eyes of someone who knows them intimately. Thus, love involves the exploration of these identity issues, and also serves as contexts for identity formation. So, romantic relationships offer a context for the further development of the sense of identity, as serious involvement in a love relationship requires that the individual take a position that supports both the relationship and the self (Montgomery, 2005). This finding is compatible with previous studies on identity and love or intimacy development such as Kacerguis & Adams (1980), Montgomery (2005), Johnson (2012), Markstrom & Kalmanir (2001), Frisén & Wängqvist (2011), Mansoobifar et al. (2012), Bosch & Curran (2011) and Keybollahi et al. (2012).

In summary, according to Ericson (1968) identity development is a process including both a period of exploration and achievement commitments. So, both identity achievement and the love relationship are characterized by strong commitments in married people, therefore, we can conclude that a strong ego development is basic to the formation of mutual relationships and the successful integration of aspects of the self and others. So, planning programs to develop the ego of youth in families and related institutions is a good predictor of success in marital life.

However, it is possible that identity statuses and love attitudes are independent of each other and can be moderated by other variables. Since in this study, the relationship between the identity statuses and attitudes towards love were studied in married people with different lengths of marriage, future research should be conducted with a cross-sectional method in different samples to study other control and moderated variables.

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Received: 13 / 2 /2014
 Revised : 25/ 10/ 2014
 Accepted: 9 / 11/ 2014