



**Predicting Pathology and Motivational Level of Master's Students of Psychology Based on the Identity Style and Individual History**

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**Predicting Pathology and Motivational Level of Master's Students of Psychology Based on the Identity Style and Individual History**

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**Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to predict the level of pathology and the level of motivation of the master students of psychology based on the style of identity and individual history. The research method was descriptive-correlational and the statistical population consisted of all master's students of psychology from Shiraz and Marvdasht Azad University. A total of 300 master students were selected through availability sampling. They completed Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale and identity style, a researcher-made personal history questionnaire and motivation level questionnaire. Data were analyzed using multiple regression coefficients in a synchronous manner. The results showed that normative and confused identities can positively and significantly predict the level of pathology in students. But the information and commitment styles of identity were not predictable. Also, informational identity, normative identity and confused identity can significantly predict students' motivational level. But identity commitment could not be predicted. On the other hand, the results showed that individual histories can positively and significantly predict the level of pathology. Also, personal history can positively and significantly predict the level of motivation of students.

**Keywords:** Pathology Level, Motivational Level, Identity Style, Individual History



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## **Introduction**

The study of psychopathology is an attempt to find out why people behave, think and feel in abnormal, unexpected and sometimes strange ways. Psychologists consider several different features, including personal neurosis, disability, defects in social norms, and malfunction, in assessing whether an abnormal behavior is inevitable, but none alone provides a completely satisfactory definition (Mohammadi et al., 2014). On the other hand, motivation is the general term for identifying the common ground of needs, cognition and excitement. The motivation is divided into two parts: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is a natural tendency to address desires and abilities that derive from psychological needs, curiosity and innate endeavors for growth. Extrinsic motivation is affected by incentives and environmental outcomes, such as money or food. Different factors and motivations are involved in selecting a job and talent is an important factor in the success or failure of individuals in their jobs and their chosen discipline. The interest and desire in many aspects of human life is prevailing. A person without an interest in an activity has no incentive to do that. Lack of early interest may increase dissatisfaction with the activity involved. Job opportunities are an effective factor in choosing a job (Enayati Novinfar et al., 2012).

Individual identity is created through similarity and unity, as well as unconscious attempts to persevere a personality and a sense of shared responsibility for the ideals and social identity of a group (Shirdel et al., 2014). Marsia (1980) presented a pattern of identity status to explain the process of transformation and identity structure. In this template, based on the level of personal search, which is called identity crisis, issues related to person and position, such as the search for religious beliefs and the level of commitment, such as a confused obligation are presented.

Barzonsky proposes a model that emphasizes the difference in the social cognitive process of youth in the construction, maintenance and adaptation of their own identities. This pattern points to a significant difference in the involvement or avoidance of different assignments, such as decision making, solving personal issues, and identity issues. Assumed identity styles are used at least in three levels: information, normative and confusion/ avoidance (Barzozsky, 1998). An individual's history is basically a story of his life. To obtain facts and information about the development and growth of a person from birth, various sources have been used (Shamloo, 2016). In individual history, events and potential injuries that have affected the person are



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considered (Mansoor, 1990). Sadiq et al. (2014) concluded that a combination of conscience, consensus and extroversion is likely to be involved in normative and informational identity styles. Mohammadi et al. (2014) showed that individual histories are related to pathology. Rahimi-Nejad et al (2012) showed that the confusion/avoidance style was significantly influencing depression. The results of Cartis et al. (2011) showed that there was a significant relationship between mental health and identity and individual's history of life. In Smithina (2010) study, the results showed that there was a high correlation between student's job identity and internal motivation for choosing a study and higher university satisfaction from their job. In Abedian and Shah Hosseini's research (2012), it was concluded that factors associated with individual motivations are more effective than selecting nursing in comparison with other factors. Enayati Novinifer et al. (2012) concluded that economic, individual, institutional, educational, national, and sociocultural factors influenced the selection field of study by students. Ferahani et al. (2011) showed that identity can be associated with problematic behaviors. Therefore, according to the above articles, the purpose of the present study was to predict the level of pathology and the level of motivation of the undergraduate students of psychology based on the style of identity and individual history.

### **Method**

The research method was descriptive-correlational and the statistical population included all the students of the Master of Psychology in Azad University of Shiraz and Marvdasht. A sample of 150 graduate students from the Shiraz and 150 from the Marvdasht Unit completed research tools based on their collaboration with the research community.

**Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale:** this scale (Lovibond and Lovibond, 1995) is a collection of three self-reporting scales for assessing negative emotional states in depression, anxiety and stress. The results of the correlation coefficient between the three factors of the questionnaire in Anthony et al. study showed a correlation coefficient of 0.48 between depression and stress, 0.53 between anxiety and tension and 0.28 between anxiety and depression. Validity and reliability of this questionnaire in Iran have been investigated by Samani and Jokar (2007), which has the re-test validity for the depression, anxiety and stress scale of 0.80, 0.77 and 0.77, respectively. Cronbach's alpha for depression, anxiety and tension were 0.81, 0.74 and 0.78, respectively. In



the present study, the reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.81 for the total score obtained by Cronbach's alpha.

**The Berzonsky identity styles inventory:** The questionnaire consists of 40 questions, 11 questions in the style of informational identity, 9 questions related to normative identity, 10 questions related to confusion / avoidance identity, and 10 questions are related to the scale of commitment. This questionnaire was standardized by Ghazanfari (2004). In this research, the reliability of the whole questionnaire was 0.73. The reliability of informational, normative, confusion or avoidance and commitment styles were 0.67, 0.52, 0.62 and 0.77, respectively. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient were 0.81, 0.69, 0.73 and 0.74 for informational, normative, confused or avoidance and commitment styles, respectively.

**Individual History Questionnaire:** A researcher-made questionnaire was used to examine the individual's history. This tool examined the history of a person's life, which includes important events of life of individuals and can affect his subsequent behaviors. The questionnaire consists of four questions that address the personal and family problems of individuals. High scores in this questionnaire mean more individual problems. Validity of the questionnaire was investigated through factor analysis using main components method and Varimax rotation. According to the histogram diagram, the specific value was higher than 1.5 and the correlation was higher than 0.30 of one factor. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used for reliability analysis. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.71, which is acceptable.

**Motivational level questionnaire:** A researcher-made questionnaire was used to study the students' motivational level. This tool seeks to investigate the motivation of psychology students to choose a course in psychology at the master's degree. The questionnaire has 14 questions that measure four areas of success, economic dimension, solving personal problems and interest. Validity of the questionnaire was evaluated through factor analysis using the main component method and varimax rotation. According to the charts, the specific value of higher than 1.5 and the correlation of higher than 0.30 were obtained for interest and solving personal and economics problems and finding opportunity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used for reliability analysis. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.73, which is relatively reliable.

## **Findings**



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In this section, the research findings are presented in two sections: descriptive and inferential.

**Table 1.** Frequency distribution and percentage of respondents by gender

<b>Class</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Girls</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Boys</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2.** The mean and the standard deviations of the studied variables

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Identity style</b>	<b>Informational identity</b>	<b>35.006</b>	<b>6.62</b>
	<b>Normative identity</b>	<b>32.12</b>	<b>37.34</b>
	<b>Confused identity</b>	<b>33.96</b>	<b>7.72</b>
	<b>Commitment identity</b>	<b>43.13</b>	<b>10.05</b>
	<b>Personal history</b>	<b>16.41</b>	<b>2.67</b>
<b>pathology</b>	<b>Level of pathology (total)</b>	<b>65.70</b>	<b>8.81</b>
	<b>Depression</b>	<b>16.45</b>	<b>4.35</b>
	<b>Anxiety</b>	<b>18.23</b>	<b>3.23</b>
	<b>Stress</b>	<b>17.89</b>	<b>3.56</b>
<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Motivational level (Total)</b>	<b>56.21</b>	<b>7.2</b>
	<b>Interest and solving personal issues</b>	<b>32.12</b>	<b>3.45</b>
	<b>Economic and opportunity</b>	<b>24.09</b>	<b>4.23</b>



**Table 3.** Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Identity Style and Student's Pathology and Motivational Level

Variables		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Identity styles	Informational identity	1									
	Normative identity	0.31*	1								
	Confused identity	0.05	0.06	1							
	Commitment identity	0.43*	0.25*	0.09	1						
pathology	Pathology (Total)	0.08	0.35*	0.43*	0.33*	1					
	Depression	-0.06	0.23*	0.37*	0.06	0.43*	1				
	Anxiety	0.11*	0.06	0.33*	0.09	0.39*	0.54**	1			
	Stress	0.05	0.17*	0.27*	0.00	0.54*	0.47**	0.54*	1		
Motivatio n	Motivation level (Total)	0.36*	0.26*	-	0.04	0.28*	0.39**	0.47*	0.25**	1	
	Interest and personal issues	0.42*	0.12*	0.33*	0.15	0.21*	0.27**	0.23*	0.33**	0.43*	1
	Economic and finding opportunity	0.23*	0.37*	-	0.06	-	0.09	-	0.03**	0.54*	0.36*

**Table 4.** Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Individual History with Pathology Level and Motivational Level



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Variables		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Personal history		1							
pathology	Pathology (Total)	0.70* *	1						
	Depression	0.43* *	0.43**	1					
	Anxiety	0.37* *	0.39**	0.54* *	1				
	Stress	0.39* *	0.54**	0.63* *	0.54* *	1			
Motivation	Motivation level (Total)	0.52* *	0.28**	0.39* *	0.47* *	0.25* *	1		
	Interest and personal issues	0.43* *	0.21**	0.27* *	0.23* *	0.33* *	0.43* *	1	
	Economic and finding opportunity	0.54* *	- 0.27**	0.09	- 0.11*	0.03	0.54* *	0.36* *	1

**Question 1: Does identity style significantly predict students' pathology level?** To investigate this research question, multiple regression coefficients were used simultaneously. The results are presented in the table below.

**Table 5.** Multiple regression results to predict the level of pathology based on identity styles

Predicting variable		R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P<	Beta	t	P<
Identity style	Informational identity	0.56	0.31	11.72	0.001	-0.12	-1.03	0.08
	Normative identity					0.23	3.01	0.003
	Confused identity					0.63	5.76	0.001



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	<b>Commitment identity</b>					<b>0.11</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>0.11</b>
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As the table above shows, the results of simultaneous multiple regressions were significant in order to predict the level of pathology from the identity styles, and the value of F was 11.33. Normative identity with a beta coefficient of 0.26 and confused identities with beta coefficient of 0.63 can positively and significantly predict the level of pathology in students. But the informational identity style and commitment style did not predict the level of pathology. Also, the value of R<sup>2</sup> indicated that 0.31 of variance in the level of pathology is predictable by identity styles. Therefore, as the person's identity progresses to normative or confused identity, it is more likely that his pathology problems will increase.

**Second Question: The style of identity can predict students' motivational level significantly?** To investigate this research question, simultaneous multiple regression coefficients were used. The results are shown in the following table.

**Table 6 - Multiple regression results for predicting motivational level based on identity styles**

<b>Predicting variable</b>		<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P&lt;</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>P&lt;</b>
<b>Identity style</b>	<b>Informational identity</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>47.52</b>	<b>0.001</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>0.002</b>
	<b>Normative identity</b>					<b>-0.12</b>	<b>-2.2</b>	<b>0.02</b>
	<b>Confused identity</b>					<b>-0.32</b>	<b>-1.07</b>	<b>0.001</b>
	<b>Commitment identity</b>					<b>-0.49</b>	<b>-1.5</b>	<b>0.06</b>

As the table above shows, the results of simultaneous multiple regressions was significant to predict the level of motivation on identity styles, and the value of F was 47.52. Information identity with beta coefficient of 0.22, normative identity with beta coefficient of -0.12, confused identity with beta coefficient of -0.26 can significantly predict student's level of motivation. But,





commitment identity cannot predict it. Also, the value of R<sup>2</sup> indicated that 0.44 of the variance of the level of motivation was predictable by identity styles. Therefore, as the person's identity goes towards the informational identity, it is more likely that the level of his motivation will increase, and conversely, as the person's identity progresses to normative or confused identity, it is more likely that his level of motivation will decrease.

Question Three: Is Individual History Significantly Predicting Student Pathology? To investigate this research question, simultaneous multiple regression coefficients was used. The results are presented in the table below.

**Table 7** - Multiple regression results to predict the level of pathology based on individual histories

Predicting variable	Criterion variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P<	B	Beta	t	P<
Personal history	Pathology level	0.70	0.49	20.89	0.001	0.53	0.49	6.49	0.001

As shown in Table 7, the results of simultaneous multiple regressions were significant in order to predict the level of pathology based on individual histories, and the value of F was 20/89. Individual history with a beta of 0.49 can predict positively and significantly the level of pathology. Also, the value of R<sup>2</sup> indicated that 0.49 percent of the variance of the pathology level is predicted by individual histories.

**Question 4: Does individual history significantly predict students' motivation?** To investigate this research question, simultaneous multiple regression coefficients were used. The results are presented in the table below.

**Table 8:** Multiple regression results to predict the level of motivation based on individual history

Predicting variable	Criterion variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P<	B	Beta	t	P<
Personal history	Motivation level	0.52	0.27	24.35	0.001	0.34	0.52	5.24	0.001



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As Table 8 shows, the results of simultaneous multiple regressions were significant to predict the level of motivation based on individual history, and the value of F was 24.35. Individual history with a beta of 0.52 can positively and significantly predict students' motivational level. Also, the predicted R<sup>2</sup> indicated that 0.27% of the variance of the level of motivation is predicted by individual history.

### **Discussion:**

Question 1: Does identity style significantly predict students' pathology level? The results showed that predictive regression of pathology level is significant on identity styles, and normative identity and confused identity can positively and significantly predict the level of pathology in students. However, the identity intelligence style and identity commitment did not predict the level of pathology. These results are consistent with the studies by Rahimi-Nezhad et al. (2012) and Shirdel et al. (2013). In explaining this finding, it can be said that individual identity forms unity and continuity, as well as unconscious attempts to persevere personality and, on the other hand, the sense of shared responsibility for the ideals and social identity of a group (Sadeghi et al., 2014). The style of informational identity seems to be seeking to achieve itself. It seeks to consolidate individual values and dreams and ultimately support personal growth. Therefore, psychological pathology should probably be low in this identity style and in individuals with low-level identity. Because it is probably one of the main factors affecting the level of mental health failures in goal setting and is aimed at empowering people with the style of informational identity. On the other hand, in the primary identity, a person accepts the established roles rather than prove them, and since, in many cases, it is difficult or impossible to obtain the opinion of others, the person is at risk of value uncertainty and ultimately the defined identity is questioned based on the foundations of conventional social norms and suffers numerous psychological harm. Finally, the confused identity style, with disregard for the norms and neglect of its realization, and ultimately a kind of spiritual wanderings, is a great readiness for vulnerability. If the strong point of the style of informational identity is accurate goal setting, the main disadvantage of the style of confused identity is wandering.

Second Question: Does the identity style significantly predict students' motivational level? The results showed that predictive regression of motivational level is significant on identity styles, and information identity, normative identity and confused identity can significantly predict



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students' motivational level. However, identity commitment cannot predict it. These results are consistent with the studies of Aghajani et al. (2008) Farahani, Shahrari and Moradi (2011). The motive structure refers to behaviors that are relevant to development and, in principle, determine energy and behavior (Dipesco and Trichami, 2015). Motivation is defined as the desire to maximize efforts to achieve maximum results (Kian et al., 2014). In such a way, the individual uses all his ability to achieve the planned goals and tries to fight and eliminate the obstacles ahead.

But, the important point is that the motivation is a dependent variable. In the way, we need to look at the factors influencing it. Therefore, as stated, identity styles can be expected to have a meaningful and positive relationship between the style of informational identity and the level of motivation. In sum, it can be said that a person with an informational style of identity has the required energy to achieve goals and is highly motivated due to high abilities in choosing the goals. In the normative identity style, due to external targeting, as soon as external amplifiers are lost, motivation is also reduced, and in a avoidance or confusion identity, motivation is still wandering like identity, and the person frequently moves from one goal to another.

Question Three: Is Individual History Significantly Predicting Student Pathology? To investigate this research question, simultaneous multiple regression coefficients were used. The results showed that prediction regression of pathology level was significant based on individual history and personal history can positively and significantly predict the level of pathology. These results were consistent with results of Lewis et al. (2010) and Cartis, Eugen and Colin (2011). The study of psychiatric pathology is an attempt to find out why people behave, think and feel in abnormal, unexpected and sometimes strange ways. Therefore, it can be said that the level of pathology is still one of the qualitative variable to be studied, and probably the study of individual history is one of the best methods for predicting the level of human pathology.

In personal history, you should look for the events and potential injuries that shadow personal development. It may be the events that affect the environment entirely (Mansoor, 1371). In a general and theoretical summary, it can be said that individual history is the study of several factors affecting mental health or mental vulnerability of individuals. These factors, as a multivariate variable, determine the conditions of activity for the individual and can determine the amount and type of injury.



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Question 4: Does individual history significantly predict students' motivation? To investigate this question, simultaneous multiple regression coefficients were used. The results showed that predictive regression of motivational level is significant based on individual history and personal history can positively and significantly predict students' motivational level. These results are consistent with the results of Mohammadi et al. (2014), Abedian and Shah Hosseini (2012), and Smithana, 2010). In explaining this finding, it can be said that in individual history, one should look for the events and possible injuries that shadow a person transformation. On the other hand, motivation is the general term for identifying the common ground of needs, cognition and excitement. The behavioral motivational effects are: effort, latency, choice stability, response probability, facial expressions and physical states (Adams et al., 2005). But it should be noted that the motive is dependent on a variable. So, you have to talk about motivation. On the same basis, in a causal model, individual history is likely to be a significant and influential variable on the level of motivation. As with a simple behavioral explanation, the past history of a person determines his motivation. Finally, at least by relying on behavioral studies, the prediction of motivation based on individual history seems obvious.

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