

CHAPTER V

Summary

In the present investigation an attempt was made to study the effects of age, sex differences, sex roles and social class on ego identity, purpose-in-life (PIL) and present and future self-concept of Indian adolescents.

Issues and Objectives

The present investigation sought to answer the following queries:

- (1) What is the effect of age on ego identity of the adolescents?
- (2) What is the effect of age on purpose-in-life of the adolescents?
- (3) What is relationship between age and present and future self-concepts of the adolescents?
- (4) Do adolescent boys and girls differ from each other in their ego identity?
- (5) Do boys and girls differ from each other in their purpose-in-life?

- (6) Do boys and girls differ from each other in their present and future self-concepts?
- (7) What is the effect of sex role on ego identity?
- (8) What is the effect of sex roles on purpose-in-life?
- (9) What is the relationship between sex roles and present and future self-concepts?
- (10) What is the effect of social class on ego identity?
- (11) What is the effect of social class on purpose-in-life of adolescents?
- (12) What is the relationship between social class and present and future self-concept of the adolescents?
- (13) What is the effect of the interaction between age, sex, sex roles and social class on ego identity?
- (14) What is the effect of the interaction between age, sex, sex roles and social class on purpose-in-life?

Hypotheses

The underlying hypotheses were as follows:

1. The nature of ego identity is a function of the age of the subject.
2. The nature of purpose-in-life is a function of the age of the subject.

3. The nature of present and future self-concept is a function of the age of the subject.
4. The nature of ego identity is a function of the sex differences.
5. The nature of purpose-in-life is a function of the sex differences.
6. The nature of present and future self-concept is a function of the sex differences.
7. The nature of ego identity is a function of the sex role of the subject.
8. The nature of purpose-in-life is a function of the sex role of the subject.
9. The nature of present and future self-concept is a function of the sex role of the subject.
10. The nature of ego identity is a function of the social class of the subject.
11. The nature of purpose-in-life is a function of the social class of the subject.
12. The nature of present and future self-concept is a function of the social class of the subject.

13. The nature of ego identity is a function of the interactive effect of age, sex differences, sex roles and social class of the subject.
14. The nature of purpose-in-life is a function of the interactive effect of age, sex differences, sex roles and social class of the subject.

Sample

The final sample for the present study comprised 1200 adolescents from various English medium schools of Baroda. The sample was equally divided in terms of age (two age groups - 15 to 16 years, and 17 to 18 years), sex (boys and girls), and social class (upper, middle and lower class). For classifying the subjects in terms of their sex roles, the median split of masculinity and femininity scores were computed.

The Variables

The major independent variables in the present study were:

- I. Age of the subject - 15 to 16 years and 17 to 18 years.
- II. Sex of the subject - boys and girls.
- III. Sex role of the subject - androgynous, masculine, feminine and undifferentiated.
- IV. Social class of the subject - upper, middle and lower class.

The dependent variables in the present study were:

- I. Ego identity.
- II. Purpose-in-life.
- III. Present and future self-concept.

Tools

In the present study, the following tools were used for measuring the independent variables:

- (A) Kuppuswamy's scale of socioeconomic status, URBAN (1983).
- (B) Sex role inventory (Patel & Gon, 1987).

The following tools were used for measuring the dependent variables:

- (A) An Indian adaptation of a short measure of Eriksonian ego identity (Srivastava, 1982).
- (B) Purpose-in-life scale (Crumbaugh, 1968).
- (C) Coleman's sentence completion test of self-concepts (Coleman, Herzberg & Morris, 1977).

Data Collection

Phase I: Principals of the schools were contacted and the time and place for collecting data was fixed.

Phase II: The students were met in their classrooms and the

booklets containing all the five tests were given to them.

Analysis

In order to study the main and interaction effects of age, sex, sex roles and social class on ego identity and purpose-in-life, the data were treated to a $2 \times 2 \times 4 \times 3$ analysis of variance (ANOVA).

To find out significant differences between the means, 't' tests were computed.

Chi squares were computed to assess the relationship between the dependent variable present and future self-concept and each of the independent variables i.e. age, sex, sex roles and social class.

Results and Interpretation

The major findings of the present study were as follows:

1. Age had no significant effect on ego identity. A probable reason for this could be that rather than the chronological age per se, a challenging interpersonal environment is more significant in its impact on ego identity achievement. The college environment is a more complex and important social setting where open communication of ideas and minimal

restrictiveness of search for roles are involved all of which aids in the process of establishment and stabilization of ego identity.

2. The younger and older subjects did not differ significantly in their purpose-in-life. A probable reason for this could be that both the two age groups more or less shared problems, attitudes life-styles and experiences specific to late adolescence and hence were similar in their life purpose.

3. The relationship between age and present and future self-concept was found to be non-significant. A probable reason for this could be that it is the cognitive changes during late adolescence and the emergence of formal operational thought structure that makes it possible for adolescents to reflect critically on themselves, on their ideals, their past, present and future. The subjects in the present study were probably too young to have given any serious thought to aspects of the self or might have been in the process of acquiring the cognitive skills necessary for self-perception and introspection.

4. Boys ($M = 7.09$) were higher in their ego identity than girls ($M = 6.81$). A probable reason for this could be that in India, intimacy is more closely related to identity achievement, especially for girls. The woman achieves her identity through intimacy i.e. in a close relationship with a

man, whereas a man attains his identity first, through satisfactory work performance, after which he establishes intimacy with a woman.

5. Boys ($M = 102.68$) and girls ($M = 102.22$) did not differ from each other in their purpose-in-life. This could be due to the fact that the growing awareness and consciousness of women as individuals in their own rights, a condition spurred by the women's liberation and equality movements seems to have resulted in women defining themselves in less stereotypic ways in terms of their conforming behaviour, attitudes, values, potentialities and the amount and kind of work. All this seems to have brought the sexes closer in terms of their purpose-in-life.

6. The relationship between sex of the subject and present and future self-concept was found to be non-significant. A probable reason for this could be that due to industrialization and the changing status of women, men and women have started defining themselves in a markedly similar manner. This has led to women pursuing higher education and entering the work force, thereby becoming financially independent and gaining positive self-confidence in their abilities to deal with the outside world. All this has resulted in the lack of differentiation in boys' and girls' perception of present and future self-concepts.

7. Subjects belonging to different sex role categories

differed significantly in their ego identity. Androgynous (M = 7.57) and masculine (M = 7.35) subjects were significantly higher in their ego identity than feminine subjects (M = 6.63). Undifferentiated subjects (M = 6.16) were lowest in their ego identity. This could be due to the fact that androgynous individuals have a dynamic personality and are disposed toward performing different roles to suit varying situations. They do not restrict their behaviour based on the cultural stereotypes of masculinity and femininity and therefore they have a wider range of strategies for dealing with diverse situations which affects their ego identity achievement. Because the sex-typed individuals are internally motivated to maintain a self-image as masculine or feminine, and keep their behaviour consistent with an internalized sex role standard they have a limited repertoire of behaviour for dealing with situations. Undifferentiated individuals are characterized by absence of crisis and absence of commitment because they are incapable of the introspection and integration necessary for identity formation.

8. Sex role had a significant effect on purpose-in-life. Androgynous (M = 109.72) subjects were significantly higher in their purpose-in-life than masculine (M = 105.92) and feminine (M = 100.17) subjects. Undifferentiated subjects (M = 93.03) had lowest PIL. One reason for this could be that since androgynous individuals are endowed with a strong sense of ambition and

confidence in their ability they probably set a high and challenging purpose-in-life for themselves. Sex-typed individuals naturally select a more traditional and hence limited set of options in terms of their attitudes and life-choices which lowers their purpose-in-life. Undifferentiated individuals since they do not have a crystallized personality they cannot integrate their lives very well around purposeful goals.

9. The relationship between sex roles and present and future self-concept was found to be statistically significant. Higher percentage of androgynous subjects had a positive present as well as future self-concept followed by masculine, feminine and undifferentiated subjects respectively. This could be due to the fact that androgynous individuals have a more wholesome and flexible personality and they also engage more freely in masculine as well as feminine behaviour in solving present problems and achieving future goals which broadens their self-concept. Narrow sex-typing leads to restricted social competence and rigidity in behaviour and hence a lowered self-concept. Undifferentiated individuals, since they lack ambition and confidence in their abilities, also have a low and pessimistic concept of their future.

10. Subjects belonging to different social class differed significantly in their ego identity. Upper class (M = 7.46) subjects were significantly higher in their ego identity

compared to middle ($M = 6.91$) and lower class ($M = 6.48$) subjects respectively. This could be due to the fact that upper and middle class families are characterized by a wider range and higher level of stimulation which encourages advanced cognitive thinking required for achieving ego identity. They are also more exposed to a wider range of available occupational and ideological roles and commitments as compared to the lower class which results in a higher ego identity achievement.

11. Social class had a significant effect on purpose-in-life. Upper class subjects ($M = 107.45$) had a significantly higher purpose-in-life than middle ($M = 102.93$) and lower class ($M = 96.97$) subjects. A probable reason for this could be that the learning environment in the upper and middle classes as compared to the lower class, seem to be aimed more at setting long-term goals, and they emphasize a stronger sense of control over events and a greater optimism as to the realization of one's future goals. The lower class individuals on the other hand seem many a times to be forced to compromise with situational and societal demands which are different from their personal demands and this lowers their purpose-in-life.

12. The relationship between social class and present and future self-concept was found to be significant. Higher percentage of upper class subjects had a positive self-concept and higher percentage of lower class subjects had a negative

self-concept. This could be due to the fact that parents inculcate in their children the skills, capacities and the personality needed to cope with the typical life circumstances which the child will face as an adult. The socialization practices of the upper and middle class are hence aimed more towards strengthening the self-concept, self-confidence and self-responsibility of the child. Lower class parents are too preoccupied or defeated by their own problems and are hence not able to give adequate attention and guidance to their children. Many of the lower class youth are also poorly educated due to financial constraints and find themselves increasingly penalized in the years ahead all of which results in a lowered self-concept.

13. The age x sex and sex x sex roles interaction effect on ego identity was found to be significant. The three-way age x sex x sex roles and age x sex x social class interaction effects were found to be significant. The four-way interaction effect of age x sex x sex roles x social class on ego identity was also found to be significant. A probable reason for this could be that while differential qualities of males and females are generally reinforced since childhood, with increasing age, this differentiation seems to become more pronounced in the lower class families. Due to the prevailing differential division of roles and abilities the child is subjected to sex-specific role expectations and reinforcements through the socialization process

which influences his or her ego identity achievement.

14. The sex x sex roles interaction effect on purpose-in-life was found to be significant. All other two-way, three-way and four-way interaction effect on ego identity were found to be non-significant. A probable reason for the non-significant interaction effects could be the categorization of variables in terms of their levels which reduced the sample size in each group.

Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

No study is complete by itself. On the basis of the insight gained during the course of the present exploratory study, certain limitations were felt. With a view to overcoming some of these limitations, the following suggestions for further researches in this area are offered:

1. The present study took into consideration adolescents from urban area only. A comparative study of the urban and rural adolescents can be carried out since the social setting and economic conditions are different in urban and rural areas.

2. The present study was restricted to studying high school adolescents between the between the ages of 15 to 18 years. Further research can focus on the significant factors

influencing ego identity, purpose-in-life and self-concept in school as well as college population.

3. The use of an overall ego identity score provides comparatively less information. A more intensive investigation can be carried out in the future using "Marcia's ego identity status interview".

4. The present study obviously has limited generalizability especially in view of the tremendous diversity in language, religion and customs in India. There is a need for further cross-regional research of this type in other parts of India and in other cultures to clarify the effect of sex roles and social class.

5. The effect of other variables such as intelligence, family type, caste, sibling order, etc. on ego identity, self-concept and purpose-in-life can be studied.