

# Identity Styles, Mental Health and Socio-economic Status of Iranian Late Adolescents

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## Abstract

This study examines identity formation among Golestan's late adolescents. Its findings indicate that 94.3% of participants have not experienced an identity crisis. A majority of respondents 33.8% reflected the diffuse-avoidant identity style. No significant difference in identity style exists between late adolescent's males and females. There is a significant difference in identity styles between different age groups. Comparative consequences showed that there isn't significant difference between girls and boys in finding identity style, while there is significant difference between different age groups, which means there is significant difference between 20- 24 year olds in confusion identity style.

Correlation consequences show that there is significant relationship between confusion identity style and identity crisis. It means that those experiencing the identity crisis have more tendencies to face identity diffuse/avoidant. There is also significant negative correlation between confusion identity style and economic-social status, which means the higher the economic and social status, the less is experienced in the confusion identity style. In addition, the results show that there is significant correlation between identity crisis and mental health. It means those girls experiencing identity crisis have lower psychiatric health, while this is different among boys, which means boys who experience identity crisis have higher chance of having mental health.

**Keywords:** identity style, identity crisis, mental health and socio-economic status

## 1. Introduction

This study attempts to identify the identity styles among the late adolescents in Golestan Province and to determine the relationship between identity style, mental health and socio-economic status. Several academic fields, including psychology, sociology, politics, even literature and art relate to identity formation. The issue of identity has been discussed in various sub-fields of psychology, such as social, developmental, pathological and personality psychology. This fact indicates identity's relevance to various fields of study while also demonstrating the vastness of the topic. Identity is an organized sense of self-recognition that includes the values, beliefs and goals to which individuals is commitment (Berzonsky, 1998). Identity helps people to define themselves. If a person's self-definition is contrary to their social reality, s/he will exhibit lack of experience, stress and behavioral problems. Many psychologists believe that the behaviors typically exhibited by adolescents are their natural attempt to define themselves and explore their identity (Ghorbani, 2005).

Identity has myriad meanings. The reason that various synonyms for identity exist e.g., subjective me, objective me, we, self, self-perception, self-imagination, self-awareness, self-image, self-identity, ego, superego and personality is likely due to its multiple meanings (Doran, 2003). Psychologists believe that identity is a necessary and essential aspect of all humans, in all cultures, that continues from birth to death (Zaki, 2003). The peak of identity exploration is during adolescence, and identity achievement typically occurs during the third decade of one's life. Identity is a word that has recently received much attention, especially in the humanities. Shafeabadi and Naseri (2004) define identity as the image that a person creates of him/herself, which may be similar to or different from the image that others have of him/her (Shafeabadi & Naseri 2004).

Berzonsky (1998 July) defines identity as an organized sense of self that consists of values, beliefs and goals that

an individual is committed to them. People differ from each other according to their usage of social-cognitive processes to solve their private issues, make decisions and identify formation process, and apply different ways (Berzonsky, 1998). One of these ways is confusion or avoidant identity style. People with this style avoid from confronting with personal affairs and decisions. If these people keep delayed for a long time, they will show behavioral reactions and are controlled with situational demands and motives (Berzonsky, 2000). In other words we can recognize them as experiencing identity crisis.

In Erikson's view, people who have a strong sense of identity are equipped with confidence and certitude as they enter adulthood. Those who are unsuccessful in achieving a coherent identity experience an identity crisis and display what Erikson called "role diffuse-avoidant." They do not know who or what they are, where they belong or where they want to go (Schultz & Schultz 1998).

Shokrayi (2001) demonstrated that there was no significant difference in identity styles between girl and boy students. Akhavan (2004) found that there is no relationship between individual characteristics (e.g., age, gender and years of education) or the physical constitution of the family (e.g., number of children, gender of children, birth rank and social status of parents) and the adolescents' identity formation. However, a connection was found between educational fields and identity status. Ghazanfari (2003) showed that, as the students' age increased, the percentage that had a successful identity status increased, and the percentage of students that had a confused identity status decreased.

Other studies have found that identity relates to individuals' ability to resolve personal issues and make decisions. Participants with a premature identity (too early identity) possess a primarily normative identity style, those with successful, late identity formation primarily exhibit an informational identity style, and those with confused identity primarily exhibit the diffuse-avoidant identity style (Streitmatter, 1993; Berzonsky, 1994; Aghajanihosseinabadi, 2002).

Daneshvar (1996) has demonstrated that the lower the economic class of the family, the higher that the degree of adolescent identity crisis will be. With the adolescents' increasing age, the incidence of identity crises also increases. Adabi (2000) found that individuals with a confused and late identity had lower levels of mental health compared to people with a successful and premature identity. However, there was not a significant correlation between identity status, mental health and age. The studies mentioned above, along with others conducted on this topic, indicate that the distribution of identity styles and incidence of identity crisis do not vary according to age, gender or socio-economic status. Therefore, the main question of this study is the distribution of identity styles in Golestan Province and whether this distribution depends on age, gender, socio-economic status or general health?

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Participation*

The study's statistical population includes late adolescent's men and late women who live in Golestan Province and who fall between the ages of 20 and 24. A sample size of 400 late adolescent's were selected from the above statistical population using cluster sampling: first, 11 cities in Golestan Province were selected; areas and blocks were selected randomly, with the aid of maps supplied by management and planning organizations of Golestan Province; and finally, participations were selected using stratified random sampling.

### *2.2 Measures*

In this study, the four questionnaires that were used to measure the study's variables are as follows:

- 1) Mental-health questionnaire
- 2) Identity-crisis questionnaire
- 3) Identity-styles questionnaire
- 4) Socio-economic status questionnaire

#### *2.2.1 Mental Health Questionnaire*

This questionnaire was designed by Goldberg in 1972 and has been used to diagnose mild mental disorders in various contexts. This questionnaire with 28 questions was designed by (Goldberg, 2009) originally to increase variance based on factorial analysis. It involves four subscales. The first subscale measures respondents' feelings about their health status and includes physical symptoms; it evaluates perceptions of physical feeling, which often relate to emotional stimulations. The second subscale includes questions about anxiety and insomnia. The third subscale measures respondents' ability to manage the demands of daily life and reveals their feelings about

the way they handle common situations. The fourth subscale includes items associated with serious depression and a clear tendency towards suicidal thoughts. An individual's score is obtained by adding up the scores for the four subscales. The scoring from right to left is zero, one, two, and three. The respondents' scores for each subscale are noted on the bottom of the page, and then the four scores are totaled. The scores 14-21 in each subscale show the seriousness of the participant's situation. This method suggests a cut-off of 22 for men and 21 for women (Ghazanfari, 2003). Moreover, Yaghubi et al. (1995) has found the reliability coefficient for the total scale to be 0.88 and those for the subscales to be 0.66–0.83 using Cronbach's alpha method. Mirhakkak (2001) has also reported the reliability of the above questionnaire to be 0.86. Ghazanfari (2003), drawing from Hashemzadeh et al. (1999), reanalyzed the scales using GHQ-28 and concluded that the reliability of the test is approximately 80%. In this study, the reliability of the test was 0.93 using Cronbach's alpha method.

### 2.2.2 Identity Crisis Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed by Ahmadi at Isfahan University in 1994. For this questionnaire, first, diagnostic topics of identity crisis were selected from various sources. Then, four degrees ranging from weak to intense were assigned to each topic, and for each degree, an option was provided. The options ranged from a lack of identity problem (score of zero) to a serious identity problem (score of three) (Ahmadi, 1993). In this narrative research, the correlation coefficient was calculated between this questionnaire and the diffuse-avoidant identity exploration style of Berzonsky. The correlation coefficient was  $r=0.156$ , which is significant at alpha level 0.01. The test reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha method, which resulted in a score of 0.75, indicating the acceptability of the test for the population being studied.

### 2.2.3 Identity Style Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed by Berzonsky in 1990. It involves a scale of 40 questions and includes an informational scale (11 items), normative scale (9 items), diffuse-avoidant or avoidant scale (10 items) and commitment scale (10 items). The commitment scale is used to reanalyze results and is not considered as an identity style. Individuals' responses take the form of 5-point Likert scales, which range from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Berzonsky has reported the internal reliability of the informational scale to be 0.62, the normative scale to be 0.60 and the diffuse-avoidant or avoidant scale to be 0.73. In a study conducted by (White, 1998), alpha coefficients were reported to be 0.78 for the diffuse-avoidant or avoidant scale, 0.64 for the normative scale, and 0.59 for the informational scale. These coefficients are similar to the ones reported by (Berzonsky, 1992; White, 1996). Jomenia(2009) reported that the alpha coefficient of her research was 0.60. In this study, the reliability of the instrument yielded a score of 0.76 using Cronbach's alpha method.

### 2.2.4 Socio-economic Status Questionnaire

A socio-economic status questionnaire used by Aghazadeh (1999) was titled, "Collective identity: Sociological study of identity dimensions among students of Allameh Tabatabai university." Husseinbor (2001) used a socio-economic status questionnaire in his paper titled, "A Study of the factors affecting the attitudes of Baluch students towards national identity at Allameh Tabatabai University" (reliability=0.80). These questionnaires were revised and utilized in this study.

## 2.3 Research Design

The methodology used in this study is of a quantitative descriptive and correlative design. To analyze the research data, descriptive statistic criteria were used, such as the frequency, mean and standard deviation. To answer questions above, inferential and statistics criteria were utilized, including a t-test, one-way variance analysis and correlation coefficient.

## 2.4 Results

The first research question was, "What is the distribution of identity styles among late adolescents in Golestan Province?" Berzonsky's identity exploration question (ISI .6G) was used to answer this question. To compute this variable, the raw scores of participants in each of the informational styles were extracted. Then, the scores were converted to a standard score  $z$  to reveal the participants' identity style. The highest score a person gained in one of the styles was recognized as his/her identity style. The results are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of participants in different age groups for the four identity styles

variable	N	Informative		Normative		Diffuse		Commitment		Missing	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
20 years	99	18	18.18	20	20.2	40	40.4	20	20.2	1	1.01
21 years	66	5	7.57	15	22.72	30	45.45	16	24.24	0	0
22 years	68	20	29.41	18	26.47	20	29.41	10	14.7	0	0
23 years	68	13	19.11	19	27.94	20	29.41	15	22.05	1	1.47
24 years	99	22	22.22	19	19.19	25	25.25	29	29.29	4	4.04
Total	400	78	19.5	91	22.8	135	33.8	90	22.5	6	1.5

The data provided in Table 1 shows that most people are experiencing a diffuse-avoidant style or have a tendency toward it (135 people, or 33.8%). The normative identity exploration style represented the next-largest group of people (91 people or 22.8%). The lowest-ranked tendency is toward the informational identity exploration style (78 people or 19.5% people).

The second research question was, "Is there any difference in identity styles between late adolescent's men and women?" The respondents' scores from the identity styles questionnaire were analyzed using a t-test in independent groups. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean scores of males and females in the identity style

Identity style	Gender	N	Mean	df	t	p
Informational	Girl	226	41.51	398	0.209	0.835
	Boy	174	41.37			
Normative	Girl	226	34.35	398	0.497	0.62
	Boy	174	34.09			
Diffuse-avoidant	Girl	226	27.65	398	0.985	0.325
	Boy	174	26.97			
Commitment	Girl	226	36.46	398	-1.71	0.087
	Boy	174	37.59			

The data described in Table 2 shows indicate that there is no significant difference between late adolescent's men and women's identity exploration style in Golestan Province., i.e. men and women of Golestan State do similarly in identity exploration and there is no difference between them. To answer the third research question was, "Is there significant difference in identity exploration styles between different age groups?" The mean of participants' acquired scores in the identity exploration style test for in each style among different age groups was analyzed using one - way variance analysis. The results of the analysis have been are provided in Table 3.

Table 3. One-way variance for the identity style among different age groups identity style

Identity style	Source of change	SS	df	MS	F	P
Informational	Between groups	156.623	4	39.156	0.948	0.436
	Within groups	16306.377	395	41.282		
	total	16463	399	-		
Normative	Between groups	235.435	4	58.859	2.085	0.082
	Within groups	11149.002	395	28.225		
	total	11384.438	399	-		
Confusion	Between groups	448.539	4	112.135	2.434	0.047
	Within groups	18195.051	395	46.063		
	total	18643.59	399	-		
commitment	Between groups	404.831	4	101.208	0.05	2.4
	Within groups	16659.067	395	42.175		
	total	17063.898	399	-		

Given the data included in Table 3, it becomes cleared that there is no significant difference between different ages in informational and normative identity- exploration styles. However, there is meaningful difference between different ages in diffuse-avoidant, and informational and normative identity- exploration styles. By applying Tukey's follow - up test, it is clear that there is significant difference between 21-year-old age groups respondents and 24 year-old age groups respondents. In For commitment, the difference between the 20 and 24 years- old groups is significant.

To answer the fourth research question was, "What is the incidence of identity crisis among the late adolescents of Golestan Province? Is there identity crisis among late adolescents of Golestan State?" the needed the pertinent data were collected using Ahmadi's identity test from the sample group being studied with size of 400 people. The cut-off point between those who experience identity crisis and those who do not, and considering cutting point was set at 9 those who experience identity crisis and those who don't were distinguished from each other. The results of this analysis are provided in Table 4.

Table 4. Investigation analysis of identity- crisis incidence among the late adolescents of Golestan

Age	Crisis experienced		Crisis not experienced	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
20	6	6.06	93	93.94
21	1	1.51	65	98.49
22	10	14.70	58	85.3
23	2	2.94	66	97.66
24	4	4.04	95	95.96
Total	23	5.75	377	94.25

According to the data included in Table 4, among the sample being studied, 377 people namely (94.25%) of the participants in this investigation are not experiencing an identity crisis at this time. Twenty-three and 23 people (namely 5.75%) of in the sample group are experiencing an identity crisis. The highest degree of experiencing an identity crisis has been seen is among 22- years- olds ( age group with frequency of 10 people, namely 14.7% of this age group). The least age group experiencing the lowest degree of experiencing identity crisis has been seen among is among the 21- year- old groups (age group with frequency of 1 person, namely 1.51% person).of this age group.

To answer the fifth questions was, "Do different age groups differ in identity crisis?" To answer this mean of the scores obtained from different age groups in on Ahmadi's identity- exploration questionnaire was analyzed using one-way variance analysis. The results of the analysis are has been provided in Table 5.

Table 5. One-way variance on the mean of scores of obtained from different age groups in Ahmadi's identity

Scores of changes	Ss	df	Ms	F	P
Between Groups	230.78	4	57.596		
Within Groups	9910.077	366	27.077	20131	0.076
Total	10140.857	370	-		

According to the data given presented in Table 5, there is no significant difference between different age groups in the mean of participants' scores in on Ahmadi's identity- crisis questionnaire. The result this finding means indicates that the identity-crisis rate of identity crisis experience among different age groups participating in the research is similar.

To answer the sixth research question is, "Are there any differences in the rate of identity crisis between late adolescent's men and late women of Golestan Province?" T ", the mean of participants' acquired scores in for Ahmadi's identity- crisis questionnaire among late adolescent's men and women was analyzed using a t-test at for independent each groups. The results are given in Table 6.

Table 6. T-test for comparing the mean of male and female identity- crisis

Gender	N	Mean	df	T	P
Girl	211	6.61	369	.0752	.0453
Boy	160	6.19			

The data provided in Table 6 indicate shows that there is no significant difference between late adolescent's men and women in terms of in identity- crisis rate. It means that the sample men and women are similar in experiencing identity crisis.

To answer the seventh question was, "Does identity crisis relate to mental health and social class among the late adolescents of Golestan Province?" "Does identity crisis have relation with mental health and social class of late adolescents of Golestan Province?" The Pearson correlation coefficient was computed between participants' acquired scores in on Ahmadi's identity- crisis questionnaire and, the general- health questionnaire and the socio-economic status questionnaire. The results of the calculation are provided in Table 7.

Table 7. Correlation between identity crisis, general health and socio-economic status

Variables	Socio- economic	Mental health	Identity exploration styles			
			Informational	Normative	Confusion	Commitment
Identity crisis	-0.031**	0.516**	-0.36**	-0.44 **	-0.158**	-0.531 **

\*\* Correlation coefficient at level 0.01 is meaningful

The data provided in Table 7 shows indicate that, among the sample being studied, identity crisis has a significant and positive correlation with mental health and the diffuse-avoidant identity exploration style. This It result means that the higher the identity-crisis score of identity crisis, the higher the mental- health score will be. In other words, the higher a people experience identity- crisis score, the less lowly his / her level of mental health will be. Also In addition, people experiencing an identity crisis tend more toward to the diffuse-avoidant identity style. Table 7 shows that identity crisis has a meaningful and negative correlation with socio-economic status, informational and normative identity exploration styles and commitment. This result means that the higher the socio-economic status, the less identity crisis experienced. People, who do not experience identity crisis, tend more toward informational and normative identity exploration styles and commitment.

To answer the eighth research question, was "Does the degree to which identity crisis is associated with mental health and social class differ between the late adolescents men and women of Golestan Province Does the degree of relation of identity crisis with mental health and social class differ among late adolescents girls and boys of Golestan Province?" The Pearson's correlation coefficient was separately calculated between male and female participants' acquired scores in our variables among men and women. The results of this calculation are provided in Table 8.

Table 8. Correlation between male and female in identity crisis, general health and socio-economic status

Variables	Gender	Socio-economic status	Mental health	Identity styles			
				Informational	Normative	diffuse	Commitment
Identity Crisis	Girl	- 0.137*	0.561**	- 0.37**	-0.47**	0.15*	-0.55**
	Boy	0.10	0.44**	0.44**	-0.43**	0.16*	-0.501**

\*\* Correlation coefficient is significant at level 0.01

\* Correlation coefficient is significant at level 0.05

According to the data given in Table 8, there is not any considerable difference between the correlation coefficients for late adolescent's men and women.

To answer to the ninth question, "What is the mental health status of the late adolescents of Golestan Province How is the mental health of late adolescents of Golestan Province?" To answer this question, we engage in studying the mental health of the participant sample being studied using the data obtained from Goldberg' and colleagues' mental- health questionnaire. The data has been provided in Table 9.

Table 9. Incidence rate of mental illnesses among the late adolescents of Golestan

Dimension	Girl				Boy				Total sample			
	Healthy		Illness		Healthy		Illness		Healthy		Illness	
	Frequency	percent	Frequency	percent	Frequency	percent	Frequency	percent	Frequency	percent	Frequency	percent
Bodily												
Symptoms	207	91.6	15	6.6	163	93.7	6	3.4	370	92.5	21	5.3
Anxiety	193	85.4	29	12.8	153	87.9	15	8.6	346	86.5	44	11
Job, Daily life Problems												
Depression	203	89.8	15	6.6	165	94.8	3	1.7	368	92	18	4.5
Depression	200	88.5	24	10.6	165	94.8	8	4.6	365	91.3	32	8
Total	111	49.1	98	43.4	103	59.2	56	32.2	-	-	-	-

According to the data included in Table 9, 43.4% of the girls being late adolescents women studied surveyed suffer from a kind some type of mental disorders, and whereas 49.1% of them are healthy and are not experiencing any kind type of mental disorder. However, among late adolescents men being studied surveyed, 32.2% are experiencing any kind some type of mental disorders and whereas 59.2% percent of them are healthy who and are not experiencing any kind type of mental disorders. Anxiety was the most prevalent of the mental disorders with an incidence of 12.8% and 8.6% among late adolescent's women and men, respectively. The second most- prevalent mental disorder among between these two groups was depression.

To answer the tenth research question was, "Does the mental-health variable vary between different age groups? Does the mental health variable differ between various age groups?" The mean scores of for research participants in on the general- health questionnaire were was analyzed using one-way variance analysis. The result has been provided in Table 10.

Table 10. One-way variance analysis for on the mean GHQ28 among different age groups

Source of change	Ss	df	Ms	F	P
Among groups	2134.84	4	533.71		
Within groups	82194.97	363	226.43	2.357	0.053
Total	84329.826	367	-		

The data included in Table 10 shows indicate that in the mental health rate there is no significant difference between mental-health rates among the different age groups. It means that in mental health variable, late adolescents of Golestan State have approximately similar situation.

To answer the eleventh question, "" Do the late adolescent's men and women in this study have the same mental-health status?" Do the men and women in the sample studied; experience the same mental health status. ", The mean of the scores of research participants of the general- health questionnaire were analyzed in independent groups using a t-test. The results of this analysis has been are provided in Table 11.

Table 11. T-test for comparing the mean of scores mental-health between male and female

Gender	N	Mean	df	T	P
Girl	209	24.57	366	2.33	0.02
Boy	159	20.88			

The data provided in Table 11 indicates that there is a significant difference between late adolescent's men and women's mental- health status. It means that the female participants experiencing mental illnesses are more than men. At a higher, rate than do the male participants.

### 2.5 Discussion

It can be inferred from the results that in the sample being studied, most of the individuals are experiencing the diffuse-avoidant identity style or have tendency towards it. The next most-prevalent identity style is normative

style. The least-prevalent style is informational style. The lower the frequency of commitment, the higher is the frequency of people experiencing diffuse-avoidant style. The higher the frequency of commitment, the less the frequency of people experiencing the diffuse-avoidant style is. The findings of this research are consistent with the (Berzonsky's results 1990; Ghorbani, 2005; Jabbari & Ghorbani, 2007; Jomenia, 2009).

On the one hand, these findings indicate the decline of late adolescents people's commitment to values and beliefs, which, in turn, results in weakness of the function of family and the educational system and people responsible for cultural issue in transmitting cultural values to the younger generation.

The research study found that there is no significant difference between male and female participants in any of the identity styles. It this means that late adolescents men and women of Golestan Province have similar approaches to in exploring their identity and there is no difference between them. Similarly, Sramova et al (2008) exhibited Gender don't explain difference in commitment significantly. Hejazi et al (2006) showed there is no significant gender difference in normative, diffuse/avoidant, and commitment identity styles. Akhavan (2004) also found that there was no relationship between the individual characteristics (age, sex, and years of education), physical structure of the family (number of children, sex of the children, and order of birth and social position of the parents) and the formation of adolescent identity. The results of the present study are in parallel with the findings of these studies. Shokrayi (2001) showed that there was no significant difference between the different identity situations among boy and girl students. Archer (1989) in three different studies but consistently showed women and men were similar in formation of identity. Marcia (1980) concluded women and men are similar in the formation of their identity in terms of process and action. The early identity status research was conducted primarily with males, the one exception being the Podd, Marcia, and Rubin (1970) study in which no sex differences were found. These findings of this investigation are consistent with the results of (Berzonsky, 2002).

In a number of studies, men have been found to score higher on diffuse-avoidance compared to their female counterparts (e.g., Berzonsky, 1992b, 2008a; Soenens, Berzonsky, Vansteenkiste, Beyers, & Goossens, 2005; Berzonsky & Kinney, 2008).

There is no significant difference between different age groups in terms of the informational and normative styles. However, there is a meaningful difference between the diffuse-avoidant style and the informational and normative styles among different age groups.

Tukey's follow-up test demonstrated a significant difference between the 21-year-old age group and the 24-year-old age group in the diffuse-avoidant style. In commitment, the difference between 20- and 24-year-olds is also meaningful. These findings are consistent with the results presented by (Berzonsky, 2000; Farsinejad, 2004).

Adams and Fitch (1982) Waterman et al (1974, 1999) as well as Waterman and Goldman (1976) showed over time sense of personal identity increases (Waterman, 1974; Adams, 1982; Waterman, 1999). Akhavan (2004) also found that there was no relationship between the individual characteristics (age, sex, and years of education), physical structure of the family (number of children, sex of the children, and order of birth and social position of the parents) and the formation of adolescent identity. The age of adolescents did not significantly differentiate representation of identity style (Šramová, 2008). The results of the present study are in parallel with the findings of these studies.

Based on the results obtained from Ahmadi's questionnaire, 377 participants (94.25%) were not experiencing an identity crisis at the time of the study, and 23 people (5.57%) were. The highest incidence of identity crisis was noted among 22-years-olds (10 people, or 14.7% of this age group). The lowest incidence identity crisis was among 21-year-olds (1 person, or 1.51% of this age group).

There is no significant difference in the mean score for Ahmadi's identity-crisis questionnaire among different age groups. These research findings are consistent with those of (Akhavan, 2004).

There is no significant difference between late adolescent's men and women in terms of incidence of identity crisis. These findings are consistent with the results of (Archer, 1989).

Among the sample studied, identity crisis has a positive and significant correlation with mental health and the diffuse-avoidant identity style. This result means that, as the identity-crisis score increases, the mental-health score also increases. By the same logic, the more the person experiences identity crisis, the lower his/her mental health will be. Similarly, people experiencing an identity crisis have more of a tendency toward the diffuse-avoidant identity style.

Identity crisis has a negative and significant correlation with socio-economic status, the informational and normative identity exploration styles and commitment. This result means that, as socio-economic status increases,

the incidence of identity crisis decreases.

People who do not experience an identity crisis have more of a tendency toward informational and normative identity exploration styles and commitment. These research findings are consistent with previous results (Daneshvar, 1996).

There is no considerable difference between the correlation coefficients for late adolescent's men and women. These research findings are in line with the results of (Shekhrohani, 1999; Shokrai 2001).

Among the late adolescents women studied, 43.4% suffer from some type of mental disorder, whereas 49.1% of them are not experiencing any type of mental disorder. Among the late adolescent's men, however, 32.2% are suffering from a mental disorder, whereas 59.2% of the boys are healthy and not experiencing any kind of disorder. Anxiety is the most prevalent mental disorder among girls and boys 2.8% and 8.6% respectively and depression had the highest incidence between both groups. These findings are consistent with the results of (Yamaguchi-Shinozaki, 1994, Berzonsky, 1999; Ghazanfari, 2003).

There is no significant difference in the mental-health rate among age groups. This result means that the late adolescents of Golestan Province have a similar status for the mental health variable. These research findings are consistent with the results of (Nurmi, 1997; Adabi, 2000, Ghazanfari, 2003).

There is a significant difference between late adolescent's men and women in mental-health status, with a higher rate of mental illness among the late adolescents women surveyed than among late adolescent's men. Omidi (2002) also found that depression rates have a direct relation with sex and that the rate of depression is greater among women than men. Currently, nearly 330 million people have been afflicted by depression worldwide, at an estimated rate of 2-3% among men and 5-12% among women (Bayani, 2005).

#### 2.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Findings from this study could be used as guidelines in developing scale for measuring identity styles in other areas of concern. Nowadays the role of mass media is very important, effective and undeniable. Study on the effect of mass media on dimensions of identity such as national and religion identity can lead to insightful outcomes. Experience of going to university is unique for late adolescents and its effect on the formation of their identity is worth investigation. Future research is also needed to explore identity styles with other approach and theories. Finally, future research can compare the role of mothers and fathers separately in adolescents' identity formation.

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