



## **Modeling the Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Differentiation with the Mediation of Early Self-Expression and Identity for the Purpose of Adolescent Educational Cultural Pathology**

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**Background and Aim:** One of the most important characteristics of adolescence is early puberty and identity changes, in the meantime, if the management of identity changes and educational and cultural issues of adolescents are not addressed, they may suffer many injuries in the next period of life. Therefore, the main goal of the present study was to model the relationship between self-esteem and differentiation with the mediation of early self-expression and identity for the purpose of cultural pathology of adolescence. **Methods:** This research was applied in terms of quantitative method (descriptive-correlation) and in terms of purpose. The statistical population included the second high school students of district 1 of Tehran, 384 of whom were randomly selected based on Cochran's formula. The data collection tool also included a researcher-made questionnaire, which was used to verify the formal and content validity of the researcher-made questionnaire from the opinions of experts, and for the validity of the interviews, the method of transferability and review by members was used. Cronbach's alpha formula was used to calculate reliability in the quantitative part. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (structural equivalent modeling) were used for experiment and data analysis. **Results:** The findings showed that self-esteem with differentiation had a beta coefficient and a significant level ( $R^2=0.101$  and  $P<0.05$ ). Self-expression with differentiation had a beta coefficient and significance level ( $R^2=0.133$  and  $P<0.05$ ) and early identity also had a beta coefficient and significance level with differentiation ( $R^2=0.369$  and  $P<0.05$ ). **Conclusion:** Based on the findings, it can be concluded that self-esteem has a significant relationship with the mediation of early self-expression and identity, and therefore, the planners of the country's educational and cultural system can reduce the cultural and educational damage to self-esteem and pay attention to the differentiation of young people along with other factors.



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## Introduction

Adolescence is one of the most challenging, stressful, attractive and at the same time most problematic periods of life for both adolescents and parents, teachers and community health professionals. At the same time, adolescence is a period with the best pleasures, recreations, excitements, idealisms and optimism during which the teenager tastes the joy of independence, intimacy and planning for the future and reaches the peak of his physical, emotional and mental development (Tomova et al., 2021). The issue of adolescent health can be considered as a dangerous area of development. Unlike the children of yesterday, today's teenagers have to deal with a whole new set of health risks. These risks range from drugs and sexually transmitted diseases to suicidal disorders and depression (Keith et al., 2019). Risks of this type remind the necessity and urgency of understanding the health of adolescents, and also create new insights and attitudes towards the dimensions and positive aspects of healthy behavior that differentiates the adolescent generation from the generation of children and adults. (Parvin, 2013).

Today, investing in the health of adolescents in educational environments and outside educational environments is considered as one of the most important interventions of health systems, so that this importance is also recommended by the World Health Organization in the form of comprehensive programs such as "Health Promoting Schools" in the field of promoting the health of adolescents. (Amagir et al., 2018). From a philosophical point of view, school programs should be a full-view mirror of social values, wishes and expectations, and for this reason, identifying basic social issues and needs is considered the most central element in decision-making; In other words, the main goal of school programs is to socialize students and prepare them with the necessary knowledge, values, tendencies and skills to live in society. The strength and cohesion of any society is paying attention to the law and observing it, and legality and legalism in society is the logic of the law (Scarf et al., 2017).

Social harms exist in all societies. More than half of the world's population lives in cities. Avoiding the law in cities is one of the social deviations from which many types of harms originate. The type of deviations and

inconsistencies for which official executive guarantee has been provided in the law is considered as law evasion. With a brief look at the news and media reports, especially in the last few months, the presence of all kinds of lawlessness such as: short selling, high selling, public abuse, embezzlement, forging university documents and people having two jobs to murders and violent law violations, disregarding the law in the society can be seen. The weakness of legalism and lawlessness is one of the issues that exist in many parts of Iran at the micro and macro level or small and large examples (Parvin, 2013).

Therefore, a complete picture of the society includes all norm violations and also represents regularism, which indicates that lawlessness and legalism are two sides of the coin of social life. Similarly, unity, empathy, conflict and conflict have been two sides of the human social coin. This is why it is said: "Wherever there is law, there is crime." Although mankind has lived for many centuries without the existence of modern laws, today modern man cannot achieve his ideals with disorder, insecurity and chaos. (Khodayari & Jahanbakhsh, 2020).

Law enforcement has a very special place from the perspective of Islam and the Qur'an, as it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in Surah Nisa, verses 65 and 105 and in Surah Noor, verses 48 and 49. In hadiths and hadiths, there is a great emphasis on rule of law. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) paid special attention to rule of law in his government affairs. The Prophet (PBUH) said in a sermon after the conquest of Mecca: "O people! Be aware that your Lord is one and your father is one. Know that neither the Arab is superior to the non-Ajam nor the non-Ajam to the Arab, nor the black to the white nor the white to the black, except by piety." Abiding or avoiding the law can have several reasons. Research has shown that lawlessness in every society has its own reasons, and in Iran it is also caused by various factors: political factors (Alavi Tabar, 1997; Ghazi Moradi, 1999); personality traits (Ghaderi, 2002; Abdi, 2002; Haqshanas, 2002); cultural particularism (Rezaei, 2002; Alikhah, 1999); economic inequality (Rafipour, 1998; Razaghi, 1999); Inadequacy of law enforcers (Rezaei, 2005; Haqshanas, 2002); inappropriateness of laws (Shiri, 2004; Haji Safarali, 2002); Early identifications.

The basis of social order in any society is a set of formal and informal values and norms that people follow in their daily lives. Several factors play a fundamental role in the legalization process: family, education (school), media (mass communication tools) and peer groups. Meanwhile, formal education centers such as schools and universities are an important factor in the process of legalization and legalization of teenagers. As a cultural institution, the school conveys certain worldviews, skills and knowledge to teenagers and young adults (Fraser, 2019).

Self-esteem can also be considered as a set of thoughts, feelings, emotions and experiences that are formed in the process of social life. The collection of thousands of impressions, evaluations and experiences that a person has about himself makes him feel pleasant, valuable or vice versa. Differentiation is defined by the ability of a person to separate emotionally and physically from his family and to achieve emotional independence while remaining in the emotional atmosphere of the family (Razavi & Livarjani, 2020). Self-differentiation is a bridge to understand the state of interdependence of people and expresses the level of a person's ability to balance between thinking and feeling and between intimacy and independence in the family. Premature identity (deterrence) has people who have committed themselves to values and goals without considering other options. Instead, they accept and record a ready-made identity of a believer, usually parents but sometimes teachers, religious leaders, or encouragers. He has chosen it for them. (Burke, 2001). Absolutism is a concept used by contemporary philosophers. Since there was no clear boundary between philosophy and political science, this term is rooted in both politics and philosophy. According to the philosophical perspective, absolutism is defined from a metaphysical lens as a reality that exceeds human knowledge and thus creates an absolute reality.

In the case of the present study, studies have been carried out. Masoud Nia (2017) concluded in a research that the norm of social confrontation and its components play an important role in reducing and preventing the tendency of motorcycle users in Yazd city to commit lawlessness; Therefore, in order to reduce the rate of evasion among motorcycle

users, it is better to implement external deterrent strategies, such as fines, social and behavioral interventions, and social and behavioral intervention measures to strengthen the norm of social confrontation. Mirzaei et al. (2017) concluded in a research that the most and the least law-abiding areas are related to traffic and cultural-educational law-abiding, respectively. Branden Crawford et al. (2018) concluded in a research that there is a relationship between child abuse and out-of-home care and adult crimes and juvenile delinquency. Miang and Bandar (2018) concluded in a research that although abused children benefit from home services or out-of-home services every year in the United States, the role of these services in criminal behavior has not yet been determined. In addition, although children who have been maltreated and have benefited from out-of-home care, they have different residential experiences (such as different types of placements, different number of placements). Michel and Delisi (2017) concluded in a research that although energy flows in all forms of life and is the basic factor of physical and mental performance, its role in antisocial behaviors has not yet been determined.

Despite conducting some studies on the current topic, there is still a research gap because the period of adolescence and youth has undergone extensive changes and developments compared to the past. According to experts, the issue of the identity of teenagers and young people has become more complicated in the modern era and their knowledge needs many studies. Therefore, conducting the present study can help to better explain the issue of self-esteem and differentiation with the mediation of self-expression and early identity for the purpose of educational cultural pathology of adolescence. Therefore, the main goal of the present study was to investigate this issue.

## Method

**1. Researcher-made questionnaire.** The research tool included a researcher-made questionnaire based on previous studies and collection. This questionnaire has 4 main variables including self-esteem with 15 items; self-expression with 12 items; Differentiation with 24 items and early identity with 15 items. In this research, a 5-point Likert scale was used in the form of very low (1), low (2), moderate (3), high (4) and very high (5). The validity of

the tool was done by means of face validity by 3 expert professors in the field of methodology. Cronbach's alpha test was also used for reliability, and the reliability values for research variables including self-esteem, differentiation, self-expression, and early identity were 0.90, 0.88, 0.79, and 0.93, respectively.

**Materials**

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**Implementation**

By having the list of schools from several different districts, 2 schools were randomly selected. Then the students were questioned. The data collection tool also included a researcher-made questionnaire, which was used to verify the form and content validity of the researcher-made questionnaire from the opinions of experts (3 academic experts) and Cronbach's alpha was used to calculate reliability. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (structural equivalent modeling) were used for data analysis.

**Results**

In terms of demographic characteristics, 229 (59%) of the participants were male and 155 (41%) were female. Also, 112 people (29%) were studying in the 10th grade, 109 people (28%) in the 11th grade, and 163 people (43%) in the 12th grade. In this case, 131 people (34%) were studying humanities, 166 people (43%) experimental sciences, and 87 people (23%) mathematics. Some descriptive statistics indicators are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Some descriptive indicators of self-expression, responsibility, self-esteem, early differentiation and identity, and absolutism**

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-expression	392	10/00	36/00	26/0000	4/00000	000	000
Responsibility	392	5/00	20/00	16/0000	2/00000	-1/000	-1/000
Self-esteem	392	3/00	12/00	9/0000	1/00000	000	000
Differentiation	392	4/00	16/00	8/0000	2/00000	000	000
Early identity	392	4/00	16/00	10/0000	2/00000	000	000
Absolutism	392	3/00	12/00	8/0000	1/00000	000	000

The findings of the above table show that the highest mean, 36, is related to the variable of self-expression, and also, the lowest mean is

related to the variable of self-esteem and absolutism. In the following, the correlation between the variables is reported.

**Table 2. Correlation relationship between research variables (expression, responsibility, self-esteem, differentiation, premature identity and absolutism)**

Pearson	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Self-expression	1	0/66	0/71	0/61	0/71	0/44
2. Responsibility	0/54	1	0/56	0/23	0/34	0/43
3. Self-esteem	0/66	0/70	1	0/41	0/59	0/34
4. Differentiation	0/75	0/42	0/30	1	0/41	0/71
5. Early identity	0/35	0/39	0/46	0/60	1	/74
6. Absolutism	0/51	0/49	0/29	0/37	0/71	1

The results of the above table show that there is a positive and significant relationship between

all the variables of knowledge. The highest correlation (0.75) was between differentiation

variable and self-expression. Also, the lowest correlation (0.29) was observed between absolutism and self-esteem. It should be noted that the significance level between all variables was 0.000. At this stage of the research, the factors obtained from the factor analysis of the questionnaire, from self-expression to absolutism, are modeled using the path analysis

method. Path analysis helps to identify the mechanism of effect of variables on each other and reports the relationship between variables in the real world. In addition, it reveals some hidden relationships between variables that are not visible in the real world, but their relationship is revealed by modeling. The results of path analysis are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Direct and indirect effects and total standard effects, about the relationship between self-esteem and differentiation**

Row	Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect	SE
1	Self-esteem → responsibility	0/307 **	0	0/307 **	0/065
2	Responsibility → absolutism	-0/101	0	-0/101	0/034
3	Self-esteem → absolutism	-0/068	-0/031	-0/099	0/046
4	Responsibility → premature identity	0/190 **	0	0/190 **	0/045
5	Responsibility → self-expression	0/315 **	-0/015	0/331 **	0/092
6	Self-esteem → self-expression	0/103 *	-0/112	0/215 **	0/123
7	Absolutism → self-expression	0/154 **	0	0/154 **	0/136
8	Early identity → differentiation	0/369 **	0	0/369 **	0/050
9	Self-expression → differentiation	- 0/133 **	0	- 0/133 **	0/024
10	Self-esteem → differentiation	0/101 *	- 0/007	-0/094	0/062

\*\*P < 0.01

\*P < 0.05

The results of table (4) show that the variables of self-esteem had a direct relationship with responsibility, responsibility with materialism, responsibility with early identity, absolutism with self-expression, early identity with differentiation and expression with differentiation, and other relationships had

direct and indirect relationships. Also, the significance level in the above table shows that the significance of the relationship between all variables is confirmed ( $p < 0.05$ ). In the following, the effect coefficients of the relationships between the variables are reported in Table 4.

**Table 4. Coefficient of determining the effect size of the model on the discussed variables**

Factor	Name	Effect size	R
F1	Self-expression	0/168	0/41
F2	Responsibility	0/094	0/31
F4	Differentiation	0/156	0/39
F5	Early identity	0/036	0/19
F6	Absolutism	0/019	0/14

The results of the above table show that the largest effect size of the model is on self-expression with 16.8 percent and the smallest is on absolutism with 1.9 percent. One of the model acceptability indices is the fit index, which consists of several component indices. The goodness of fit index of this model is

estimated at 0.994, which is a very favorable number. This number should be greater than 0.95 and the closer it is to one, the better the fit. Therefore, the fit of the model is also acceptable. Other fit indices are normalized fit and comparative fit index. Based on one or more hypothetical models, these indicators

show whether this model is statistically more acceptable than them or not. Similar to the comparative fit index, these indexes should be greater than 0.95 and the closer to one, the better the fit. The normalized fit index of this model is equal to 0.967 and the comparative fit index is equal to 0.990, which shows the high acceptability of the model. The growth index of

the mean square of the estimation error is also one of the fit indices, which should be less than 0.05 and the closer it is to zero, the more ideal it is. This index has been calculated for the 0.031 model (Table 6), all these indices show that the modified model is acceptable and is consistent with the reality of the society.

Table 5. Fit indices of the research model

Index	GFI	GFI	NFI	RMSEA
Model	0/994	0/990	0/967	0/031

### Conclusion

The main goal of the present study was to model the relationship between self-esteem and differentiation with the mediation of early self-expression and identity for the purpose of adolescent educational cultural pathology. The findings showed that self-esteem has a significant relationship with differentiation with the mediation of early self-expression and identity. The results of this research are in line with the results of some studies such as Masoud Nia (2017), Mirzaei et al. (2017), Branden Crawford et al.

In explaining the results, it can be said that precocious identity actually causes oneself to be guided by others, and imitating parents' values is also one of the characteristics of precocious identity. Convergence with authority figures is formed in early identity. These features increase the flexibility of the individual and thus create the basis for his differentiation. On the other hand, in early identity, the attention and approval of others is very important. This process is also the basis for respecting the identity of others and this respect for the identity of others provides the basis for differentiation from others. Although this differentiation may still not be considered a complete differentiation (Amagir et al., 2018).

In self-expression, self-reliant behavior, the same autonomy, is effective in differentiation, and honest expression of one's feelings without anxiety in self-expression is effective in paying attention to one's thoughts and feelings in orientation and inner guidance in differentiation. Likewise, in self-expression, social interaction in people, which leads to the expression of thoughts and feelings, is effective in paying attention to one's thoughts and feelings in

differentiation and is also related to the recognition of feelings. Further, in self-expression, gaining trust in others and accepting shortcomings leads to act on the identity of others in differentiation. On the other hand, in self-esteem, people's resilience corresponds to their resilience in differentiation. In the same way, the family organized and stable model, integrated and of appropriate perceptions and traits in self-esteem, corresponds to self-integration and the identity of a healthy person in differentiation. Further, in self-esteem and self-concept, the feeling of self-satisfaction and self-acceptance can correspond to the differentiation that is attention to one's own thoughts and feelings. It should also be said that people with high levels of differentiation tend to deal effectively with different situations. Conversely, individuals with low levels of differentiation experience high levels of chronic anxiety and poorer performance in stressful situations and, therefore, suffer from more psychological and physical symptoms (Fraser, 2019). Researches face limitations. In the present study, since the study method was quantitative, the results may have some considerations, such as the random responses of the respondents in completing the questionnaire and the lack of control of variables beyond the researcher's control. Another thing is that the results are limited to a specific city, which requires research in other regions of the country to generalize the results. It is suggested that the researchers use the integrated method in the future and the research sample is selected at a larger level. It is suggested that the planners of the educational system, together with the trustees and cultural and educational organizations, prepare a coordinated and

comprehensive program for the pathology of students, so as to avoid partial and separate measures. Another suggestion is that, as the results showed, self-esteem had a relationship with early identity, so the issue of identity should be explained and prepared for students in terms of facing its various challenges during adolescence. Another suggestion is to involve more school counselors and even use the students themselves in order to recognize the cultural harms in schools.

### Conflict of Interest

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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