

Exploring the Role of Identity Styles in Wisdom during Adulthood

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This study was designed to examine stylistic differences in processing identity-related information and their relations with wisdom (dimensions and total) amongst adult population. Four-hundred individuals (185 males and 215 females) ranging in age from 17 to 50 years ($M = 26.095$, $SD = 8.588$) were recruited from various educational institutions and work places located in different areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Identity style inventory (version-5) developed by Berzonsky et al. (2013) and Ardel's (2003) three-dimensional wisdom scale (3D-WS) were used as tools to collect the relevant information. According to the results, identity styles accounted for significant variation in wisdom. The findings revealed that individuals with informational style obtained highest scores on wisdom (total and subcomponents, i.e., cognitive, reflective, and affective). On the contrary, diffuse-avoidant and normative persons showed the opposite pattern. A strong relationship that was observed between identity styles and wisdom attests wisdom as dependent on identity styles.

Keywords: Identity style inventory, informational style, normative style, diffuse-avoidant style, three-dimensional wisdom scale, cognitive, affective, reflective

Identity development is the most serious and significant developmental challenge that must be negotiated by the adolescents and young adults in order to have a healthy personality. Several developmental theorists consider identity development as a means for a person to explain the present as a bridge that connects the past with the future. Erik Erikson's (1959, 1968) developmental life-span model consists of eight crisis stages. Each stage is marked by a certain specific developmental task (psychosocial crisis) which offers an opportunity for growth and development, if handled correctly. The most important developmental task of the fifth phase (adolescence) is identity formation, i.e., the conscious awareness of 'Who Am I'? What are the values of my life? Which goals I have to pursue? Am I really different from others? (e.g. Erikson, 1968; Kroger, 2004). This situation calls for balancing the desire to attempt many possible selves and the need to find a single self (Sandhu & Tung, 2006). Erikson noted that identity development provides a sense of direction to the individual, and a sense of mattering to those who count. Erikson (1959) pointed up that if an individual reaches adulthood without forming an identity and ends up in identity diffusion, she/he is likely to suffer psychologically. Thus, identity is a key concept to understand adjustment/psychological wellness in adolescents and adults. In recent years scholars working in multitude of disciplines have expressed intense involvement in the issues/queries regarding identity. Regardless of this wide-ranging interest in identity, this concept, even now, remains an enigma.

Although Erikson's (1959) theory of psychosocial development is reflection of his training as a psychoanalyst, he and a number of other theorists have underlined the significance of cognitive processes in identity formation (e.g., Erikson, 1964; Marcia, 1980). Particularly, Berzonsky (1990, 2004) evolved a social-cognitive model of identity formation (known as a famous neo-Eriksonian approach) that proposes three identity processing orientations: informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant. These orientations/styles shed light on the preferences that individuals show in the social-cognitive processes while dealing with or avoiding identity issues/conflicts. The major purpose of the current investigation was to investigate the relationship of identity styles with wisdom.

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Identity Processing Styles

Marcia (1966) has been credited with developing the identity status paradigm which was the very first empirical operationalization of Erikson's pioneering work. Keeping in view varying levels of self-exploratory activity (previously known as crisis) and commitment (allegiance to childhood beliefs/values), Marcia classified four identity statuses: (a) identity achievement (demonstrating high commitment after passing through the phase of self-exploration); (b) identity moratorium (presently involved in self-exploration with some degree of commitment); (c) identity foreclosure (high commitment with low level of self-exploration); and (d) identity diffusion (low commitment without self-exploration). A large bulk of literature has proven authentic differences in identity statuses along many cognitive, personal, and social dimensions (e.g., Berzonsky & Adams, 1999; Marcia, 1993). During the past four decades, most identity researchers had based their work on identity status paradigm and according to Kroger & Marcia (2011) this model has stimulated hundreds of theoretical and empirical researches in these previous years. The Marcia's statuses are characteristically known as 'identity outcomes' because exploration and commitment are confounded within each status category. Another flaw associated with identity status is that it has been assumed as less consistent and more ephemeral when compared with identity style (Berzonsky, 1990). The identity style that captures process tends to be fairly stable. Longitudinal studies have revealed that individuals do alternate between statuses; they keep on changing, for instance, from foreclosure to moratorium, from commitment to the diffusion status, and from diffusion to foreclosure (Meeus, Ledema, Helsen, & Vollebergh, 1999). On the contrary, identity styles are comparatively permanent (Berzonsky, 1990), and also firmly associated with personality which tends to remain stable throughout life. If styles are judged from this angle, then, undoubtedly, the impact of Berzonsky's style theory on the area of identity is enormous.

The concept of identity processing style refers to the approaches and strategies that individuals employ to clarify their identity or handling of problems associated with identity. These styles emphasize comparatively stable differences in the social-cognitive strategies that people usually utilize to settle the identity-related conflicts. Berzonsky (1989, 1990) has proposed three styles of self-theorizing: Informational style refers to making timely and well considered decisions or judgments on the basis of authentic information and as such it coincides with characteristics such as decisional vigilance, cognitive persistence and the like. This style corresponds to Marcia's identity achieved status; Normative identity style indicates taking decisions on the basis of what is expected by the significant others especially the parents. This style relates to need for structure (motivated tendency to get clear answers and avoid ambiguity), and need for cognitive closure. Such traits make it comparable with foreclosure category of Marcia's paradigm; Diffuse-Avoidant identity style means running away from identity issues and avoiding/delaying making important decisions. This style is allied with lack of forethought and fear of failure. Berzonsky, Branje, and Meeus (2007) showed that the relationships that children/ adolescents develop with their parents influence their identity processing style.

In terms of five-factor theory of personality, diffused types have been shown to score low on agreeableness and conscientiousness, and high on neuroticism. According to Berzonsky and Ferrari (2009), this style is also related to problem behavior, inadequate self-control, and self-handicapping behavior and it fits in the Marcia's diffusion identity status. Research reveals that possession of cognitive abilities enables the adolescents to use all three styles and there is a possibility that they may score high on all three identity styles. However, by adulthood, individuals are expected to use one of the styles more frequently than others (Berzonsky, 1990).

Wisdom

Wisdom is the ability to foresee or discern what is true or eternal. Erikson (1968) argued that the goal of adult development is ego-integration or wisdom. He was of the view that wisdom is a character trait that plays its role in maintaining positive well-being despite emergence of challenging situations. The ancient concept of wisdom has received much attraction/attention in both western and Eastern cultures. Traditionally, the concept of Western wisdom is based on three parts: (1) practical knowledge that focuses on reasoning and justice, (2) spiritual connection with God, and (3) spiritual and ethical ability to look at the nature of the world (Adler, 1952; Cottingham, 1996). The concept of Eastern wisdom, on the contrary, gives a more inclusive view of tradition that

highlights the combination of various features of human thought such as intuition, emotion, cognition (Birren & Svensson, 2005; Takahashi, 2000). In other words, Eastern and Western concepts of wisdom have centered on different philosophical traditions. Cognition is central to Western wisdom, whereas the Eastern wisdom focuses more on cognitive, affective, and reflective components (Ardelt, 2003).

Identity and Wisdom

Erikson's theory (1968) has given support to the research findings that, though adolescence may not be the time of a sharp increase in wise actions (Richardson & Pasupathi, 2005), cognitive and affective dimensions of wisdom definitely escalate during this time and young individuals begin to focus on the questions related to their selves; for example, 'who they are', "what they know", what they can do, where they are heading in life, and so on. This kind of endeavoring on the part of the young person points out that, given the right scaffoldings, adolescents and young adults may cultivate wisdom or wisdom related knowledge and act wisely. However, it is still an assumption that needs to be fully understood.

Identity Styles and Wisdom

Both theoretical and empirical connection can be seen between identity styles and virtue of wisdom. Theoretically, Erikson (1968) suggested strong relation between identity and wisdom. Empirically, findings of researchers have called attention to remarkable similarity between informational style and wisdom. There are certain common characteristics that are shared between these two. These comparable aspects include introspectiveness (Berzonsky, 1993), self-insight (Holliday & Chandler, 1986), personal growth (Vleioras & Bosma, 2005) and self-reflectiveness (Richardson & Pasupathi, 2005). In his theory of psychosocial development, Erikson described in detail how does ego-identity developmentally relate to wisdom. Thus it is an important attribute whose emergence is based on settlement of all previous (or preceding) age-specific crises as mentioned earlier.

Thus the aforementioned facts seem to be sufficient to make a case for a link between identity and wisdom during adolescence and adulthood. Although Erikson explicitly emphasized that a well-developed ego-identity is a critical factor in wisdom development, little previous research has examined the link between the two and very few studies attempted to examine this relation across young adulthood as well as middle adulthood. Beaumont's (2009, 2011) work, for instance, remained confined to young adults only. In addition, most of these studies were based in the Western culture.

Rationale of the Study

Identity is the strongest force in human personality, or in other words, a very important aspect of an individual's self development. It is a fundamental concept to get an accurate picture on an individual's state of psycho-social adjustment. As we lose our sense of identity, symptoms of mental illness may occur. The question arises, how one forms and refines his/her identity. Berzonsky's (1989, 1990) identity style paradigm serves as a coping mechanism, or a problem-solving technique/strategy. These socio-cognitive strategies that Berzonsky introduced as identity formation styles have proved their usefulness in diverse contexts and captured worldwide prominence as a process oriented approach utilized by individuals to have clarity about their identity. Another key factor contributing to the popularity of concept of identity styles is its apparent association with various measures relating to quality of life as well as wisdom, For example, Beaumont (2009, 2011) and Berzonsky (2003) have stressed identity styles' connection with individuals' wise thoughts and actions, personal growth, self-actualization and self-transcendence (i.e., personal wisdom), and life meaning. In the light of all these findings, the present study was aimed at contributing to the literature on identity processing and wisdom by investigating patterns of differences in wisdom dimensions as a function of Berzonsky's (1990) identity styles. Use of Ardel's model of wisdom is helpful in investigating Erik Erikson's (1968) assumption that it is identity that provides the basis for integrity (he equated integrity with wisdom). Simply speaking, because Ardel's (2003) conceptualization of wisdom emphasizes integration of different aspects of personality, it seems to be convincingly aligned with Erik Erikson's (1968) theory.

Research Objectives

Keeping in view the theoretical and empirical linkage between identity styles and construct of wisdom, as mentioned in the introductory section, the major purpose of the current study was to examine the interrelationship between these two variables.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the theoretical and empirical connection that has been highlighted in the introductory section/review (above), the relationship between identity styles and wisdom was examined by formulating the following hypotheses.

1. Individuals with an informational identity style will get higher scores on the cognitive, affective, and reflective components of wisdom than those who prefer use of diffuse-avoidant style.
2. Individuals with a normative style will display lower scores on the reflective dimension and comparatively higher on the cognitive and affective dimensions of the scale measuring wisdom.

Method

Sample

This study was carried out on a sample of 400 randomly selected adolescents and adults including 185 (46.25 %) men and 215 (53.75 %) women, aged 17-50 ($M_{\text{age}} = 26.095$, $SD = 8.59$) enrolled in various disciplines of social science, humanities, pure science, engineering, and agriculture at various educational institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Mean age of the men was higher (26.89 ± 8.89) than women (25.41 ± 8.28). The participation was voluntary. Almost all of them belonged to middle social class. Following the completion of an informed consent form and a demographic questionnaire, subjects completed self-report inventories on identity styles and wisdom as described below.

Instruments

Identity Style Inventory-Version 5 (ISI-5)

This scale was developed by Berzonsky et al. (2013) to measure an individual's identity styles (three scales) and level of identity commitment. It is composed of 36 items with 9 items in each scale: An Informational-style scale (e.g., "I have spent a great deal of time thinking seriously about what I should do with my life"; $\alpha = .64$); a Normative-style scale (e.g., "I prefer to deal with situations where I can rely on social norms and standards"; $\alpha = .62$); a Diffuse-Avoidant-style scale (e.g., "I'm not really thinking about my future now; it's still a long way off"; $\alpha = .73$); and an Identity Commitment scale (e.g., "I know basically what I believe and don't believe"; $\alpha = .75$). These items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Alpha coefficients for the current sample were: Informational style, 0.92; Normative style, 0.89; Diffuse-Avoidant style, 0.91; and Identity Commitment; 0.90. The highest possible score on each subscale is 45.

Wisdom Measure

Ardelt (2003), after extensive work on wisdom came up with the Three-Dimensional-Wisdom Scale (3D-WS) comprising of 39 items to examine the three dimensions of wisdom: Cognitive (14 items, all worded negatively), reflective (12 items), and affective (13 items). The participating individuals responded to items on two different 5-point Likert scales in accordance with the nature of the statements. The first 15 items needed to be answered on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), and the remaining 24 items were answered on a scale ranging from 1 (definitely true of myself) to 5 (not true of myself). After reverse scoring of negatively worded items, scores for each wisdom dimension were computed by averaging relevant responses, and an overall wisdom score was computed by taking the average of the three dimensions' averages. Cronbach's alpha for all components ranged from .71 to .85 (Ardelt, 2003). In the current investigation, Cronbach's alpha for the three dimensions were .86 (for cognitive), .74 (for affective), and .71 (for the reflective dimension) respectively which indicate that they are not different from Ardelt's alpha scores.

Procedure

This study was carried out to determine the relationship of identity processing styles with wisdom among student population from various colleges and universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. All the subjects were assured confidentiality regarding their identifiable information. Then, personal information sheet was administered on the entire sample to get information relating to demographic profile of each of them. Later, the identity style inventory and three-dimensional wisdom scale to be filled out.

Results

Table 1

Mean Age of Respondents by Identity Styles (N=400)

Identity Styles	Mean Age	N	Std. Deviation
Informational Style	33.35	261	7.506
Normative. Style	26.14	89	7.262
Diffuse Style	19.09	50	7.819
Total	26.897	400	8.89

The findings underline the importance of age for rational identity processing. Mean age was higher (33.35 ± 7.51) for those who used an informational style than those who preferred normative and diffuse styles (26.14 ± 7.262 and 19.09 ± 7.82 respectively).

Table 2

Frequency Distribution Matrix of Identity Styles according to Gender

Gender	Informational Style	Normative Style	Diffuse Style	Total
Women	137	52	26	215
Men	124	37	24	185
Total	261	89	50	400

($\chi^2 (2, n=400) 1.011, p>.01$)

Identity style wise differences between men and women were not supported by Pearson Chi-Square ($\chi^2 (2, n=400) 1.011, p>.01$). On the whole 67.03% men and 63.72% women used informational style. Similarly, 20% of men and 24% of the women reported use of normative style whereas 12% of women and 13.1% of men preferred diffused-avoidant style as their dominant style. So it becomes obvious that most members of both genders preferred informational style in order to process information related to identity, whereas diffuse-avoidant style used to be least preferred style indicating, again, that the majority of men and women, from the region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, take rational approach toward issues. It can also be seen in Table 2 that, out of 400 subjects, 261 used informational style. This represents the portion of 65.25% of the respondents. Approximately 22.3% showed dependence on normative and only 13% on diffuse style. These statistics point out that majority of the respondents preferred informational style which reflects psychological maturity on the part of the users.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Wisdom (total and dimensions) by Identity Styles

	Identity Styles	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Cognitive Wisdom	Diffuse	2.4758	.23396	50
	Normative	3.0476	.21209	89
	Information	3.8734	.36342	261
	Total	3.5150	.60894	400
Affective Wisdom	Diffuse	2.5764	.35131	50
	Normative	3.1781	.15844	89
	Information	3.7189	.31268	261
	Total	3.4557	.49374	400
Reflective Wisdom	Diffuse	2.2196	.29648	50
	Normative	3.2087	.25526	89
	Information	3.8372	.35828	261
	Total	3.4952	.63841	400
Total Wisdom	Diffuse	2.4236	.25237	50

Normative	3.1455	.16146	89
Information	3.8088	.30721	261
Total	3.4881	.55726	400

According to statistics shown in Table 3, mean score of respondents on cognitive component of wisdom was 2.476 for diffuse-avoidant style, 3.05 for normative style, and 3.87 for informational style. Total mean score on cognitive dimension was 3.52. Similarly mean score on affective component of wisdom was 2.577 for diffuse-avoidant style, 3.178 for normative style, and 3.72 for informational style. Total mean score on affective dimension was 3.456. For the reflective component of wisdom, mean score was 2.22 for diffuse-avoidant style, 3.21 for normative style, and 3.84 for informational style. Total mean score on reflective dimension was 3.495. Mean score on overall wisdom was 2.42 for diffuse-avoidant style, 3.15 for normative style, and 3.81 for informational style. Total mean score on overall wisdom was 3.488.

The analysis seemingly proves existence of relationship between identity styles and wisdom. Descriptive statistics highlighted importance of identity styles in predicting wisdom. The subjects using informational style displayed highest score not only on overall wisdom but also on all three wisdom components compared to those having preference for two other styles. Further, achieving low mean scores on wisdom (total as well as three aspects) by respondents with diffuse-avoidant and normative styles is a matter of concern and indicated that they need more improvement in cognitive, affective, and reflective domains of their life.

Table 4
Post Hoc Pair Wise Comparison on Wisdom by Identity Styles for N = 400

Dependent Variable	Identity style (I)	Identity style (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Cognitive	Diffuse	Normative	-.5718*	.05678	.000
		Information	-1.3976*	.04960	.000
	normative	Diffuse	.5718*	.05678	.000
		Information	-.8258*	.03944	.000
	information	Diffuse	1.3976*	.04960	.000
		Normative	.8258*	.03944	.000
Affective	Diffuse	Normative	-.6017*	.05148	.000
		Information	-1.1425*	.04496	.000
	normative	Diffuse	.6017*	.05148	.000
		information	-.5408*	.03575	.000
	information	diffuse	1.1425*	.04496	.000
		normative	.5408*	.03575	.000
Reflective	Diffuse	normative	-.9891*	.05845	.000
		information	-1.6176*	.05105	.000
	normative	diffuse	.9891*	.05845	.000
		information	-.6286*	.04059	.000
	information	diffuse	1.6176*	.05105	.000
		normative	.6286*	.04059	.000
Wisdom (Total)	Diffuse	normative	-.7219*	.04855	.000
		information	-1.3852*	.04240	.000
	normative	diffuse	.7219*	.04855	.000
		information	-.6633*	.03372	.000
	information	diffuse	1.3852*	.04240	.000
		normative	.6633*	.03372	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The estimated marginal means and standard errors for wisdom (overall and components) were examined in Table 4. Table presents the possible interaction effect between different identity styles on wisdom. Various styles significantly impacted respondents' cognitive, affective, and reflective aspects of wisdom at 0.05.

Table 5*Homogeneous Subsets for Cognitive Dimension of Wisdom*

Tukey HSD				
Identity Style	N	Subset		
		1	2	3
Diffuse	50	2.4758		
Normative	89		3.0476	
Information	261			3.8734
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

The homogenous subsets output presented in Table 5 makes it obvious that all groups have achieved significantly different mean scores on cognitive dimension of wisdom, therefore, each group occupied a separate subset, which yielded three subsets, on the whole. The subjects with diffuse-avoidant style had lowest mean of 2.4758. This range of score indicates significantly lowered wisdom compared to the score achieved by respondents with informational style (Mean = 3.873) revealing that informational individuals were (significantly) far ahead of diffused types in cognitive skills.

Table 6*Homogeneous Subsets for Affective Dimension of Wisdom*

Tukey HSD				
Identity Style	N	Subset		
		1	2	3
Diffuse	50	2.576		
Normative	89		3.178	
Information	261			3.719
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

The homogenous subsets output displayed in Table 6 show that all groups had significantly different mean scores on affective dimension of wisdom. In addition, the homogeneous subsets for Tukey HSD also show that all groups were significantly different from each other, as each subset contained only one group which provides evidence in this regard. Subjects with diffuse-avoidant style had lowest mean of 2.576 indicating significantly lowered affective wisdom compared to the mean score achieved by respondents with informational style (Mean = 3.719), revealing that informational individuals are significantly more compassionate than are diffused types.

Table 7*Homogeneous Subsets for Reflective Dimension of Wisdom*

Tukey HSD				
Identity Style	N	Subset		
		1	2	3
Diffuse	50	2.2196		
Normative	89		3.2087	
Information	261			3.837
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

The homogenous subsets output shown in Table 7 indicates that, again, all groups have significantly different means from each other. On the reflective wisdom, respondents with diffuse style are found in the subset 1 with lowest mean (2.2196), whereas respondents with informational style scored highest (3.837) on this dimension, so they found a place in subset 3.

Table 8
Homogeneous Subsets for Total Wisdom

Tukey HSD		Subset		
Identity Style	N	1	2	3
Diffuse	50	2.4236		
Normative	89		3.1455	
Information	261			3.8088
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

The homogenous subsets output presented in Table 8 explains that all three groups have obtained significantly different means on the overall wisdom. The respondents with diffuse style are placed in subset 1 (with the lowest mean, i.e. 2.4236), whereas informational style users obtained highest mean (3.8088) on overall wisdom, thus they fall in subset 3.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to examine whether differences in identity processing styles would predict relationship with construct of wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to use facts and knowledge to come to correct conclusions. Acquiring wisdom means gaining understanding. One of the major concerns of this scholar was to highlight the importance of stylistic differences in identity processing for psychological maturity that is reflected in the form of wise thoughts and actions.

Identity Styles and Wisdom

Informational style: The informational individuals proved to be significantly wise, when wisdom is defined in terms of Three-Dimensional Wisdom Scale. These results (see above tables) are an addition to the existing body of literature demonstrating a link between the use of an informational style and unique positive aspects such as self-actualization (the desire for self-fulfillment), one of the aspects of wisdom (Beaumont, 2009), producing evidence that the preference for an information-oriented style facilitates wise thoughts and actions. The life-span theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1968) emphasized that the emergence of a sense of ego integrity during late adulthood depends on identity formation in adolescence. According to Erikson (1968) ego-integrity let people to be self-governing and take responsibility and accountability for what they do. It is about gaining awareness regarding different dilemmas that the entire mankind faces, and understanding each other, respecting and admiring diverse ways that humans choose to bring meaning to their lives. Clayton (1975) equated Erikson's concept of integrity with wisdom: using knowledge and reason for the welfare of entire group and it is revealed through the values that exceed one's personal as well as social and institutional interests. Rational information processing does not make sure that someone will definitely possess wisdom. But it is reasonable to assume that this type of reasoning has an important role in wisdom. Individuals using an informational style try to consider others' viewpoints, and even unconventional stance that other people may take.

Since wisdom reflects integrated personality, the findings of current study strengthen the theoretical assumptions put forward by Berzonsky (1990) that scientific minded persons achieve balance in assimilation and accommodation processes by using an informational identity style. These individuals explore ideas critically, have got ability to act by using experience, knowledge, understanding, and insightfulness. Their performance is indicative of highest level of adequacy under any circumstances. It refers to applying perceptual and judgment skills and actions after going through what may be the best possible plan of action (cognitive aspect). Results of this study prove that self-reflection is the capacity of such persons to resolve inner conflicts, and gain clarity for themselves. They exercise introspection, and show eagerness to discover more about their strengths,

weaknesses, and fundamental nature (reflective aspect). Informational processing definitely involves emotion management and regulation so that rationality and cool mindedness prevail and one's actions do not get affected by (harsh) emotional reactions (affective aspect). In short, the focus is on the right outcome that goes in favor of all.

Diffuse-Avoidant Style: In contrary, the diffuse/avoidant individuals were significantly low on overall wisdom as well as on all wisdom dimensions. These findings are in line with some of prior studies which stressed that this style bears negative relationship with self-actualization, and wise actions (Beaumont, 2009 & 2011). These previous studies draw attention to the damaging effect of this style for mature (psychological) development that is considered necessary for developing wisdom.

Normative Style: Unexpectedly, normative style also showed (complete) inverse relationship with wisdom (total and all subscales). As this study did not focus on the cause and effect relationship, it is not easy to conclude that whether identity styles influence the development of wisdom or wisdom helps to reduce reliance on normative and diffuse-avoidant styles. Given the importance of culture, institutions, and networks (that add value to life) during adolescence and early adulthood for making prediction about emergence of wisdom later in life as highlighted by Ardel (2000), it may be that, since the social circle of normative types is confined to very close persons such as family members (e.g., Mathies & Adams, 2004), there is a possibility that the mature development of cognitive, reflective, and affective aspects of wisdom is hampered by such restricted and scripted social experiences. Further, the rigidity, lack of tolerance, and closed mindedness--the distinguishing features of normative style--do not let these persons to have wider and frequent social interactions. Consequently, these limitations put bar on them to start their identity-seeking earlier (in contrast to the informational individuals who develop independence and autonomy early on in their life).

It is noteworthy to mention here that when it comes to issues of young individuals' financial support, parents are required to keep in mind the difference between psychological/emotional support and financial assistance. Young adults often need their parents' emotional or psychological support more than ever. But due to too much dependence on their parents during school or college years, normative style users fail to have adequate opportunities to build social skills (e.g., interpersonal relationship) as well as intrapersonal communications, both of which are considered vital by the researchers (e.g., Song, 1993) in nurturing the development of the affective and reflective dimensions of wisdom. These skills, therefore, are not merely important in the work area; they can benefit people's personal and social life as well. Since normative style users are deficient in these skills, they are less likely to develop integrated wisdom.

Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Directions

The results of this study indicate that there is a relationship between identity styles and wisdom: (1) informational style (as a coping mechanism) strongly predicts cognitive, affective, and reflective components of wisdom, (2) the normative and diffuse-avoidant styles resemble in that they both are inversely related to wisdom components, (3) age increment increases reliance on informational style, and reduces reliance on normative and diffuse styles (reference to mean ages). Overall, the pattern (of results) looks pretty favorable for informational style and adverse for other styles. Ardel (2000, 2008) pointed out that mature personality as well as stimulating physical, intellectual, and cultural environments in the phase of young adulthood are essential antecedents for wisdom development later in life. Hence, it may not be wrong to think that just a set of cognitive, dispositional, and social qualities of those persons who go for informational style are not sufficient/adequate to predict wisdom. However, these people have the advantage of possessing clear identity and pleasing personal traits which let them get the full benefit of the broader and richer environmental influences during adolescence and adulthood and put them in a better position to develop deeper understanding of others, connect to them (others) and work for them by going beyond their petty interests.

There are some important limitations to the present study. Just like other studies, reliance on self-report measures for all constructs is one of the concerns. Such measures are likely to be influenced by the individual's intention to present himself/herself in a very positive manner. Further, inaccurate self-judgments may also pose serious problem especially if the goal is to measure wisdom (see also Aldwin, 2009). Another limitation of the current study is its cross-sectional nature. In such researches people from different sections of

life are selected and studied concurrently. These studies are not causal or relational. Rather they are observational in nature and unable to examine cause-and-effect bond between different variables. Therefore, this type of research does not provide any empirical basis or evidence for coming to a conclusion with regard to the direction of relationship. Longitudinal data would be needed for addressing the issues pertaining to interrelatedness between changes in identity styles and the variable of wisdom over time. In future, utilizing some other instruments (e.g., Webster's SAWS, life satisfaction scale, meaning in life questionnaire, etc) may also help to endorse the results of the current study. The population of the present investigation was made up of persons who were pursuing full-time higher education in a wide range of diverse disciplines. Researchers need to arrange further studies across two groups; educated individuals and those who have never gone to a college or high school. It would be better to choose larger samples representing all age periods (i.e., early and late adolescence, early, middle, and late adulthood) and focus, in addition to age and gender, on some other demographic variables (e.g., ethnicity, income, race, family size, occupation, religion, social class, and political beliefs) aiming at exploring differential relationships between predictors and outcome variables amongst various segments of the population. Furthermore, because the entire data in the present work was collected from the northwest frontier region called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which is far more conservative and patriarchal than some other areas of the country, therefore, centering on people from other regions of Pakistan in next studies is likely to be helpful to find out how do variations in the lifestyles, traditions, and customs elicit different results. Also, recruiting individuals from other parts of the world (i.e., cross- cultural research) including individualistic societies would be helpful in investigating the influence of cultural factors on identity processing and its possible association with other variables.

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