



## Sociology of Education

### Canonical Analysis of the Relations between Identity Styles and Self Handicapping in High School Students

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**Purpose:** This study aimed to investigate the relationship between identity styles and self-handicapping by canonical correlation analysis.

**Methodology:** The design of the current research was descriptive-correlational and focal correlation analysis was used to investigate the relationships between two sets of predictor changes (identity styles) and criteria (dimensions of self-impairment). The statistical population of the study was high school students in Bojnourd. By multi-stage random sampling, 210 students were selected. Data collection was done with the identity styles questionnaire (Berzonsky, 1992) and the self-management scale (Jones, and Rhodewalt, 1982). Data analysis was done with Pearson correlation coefficient and focal correlation using SPSS.27 software.

**Findings:** Findings from the analyses indicated a significant relationship between identity styles and self-handicapping dimensions. The common variance of identity styles and self-handicapping was 28%. In the function of identity styles, informational identity was most important (0.81) and in the function of self-handicapping, it was assigned to claim self-handicapping (-0.99).

**Conclusion:** In general, the processing of identity information can impact the use of self-handicapping strategies, and teenagers with an informational and normative identity and a high identity commitment use less self-handicapping behaviors.



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## Extended Abstract

**Purpose:** Learners in academic conditions are looking for strategies to protect them from the stress caused by failure. Self-handicapping is a set of strategies in which people try to create obstacles for their performance, so that in case of failure, failure to these obstacles be attributed. People seem to use self-handicapping as a primary justification for potential failure. Dodging and procrastinating, overcompensating, lack of effort, and not creating practice opportunities are among self-disabling behaviors. These behaviors can have two-way effects; It is a form of self-protection and gaining a positive self-image and protects self-esteem in the short term, or in an extreme case, it is a maladaptive strategy and has negative effects on self-concept by avoiding duty, expectations of failure, excuses, and external documents. Self-disability is caused by the lack of confidence in one's own competence due to the existence of a history of receiving random rewards unrelated to performance, as well as a history of not receiving unconditional love and care. The main foundations of self-disabling behaviors should be considered in people's need to compensate for their mental feelings, inferiority and weaknesses. Self-handicapping can be behavioral or assertive. Behavioral self-handicapping is more maladaptive and refers to doing or not doing something with the purpose of apologizing. Alleged self-handicapping is a verbal attempt to justify others about the reasons for failure, so that the person is not questioned and blamed. Self-handicapping is related to a wide range of negative consequences such as anxiety, depression, poor academic performance. It seems that the belief that "nothing, including me, is perfect, and when a problem arises, I myself must be the beginning of solving the problem" (Gabriel, 2017). This requires reaching a precise definition of oneself, one's abilities and needs. Based on this, identity information can help create this insight and stability in a person. The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between identity styles and self-disability using focal correlation analysis.

**Methodology:** The design of the current research was descriptive-correlational and focal correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between two sets of predictor variables (identity styles) and criteria (dimensions of self-impairment). The statistical population consisted of the students of the second secondary school in Bojnord city in the academic year 2022-23. According to the suggestion of Cohen (1992), in order to achieve an average level of effect size, at least 118 sample people are required. However, Garson (2015) suggests 10 people for each variable in the model and at least 200 people for the focal correlation analysis. Due to the possibility of dropping people and the sampling method, this number increased to 240 people. Sampling was done by multi-stage random method. In this way, the city of Bojnord was initially divided into four regions. Next, one second secondary school for girls and one school for boys were selected from each region. In each school, one class from each grade was randomly selected and the questionnaire was distributed among 10 students of those classes. Finally, after removing the incomplete questionnaires, the data of 210 people were analyzed. Data collection was done with the identity styles questionnaire (Brzezunsky, 1992) and the self-handicapping scale (Jones and Rudwalt, 1982). Data analysis was done using focal correlation analysis method. This method provides the possibility of examining the relationships between multiple predictor variables and multiple criterion variables simultaneously. This analysis uses linear combination of predictor variables to estimate the linear combination of predictor variables. In this analysis, two focal functions are formed. The focal weights within each function represent the contribution of each of the main variables in focal correlation coefficients and are the same as beta coefficients in regression. Focal loads are the simple correlation between main variables and their corresponding focal function. Data analysis was done by calculating descriptive indices, Pearson correlation coefficient and focal correlation with SPSS.27 software.

**Findings:** The results showed that there is a significant relationship between identity styles and dimensions of self-disability. The common variance of identity styles and self-handicapping was 28%. The most importance in the function of identity styles was given to informational identity (0.81) and in the function of self-handicapping to alleged self-handicapping (-0.99). In general, it seems that the processing of information related to identity can have

an effect on the use of self-handicapping strategies, and adolescents who have informational and normative identity and have high identity commitment use less self-handicapping behaviors.

**Conclusion:** The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between the focal sets of identity styles (informative, normative, confused/avoidant, and identity commitment) as independent variables and the dimensions of self-impairment (behavioral, pretentious, and general) as dependent variables. In this regard, the relationship between the two sets of variables was examined and tested using focal correlation analysis. The results showed that there are negative and significant relationships between informational identity style, normative identity, and identity commitment with dimensions of self-impairment, and the relationship of confused/avoidant identity with dimensions of self-impairment is positive and significant. Other results showed that the set of predicting variables of self-handicapping (behavioral, alleged and general) and identity styles have common information. This means that by knowing the focal variable of identity styles, it is possible to predict 28% of the changes in the focal variable of self-handicapping. But with the knowledge of the central variable of self-handicapping, only 14% of the variance of identity styles can be explained. Based on this, it is concluded that by focusing on the identity styles of teenagers, their self-impairment can be explained. The results of the research showed that in the function of identity styles, informational identity and in the function of self-impairment, the alleged dimension has the most weight. This means that awareness of informational identity plays a greater role in identifying adolescent identity styles. Regarding self-impairment, the alleged dimension has the largest share in determining the amount of self-impairment of teenagers. The current research, like any other study, is faced with limitations such as the use of self-report tools and implementation in a specific cultural context, and the generalization of its findings to other groups should be done with caution. Because the structures studied in this research have a social background and may have a different status in other groups.