
INSTITUTIONAL IDENTITY OF ADOLESCENTS: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

To explore the components and factors influencing institutional identity in Pakistani adolescents, a thematic analysis approach was used to analyze the data, collected from 9 boys and 9 girls in their adolescent age that ranged between 15-17 years. These adolescents were students of grade 9-10, and were sampled from different cities of Pakistan. Thematic analysis revealed that institutional identity comprised of belongingness, personal evaluation and reputation. Analysis also revealed that peer, parents, teachers, infrastructure, curriculum, rules & regulations and extracurricular activities influence various components of institutional identity. This paper provides theoretical and practical implications for the institutional identity development of adolescents in Pakistan.

KEYWORDS

Institution, identity development, factors, components, adolescence

INTRODUCTION

Identity is a system of thinking about oneself that develops during adolescence (Lam & Tam, 2011). Identity is modified by a variety of factors (Gohier, Chevrier, & Anadón, 2007). According to Hansen (2008) Identity is formed and reformed in comparison to the others around us. Adolescents spend substantial

time learning and socializing at school (Oberle et al., 2011). Their relationships with teachers, peers, and classroom settings play a significant role in their lives (Wang & Holcombe, 2010, p. 637). Institutional identity has been a strong and exciting area of study in contemporary researches (Hogg, 2006).

According to Puusa (2006), institutional is an important construct and it offers a range of meaning for members of institutions to recognize actions and attitudes. This has been shown that the degree to which students recognize, integrate, and interact with their respective institutions facilitates many positive outcomes including increased academic success and engagement (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). According to Brown (2000) interpersonal, behavioral, and environmental features influence the learner's institutional identity.

Collectively the experiences of students at their schools can be analyzed in two domains which are social and academic. The social domain consists of student engagement and their interaction with other students (e.g. attending school events, engaging in activities). The academic domain consists of interaction with instructors and more formal interaction with fellows students (group participation). To get a deeper understanding of phenomena in educational settings different theories have been developed.

One of them is Social Identity Theory through this we can better understand institutional identity and factors that affect and play role in its construction. This theory states that individuals who belong to a certain group seem to exhibit favoritism towards mottoes and practices within the group (Brown, 2000; Hogg, 2006; Jaspal, 2010). The theory (social identity) suggests that the social group to which one belongs constitutes a part of the self-concept. Individuals identify themselves in a social group and determine the importance of those groups. So the social identity consists of knowledge about the group to which one belongs and an appraisal of the groups (bad, good neutral group) (Trepte, 2006).

SIT emphasize the importance of three factors; identification in groups, context and relationship with other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Comparing in-group and out-groups leads to increased interest in certain related / neighboring groups that improve in-group relations, identity, and thereby distancing themselves from those who are different (Hogg, 2006; Jaspal, 2010).

Identity can be viewed in the context of Marcia's theory involved in identity development. This theory explains the term crisis (it is the time when a person has to engage in choosing between alternative occupation and belief during adolescents) and commitment (defined as the degree of a personal investment expressed in a profession

or a belief by the individual) (Marcia, 1967). There are four identity formation stages as foreclosed in this stage person has clear commitment but incorporated by parents could be due to culture and also viewed it as an alternative.

Identity diffused means have no commitment relay on life where it takes them. Identity moratorium also called identity crisis person who wants to construct commitment but no comment yet the person is unable at this stage. Identity achieved at this stage person has stable commitment.

This concept of belonging is the result of many controlling variables several of which are told by social identity theory such as classifying teachers themselves and others as in and out of the group and their tendency towards personal relationships (Brewer, 1991). A connected juncture of SIT principles and teacher identity contributes to the phenomenon of institutional identity, which can commonly be explained as the state of teacher relationship with the institution in which he/she teaches (Hogg, 2006). Institutional identity is the recognition of existing student identity ideas in the SIT.

Researchers defined some factors which appear to be the most common elements of institutional identity. For instance, Self-organization, the factor which strengthens the in-group relations of member (Hogg, 2006). The importance of context, too, makes it a defining variable in the attitude and behavior of changing members. The context applies to the individual as well as contextual factors (Lovitt, 2007). By seeing the self or others as an example of the in-group prototype, which is called de-personalization, each member identifies with the institution and thus supports his/her institutional identity (Stets & Harrod, 2004). Therefore institutional identity cannot be completed without the sense of responsibility of the members towards the institution. It further enhances in-group relations and mutual loyalty (Crosswell, 2006).

The voluntary choice of participants to become active in an institution is also an important element in institutional identity, according to the literature (Goldberg, 2003). The free choice of members makes them inspired and active in attaining institutional goals (Sock, 2008). Another element is the relationship with other member of groups (Weber & Mitchell 1995). There is scarcity of literature on institutional identity of students and available literature deals with the institutional identity of employees.

Students hold a significant role in any shaping culture. Whether in high school, college or university, students have a crucial influence on society (Pancer, et al., 2005). Institution can play important role in the lives of student and facilitates them to exhibit their actual potential (Bilal et al., 2021) so, a sense of belongingness and relatedness with institution is important for a student which is called institutional identity.

Institutional identity is identity of students how they associate themselves with their institutions. Keeping in view the importance of institution in the lives of students, current study was planned to explore the process of institutional identity development and furthermore to explore the factors that influence this process.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the process of institutional identity formation among adolescents.
2. To find out the factors that influence various steps of institutional identity formation.

RESEARCH METHOD

Sample

The purposive sample comprised of 18 adolescents was recruited from all provinces of Pakistan. Boys and girls were given equal representation in the sample. Age of the sample ranged from 15 to 17 years. Physically disabled and non-Muslim adolescents were not included in the study.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Sr. No	Pseudonyms	Gender	Class/Grade
1.	Hashir	Boy	9 th
2.	Sara	Girl	10 th
3.	Salaar	Boy	9 th
4.	Zain	Boy	10 th
5.	Sana	Girl	10 th
6.	Iqra	Girl	9 th
7.	Nimra	Girl	10 th
8.	Ahad	Boy	10 th
9.	Amna	Girl	9 th
10.	Waqar	Boy	10 th
11.	Mavra	Girl	9 th
12.	Sahil	Boy	10 th
13.	Zartasha	Girl	10 th
14.	Ali	Boy	9 th
15.	Adila	Girl	10 th
16.	Kamal	Boy	9 th
17.	Haya	Girl	9 th
18.	Ahmad	Boy	10 th

Instrument

Keeping in view the interview guidelines provided by Marcia (1993), an interview protocol comprised of 20 questions was designed. Interview protocol was discussed with experts and 15 items were finalized and five items were excluded. Questions were

related with the attitude, feelings and point of views about their school and school related other factors.

Procedure

Topic of the research was approved by the institutional review board (IRB) of Psychology department, University of Sargodha. Formal permission was taken from the parents of participants. Informed consent was taken from the participants. Interview Protocol was shared with the parents on their demand. Participants were completely briefed about the purpose of study. They were ensured that their information will be used only for research purposes and it remains confidential. Students took a lot of interest in answering the questions. Interview took approximately 35 minutes. At the end participants were apprised for their cooperation.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis guidelines were adapted. Thematic analysis is flexible process and it is easy and systematic to handle. This method “aims to explore the understanding of an issue or the signification of an idea” (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 387). Step by step Braun and Clarke (2006) guidelines were employed for data analysis. The first phase of analysis was marked with the transcription and reading of interview. Data was reduced and initial codes were developed in the second phase. Third phase was meant to generate meaningful themes. Furthermore themes were refined with the help of experts. Definition and assigning labels to the themes were finalized in the fifth phase of thematic analysis. At the sixth step results were reported and during reporting the results pseudonyms were used to maintain the confidentiality of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic analysis revealed that institutional identity is comprised of various components which are belongingness, personal evaluation and reputation

Belongingness

A sense of belongingness with an academic institution is very important for the students (Osterman, 2000). The account of participants also reflects that they assign significant meanings to their institution if they experience belongingness. Belongingness with the institution is marked with the feeling of students about the level of perceived respect, acceptance and support by the school.

I like to stay at school because I feel more confident now...Teachers ask me to participate in different types of physical activities. They appreciate me and I really enjoy it at school... I have a lot of friends here and I enjoy the time at school. I feel I am being liked by my teachers and by my friends (Nimra)

The narration of the participant reflects that she feels enjoyment while at school and the reason behind this attachment with school is the confidence that is provided by the school and by the teachers to the participant. She feels worthwhile and confident therefore she experiences belongingness with her school. Belongingness to the school is a source of enrichment in the participant.

I feel so good in school that even I don't want to go home and wish to stay the whole day in school...I have made a lot of friends in this school and wish to pass my whole day with my friends(Ahsan).

I have very good friends here and the best time is when I am at school (Zain).

Verbatim of participants reflects that having friends at school play significant role in the attachment of students with school. Participants spend six to seven hours in the school but because of the presence of friends they feel to stay more at school and they consider this time as the best time of the whole day.

I am not satisfied with this school because I don't like boys of this school. They are not like me...I feel that I am not adjusted here and therefore whole week I wait for weekends (Sahil).

The narration of Sahil reflects that he is not satisfied with his school as he does not have good relationships with the boys. His narration reflects that his institutional identity is not successfully developed because he does not own his school and feels that he is not at the right place and he is suffering from adjustment issues. The main reason behind this absence of belongingness is the missing of friends in his school environment, therefore, he does not like to spend time at school.

Narrations of participants reflect that acceptance from teachers and having good interpersonal relationships with the peer group are the main important factors that determine the levels of belongingness with the institution.

Reputation of the institution

Thematic analysis revealed that it is important for the participants how their institution is evaluated by the general public. The reputation of the school determines the institutional identity of the participants.

My school is really good and other people in the city also like this school because its standard of education is very high (Sana).

I am satisfied with my school. Other people in my area also thinks that this school is good (Ahmad).

My school is too good and other people also praise and appreciate the standard of education which is provided by this school system(Ahsan).

The narrations of participants reflect their satisfaction with their school. They appear

to have a commitment with their institutional identity as they own their school and their acceptance is validated by the public fame of the school. It is important for the participants that their likings and satisfaction with school is justifiable as other people also endorse the quality and standard of their school.

The name of my school makes me proud because it is considered a good school (Zartasha).

Because of having a very good reputation the name of the school has become a source of pride for the participant.

I am satisfied with this school as it is considered as best school. Everyone wishes to get admission here. Every year first and second position holders are usually from my school (Ali)

My school was selected by my father. He asked a lot of people and most people recommended this school because of its previous record regarding positions in the board (Haya).

Participants felt satisfied with their school because generally it is perceived that the result record of school is good. Participants have a complete understanding that the purpose of school is to provide quality education. On the basis of reputation recording previous records participants felt satisfaction about their institution.

My relatives usually ask me that why are you studying in this school. They say that your parents can afford a good school then why to study here. They think that the fame of this school is not good. .. therefore I feel embarrassed when someone asks about the name of my school. (Amna)

Amna appeared to be dissatisfied with her school. Her school is a source of “embarrassment” for her. She emphasizes that other people criticize her school. It appears that this school is considered as less expensive therefore it is considered as a school for low-income group. narration of participant reflect that school is also considered as the indicator of socioeconomic status. Comments of other people are so influential that it incorporates a feeling of embarrassment for the participant.

Due to certain financial problems, I changed my school and I took admission here. This school is considered a school in the poor class. But I do not bother whatever people say about it. I know I am hardworking and I will score good marks in the exam. (Kamal)

Kamal appeared to be highly motivated. Despite having the awareness that his school is considered as a school of the poor class, he does not feel any type of embarrassment. He understands the public standing of the school and also has a complete understanding of her financial problems nevertheless he is motivated and he is sure that reputation

does not matter rather hard work matters.

Personal evaluation

The most important component of institutional identity is the personal evaluation of participants about different aspects of the school. Their narrations reflect their personal regard attached to their school.

I like my school because there is less strictness in our school as compared to other schools(Salaar)

Salaar evaluated his school on the basis of less strictness regarding rules and regulations. He likes his school because he does not like strictness.

Teachers in this school are very good and they are having command on their subject matter. (Ali)

The teachers in my school are very friendly and cooperative (Zartasha).

This school is better than my previous school as the teachers of this school are very competent and hard-working (Nimra).

I like this school because its standard of education is very good and teachers never compromise on studies. (Ahad).

Participants appeared to be satisfied with their school because they feel their teachers are competent. Teachers play a very important role in the lives of adolescents and participants reflect that their satisfaction with school is somehow linked with teachers attitude, competence, and teaching methodology.

My school is very good because the teachers of this school are very friendly and they properly respond to our all questions (Iqra).

The teachers in this school are young and they are very friendly (Sahil)

The narrations of Iqra and Sahil portray the importance of teachers' attitudes. Iqra appears to be satisfied with school and her personal evaluation is based upon the friendly attitude of teachers.

I am not satisfied with this school because teachers are not competent (Hashir)

The role of teachers in the satisfaction of school is validated through the narration of Hashir. He appears to be dissatisfied with the school because he thinks that his teachers are not competent.

.Now I am very satisfied with my school because my grades are improved now. (Sana)

Sana appeared to be satisfied with her school because she felt that her performance is improved now.

The building at my school is very good. (Iqra).

The building of this school is very large and there are wide lawns here. When we visited this school for the first time then its infrastructure inspired us even my father said that this school is best because he liked its building. (Nimra)

The importance of Infrastructure of school is reflected through the statement of participants. Wide lawn and large buildings always leave positive impressions on the students and their family members. Infrastructure provides face validity of institutions standard.

My school is good because teachers give importance to our moral and religious training. (Ahad).

Ahad feels good about her school because she feels her teachers are giving importance not only to the studies but also to the religious and moral training of students. His narration reflects that he is morally and religiously strong therefore she gives importance to this type of training.

The syllabus and curriculum of this school is also very good. Teachers mainly focus on clarity of concepts rather than just rote learning. (Nimra).

Here we are bound to study all subjects and we are not provided with options to select the subject of our choice till matriculation. I want to change this system. We should be provided with the opportunity to select subjects of our own choice as we cannot have all interests at the same time so why to waste time. (Adila)

An account of Nimra reflects that students evaluate the syllabus and curriculum of their school and if they find it up to the mark then inculcates level of satisfaction among students. Nimra appeared to be mature enough that she has complete realization regarding the importance of conceptual clarity. On the other hand Adila appeared to be concerned and dissatisfied with her curriculum and subject selection system. she is also mature enough that she realizes that mystery cannot be achieved in all subjects at a time so there must be freedom for the selection of subjects so that performance of students can be improved.

My school is not good because the school administration is less concerned about physical activities... There must be sports day and some type of physical activity on a daily basis. (Hashir)

Hashir evaluates negatively to his school because he feels the need for physical activities. He complains against her school administration because they are responsible for devising plans for school activities.

I don't like my school as its quality of education is not up to the mark... other schools are comparatively much better (Amna)

Statement of Amna reflects her personal evaluation as she thinks that she is not

satisfied with the standard of education provided by her school. She is comparing her school and it reflects that she feels that other schools are better than her school and therefore she seems to be maladjusted here.

Everything is good with this school except few teachers. .. they are very strict and we cannot ask questions easily....they always discourage questioning in the classroom especially if a question is asked twice. (Adila)

Teachers are so important for the students that evaluation of school is dependent upon the behavior, attitudes, and competence of teachers. Adila appeared to be satisfied with her school but she has complained against the undue strictness of some teachers. She feels distanced from the strict teachers and it is a big hindrance in the clarity of concepts. Asking a question in the class is the right of student but when teachers discourage the questioning of students then students stop asking questions and ultimately their concepts remain unclear.

This school promotes tuition and mostly teachers provide tuition to the students. (Haya)

The participant appeared to be annoyed with this tuition system. Haya does not like this system and she feels bad that even her teachers provide tuition to her class fellows. She must have a realization that due to tuition teachers put fewer efforts on the students as they are supposed to teach during tuition hours.

There are no proper trips for the students. I don't like my school because when it comes to arranging parties then do not allow us to wear casual dresses rather they provide us a dress code which we are compelled to follow (Amna).

The participant wants to have fun and freedom. Other than studies it is important for the participant that the school should provide some refreshments to the students. Amna complains that her school does not provide any proper opportunity for outdoor tours. She feels that they cannot properly enjoy the school functions because they are not allowed to wear dresses of their own choices. She wants to enjoy the function as per her wish but she is unable to enjoy because the dress code cannot be violated.

My school is too good. My friends are here and we enjoy a lot (Salaar)
I am not satisfied with this school because I don't like boys of this school. They are not like me... (Sahil)

Interpersonal relationships with the peer group is another source of positive or negative evaluation of the school. An account of participants reflects that having friends at school helps the individuals in making them adjusted in the environment.

This school was the selection of my mother. She is a school teacher and she can better decide about it. (Zain).

This school is a selection of my father. His colleague suggested to him that this school is good. (Sana)

Some of the participants reported that they are satisfied with their schools as it is the choice of their parents. It is only evident in those conditions when students are convinced that their parents' decision is always right and they solely rely upon the authority figure. At this stage of life if adolescents are having strong attachment with their parents then they solely rely upon their decisions with the belief that parents are wise and experienced so they can take better decisions.

As a result of thematic analysis institutional identity appeared as an important type of identity. Institutional identity is an important domain of identity for adolescents. It determines their future and further it influences many other types of identities. According to Hawkins (2001) Identity development is the continuous interaction of individuals with their environment within the frame of cultural influence. Social interaction plays important role in the identity development. This point of view can be beautifully applied in the context of students class room, where they interact with the environment and as a result learn something. It can be said that school is the basic requirement for the learning (Hawkins, 2001). Identity formation mainly starts in the middle adolescents and students spend most of their time at school (Kroger, 2000). Erikson (1959) also emphasized the role of schooling in the identity development. Schools provide options of different careers and help the students to think widely (Kaplan & Flum, 2010). Previously it is reported that institutional identity is so important that it determines the self-esteem of students regardless of the type of institution (Thomas, Smith, Marks, & Crosby, 2012). The analysis revealed that institutional identity is comprised of three components and all components are influenced by certain unique and certain combined factors. Components of institutional identity are belongingness, public fame, and personal evaluation.

The most important component appeared is belongingness. It reflected the level of student's attachment and sense of ownership attached to their institution. Previously Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) stated that the extent to which students identify with, integrate into, and engage in their respective institutions has been shown to foster many positive outcomes, including enhanced academic performance, retention and graduation. Moreover, it is also reported that an individual's sense of belonging plays an important role in his psychological and physical health (Poulton, Caspi, & Milne, 2002). In the current study participants reported having a strong sense of attachment with the school therefore they want to spend the whole day in the school. Reasons behind there sense of attachment are the meaningfulness that is provided by the school. Participants feel elevated, confident and liked by teachers and students therefore they feel comfortable in the school environment.

The importance of belongingness is emphasized by Maslow (1954) in his theory. He stated that belongingness is the fundamental need of human beings. A human being is always motivated to develop belongingness with family, group, institution, etc. Baumeister and Leary (1995) elaborated that sense of belonging attached with the groups helps in better survival through protection, reproduction, shared resources, and eventually affection.

On the other hand, few participants reported being dissatisfied with the school as they do not like to stay at school and they wait for the weekends. It reflects the importance of institutional belongingness as it ultimately disturbs the academic life of students. Previously it is stated that belongingness help in building bonds while lack of belongingness leads towards psychological and physical distress among individuals (Slaten, Ferguson, Allen, Brodrick, & Waters, 2016). In the same line it is reported that belongingness with school is positively correlated with the self-esteem of students Thomas, Smith, Marks & Crosby, 2012).

The second component of institutional identity was the reputation of the school. The reputation of schools matters a lot for the students and parents of Pakistan. School admission system of Pakistan is different from western schools. In Pakistan, it is considered that government schools are meant only for the low socioeconomic class and private schools are established for the middle and upper social class. Private schools are also having further various types of categorization on the basis of fee structure. Mainly the decision of parents for the selection of schools relies on the financial status of parents. It is perceived that high the fee structure high will be the standard of education at school because a school with a high fee structure can provide better facilities and can recruit teachers with better qualification. Therefore public fame of the school is relatively more important in Pakistan as compared to the west. Welfare states bear all the burden of school education and education is free for students. For example in countries of UK secondary level education is compulsory and almost free.

As per the results of the current study, it appeared that it is important for the participants that what the social standing of their institution is. Social standing is mainly linked with the previous record of the school. Standard and quality provided by the school can be assessed on the basis of their results. In the same line previously it is revealed that the more positively their school is perceived by the community, the better students may feel about themselves (i.e., higher self-esteem) for attending their school (Thomas, Smith, Marks & Crosby, 2012). Results revealed that on the basis of school reputation students might feel “proud” or “embarrassed” and it might be because of the impact of social class unfit. Previously it is reported that social class determines how much a student feels fit with his institution (Stephens, Townsend, Markus, & Phillips, 2012).

The third component of institutional identity is the personal evaluation of students about their institution. Other than belongingness and reputation it is important that how students evaluate their schools on different types of parameters. Criteria for evaluation varies from individual to individual as it depends upon the personal choices and preferences. Previously it is reported that personal regard for school is a significant predictor of student's self-esteem (Stephens et al., 2012).

Thematic analysis revealed that students positively or negatively evaluate their school on the basis of teacher's competence and attitude, infrastructure, peer, curriculum, parents, extracurricular activities, flexibility in rules and regulations. In the same vein previously it is reported that the availability of recreational spaces, environment of school, physical activities and size of school determine the attitude of students towards their school (Anderson, Hamilton, & Hattie, 2004; Chan, 2008; Waters, Cross, & Shaw, 2010). Infrastructure and building of school influence students significantly by influencing their school attendance and learning (Barrett, 2018; Mokaya, 2013).

The most important concern of the students regarding school evaluation is the teachers' competence and their attitude. In the same line previously it is said that teachers can help adolescents to explore the identity implications of the new ideas, activities, or possibilities they are introduced to at school (e.g., Coll & Falsafi 2010; Flum & Kaplan 2006; Kaplan and Flum 2009; Kaplan & Flum 2012; Rich & Schachter 2012; Schachter & Galili-Schachter 2012; Schachter & Rich 2011; Silseth & Arnseth 2011). The unique feature of the institutional identity is the blind reliance of participants on the choice of their parents. They feel if it is the choice of their parents then it is sufficient to be satisfied with the school. They evaluate their schools positively because they have a firm belief that it is a good choice. these types of participants are relying on the state of foreclosure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Current study comprised of students from middle socio economic class and it is suggested that future researches should give representation to the upper and lower socioeconomic class. Furthermore results would be more interesting if differences can be seen in institutional identity development of public and private schools.

Practical Implications

Findings of current study highlights very important factors that influence the process of institutional identity development of school students. On the basis of these findings school administration, teachers and parents of students can be guided that how their attitudes and strategies can facilitate the healthy institutional identity development of students. Moreover on the basis of these findings, scale of institutional identity specifically for school students can be developed and it has opened new horizon for

the quantitative researchers.

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