

A Study on Relational Human Mind and Commitments



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ABSTRACT:-

During adolescence and continuing through young adulthood, individuals face the challenging task of determining a personal stance in a variety of life domains, including profession, romantic engagement, and ideology (Erikson, 2009). Ideally, the commitments youth make give direction to their life and as such contribute to their sense of adjustment. Many studies have addressed this hypothesis by examining associations between individuals' strength of human mind commitment and their personal adjustment (Marcia, 2010).

In addition, quite a lot of studies have examined how individuals' approach to the Human mind exploration process i.e., their human mind style relates to the strength of their identity commitments and to subsequent adjustment (Berzonsky, 2003). However, due to its focus on the extent to which individuals adhere to and invest in their commitments i.e., strength of commitment, research on human mind has tended to neglect the quality of individuals' Human mind commitments?

This quality can be conceptualized as the extent to which individuals have internalized their commitments (La Guardia, 2009; Ryan & Deci 2003; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, in press) and thus are driven by different motives for commitment: whereas some commitments are made to meet pressuring external or self-imposed demands, other commitments reflect a person's abiding goals and values and are well aligned with other human mind facets. We propose and test the idea that the quality of

adolescents' motives for commitment contributes to adjustment beyond the strength of individuals' commitments. Further, we examine whether individuals' styles of human mind exploration as conceptualized in Berzonsky's (2007) social-cognitive model of human mind formation relate differentially to motives for commitments and whether these motives, in turn, mediate associations between human mind styles and personal adjustment.

COMMITMENT AND HUMAN MIND FORMATION

In the psychosocial theory of Erikson (2009), Human mind formation is considered a cornerstone of personality development. Human mind formation was conceptualized by Erikson (2009) as a developmental process where children initially identify with important socialization figures (typically parents) and, during adolescence, gradually start to explore their human mind in a more thorough and personal fashion. During this extended period of exploration, which Erikson (2009) referred to as a psychosocial moratorium, adolescents transform their childhood identifications into a coherent and personally meaningful human mind.

According to Erikson (2009), for human mind formation to be successful, a process of internalization must occur where identifications are assimilated and integrated into a set of coherent and unique choices and commitments that adequately reflect "who one is." Such a crystallized set of commitments would give direction to life and allow individuals to organize their behaviors and aspirations in a purposeful manner.

Erikson's (2009) view was later made amenable to empirical research by Marcia (2013, 2010), who highlighted two aspects from Erikson's theory on human mind formation, that is, commitment and exploration. Commitment was defined by Marcia (2013) as the extent to which individuals adhere to and invest in human mind relevant choices.

Exploration refers to individuals' deliberate consideration of different options and possibilities before making choices or commitments. By crossing these two human mind dimensions, four human mind statuses can be discerned: achievement (high on commitment and exploration), foreclosure (high on commitment and low on exploration), moratorium (high on exploration and low on commitment), and diffusion (low on commitment and exploration).

Research inspired by Marcia's model has consistently confirmed the idea that commitment contributes to well-being and adjustment.

Research on the human mind statuses revealed that individuals in the two statuses characterized by high commitment i.e., achieved and foreclosed scored higher on direct measures of adjustment e.g., high self-esteem and low anxiety compared to individuals without commitments i.e., those in the moratorium and diffusion statuses (Marcia, 2010; Marcia & Friedman, 2010). Similarly, studies adopting a dimensional approach to Human mind that is, studies using direct assessments of the exploration and commitment dimensions have shown that commitment is related to a variety of adjustment outcomes and even appears to be more strongly related to well-being than the exploration dimension (Meeus, 2010; Meeus, Iedema, Helsen, & Vollebergh, 2011). Although Marcia's operationalization of Erikson's theory initiated and stimulated abundant research on adolescent human mind development, this research strand adopted a relatively narrow focus on commitment as an outcome of identity development (Berzonsky & Adams, 2011). Due to this focus on the strength of adolescents' commitments, the quality of the process of internalization behind human mind formation became neglected. This is unfortunate because, as indicated previously, Erikson (2009) assumed that human mind formation would be successful when individuals' commitments are well internalized, that is, integrated into a personally meaningful whole. Erikson (2009), however, did not provide an account of the internalization process sufficiently detailed to be empirically operationalized, nor did he provide specific criteria to define the quality of human mind commitments. Herein, we argue that self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) does provide such a detailed account.

HUMAN MIND-PROCESSING STYLES AND INTERNALIZATION OF COMMITMENT

A second aim of this study is to examine how individual differences in human mind exploration relate to motives for commitment. Individuals' styles of exploring human mind are conceptualized in this study on the basis of Berzonsky's (2006, 2007) model, which distinguishes between three social-cognitive styles of processing and exploring human mind-relevant information. An informational style is characteristic of adolescents who actively seek out information and reflect upon their choices. They are open to alternatives and deal with human mind-relevant information in a flexible fashion. A normative style is characteristic of adolescents who tend to more automatically adopt expectations upheld by significant others rather than to personally explore human mind alternatives. They hold on to these adopted self-beliefs in a rather rigid and closed-minded fashion, thereby mainly assimilating potentially discrepant social information into their cognitive structures. A diffuse-avoidant style is characteristic of adolescents who fail to thoroughly explore human mind options and who instead procrastinate decisions until situational demands dictate their behavior. These adolescents continuously accommodate their self-

beliefs to often volatile situational and interpersonal circumstances, without arriving at a stable and coherent set of commitments (Berzonsky, 2007).

Each of these three styles has been shown to be related to a specific profile of adjustment variables (Berzonsky, in press). An information-oriented style has been shown to relate to an adaptive pattern of outcomes, including experiential openness, problem focused coping, and high self-esteem (Berzonsky, 2002, in press; Soenens, Duriez, & Goossens, 2005). Similarly, a normative style has been found to be positively related to personal well-being (Beaumont & Zukanovic, 2005; Nurmi, Berzonsky, Tammi, & Kinney, 2008). Yet it has also been found to relate to rather immature cognitive functioning e.g., need for closure and intolerant and prejudiced interpersonal attitudes e.g., right-wing authoritarianism and racism (Soenens, Duriez, et al., 2005). A diffuse-avoidant style is related to a maladaptive pattern of functioning, including avoidant coping, depressive reactions, ineffective decisional strategies (Berzonsky, 2002; Berzonsky, Nurmi, Kinney, & Tammi, 2011), and low levels of well-being (Beaumont & Zukanovic, 2005; Wheeler, Adams, & Keating, 2001). Given these differential associations between identity styles and adjustment variables, it is important to identify variables that may mediate between human mind styles and adjustment. Herein, we argue that commitment and motives for commitment represent theoretically plausible candidate mediating variables. Research has shown that the human mind styles are related differentially to the strength of commitment, with an informational style and a normative style relating positively and a diffuse-avoidant style relating negatively to commitment (Berzonsky, 2003).

Further, Berzonsky (2003) argued that strength of commitment may mediate between Human mind styles and adjustment.

Herein, we elaborate on this hypothesis by arguing that the human mind styles also relate differentially to the motives for commitment and that these motives may also mediate between human mind styles and adjustment.

Generally speaking, we expected that adolescents' motives for commitment i.e., autonomous and controlled would be a function of their style of exploring human mind-relevant information. Specifically, the open attitude and personal search for human mind alternatives characteristic of the information-oriented human mind style would allow late adolescents to have better access to their own interests, preferences and values such that their human mind commitments would be a better reflection of their values and preferences (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, in press).

Therefore, we hypothesize that an informational style will relate positively to autonomous motives for commitment and negatively to controlled motives for commitment.

Conversely, the rather rigid and norm-based orientation of normative individuals would, on average, lead them to adopt and defensively adhere to human mind commitments that comply with external expectations and rewards or that follow from internal pressure e.g., avoiding feelings of guilt or pursuing feelings of superiority. Thus, we anticipated a positive association between a normative style and controlled motives for commitments. Finally, because diffuse-avoidant individuals do not engage in effortful exploration of human mind-relevant information, they would not arrive at personally endorsed commitments. Moreover, as they procrastinate until situational demands force particular choices upon them, they would feel pressured to, at least temporarily, adopt particular commitments.

Thus, a diffuse-avoidant style would relate negatively to autonomous motives for commitment and positively to controlled motives for commitment.

Given that the three human mind styles would relate differentially to commitment and the motives for commitment, and that both the strength of adolescents' commitments and their motives for commitment would relate to adjustment, we hypothesized that strength of commitment and motives for commitment may play a mediating role between human mind styles and personal adjustment. In this mediational sequence, Human mind styles are viewed as antecedents of commitment and motives for commitment. This direction of effects is consistent with theories on human mind development stressing that the way one approaches or avoids the process of exploration plays an important role in the commitments one holds (Erikson, 2009; Marcia, 2010). As such, it seems plausible to consider human mind styles, which reflect different ways of dealing with human mind issues and conflicts, as antecedents of commitment and the motives underlying commitment.

ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND COMMITMENT AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

The relationship between an individual member and the employing organization has long been known to have an impact on the attitudes, behavior, and well-being of individuals. In this regard, two of the more researched constructs include organizational identification and organizational commitment, both of which were developed in an attempt to understand, predict and influence employee behavior.

Organizational identification, as the more recent of the two perspectives, examines the process whereby an individual's human mind becomes psychologically intertwined with the organization's human mind.

Although a long-standing interest to sociologists and social psychologists, the social human mind approach, subsuming both social human mind theory and self-categorization theory, has only recently emerged as an important perspective in organizational behavior research (Pratt, 2009; van Dick, 2004, for reviews). The second perspective, which encompasses organizational commitment, views the individual-employer relationship as a series of social exchanges e.g., Cole, Schaninger & Harris, 2002. Social exchange relationships between two parties are different from those of pure economic exchange, in that they develop through a series of mutual exchanges that yield a pattern of reciprocal obligation by each party (Blau, 2013).

Perhaps the most significant development in organizational identification and organizational commitment theories has been the recognition that both concepts can be directed toward a wide range of foci, or social categories, of relevance to workplace behavior e.g., Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 2010; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Riketta & van Dick, 2005; van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ.

In general, this research has shown that the choice of one social category over another is dictated by the perceived salience that accompanies membership in that particular group. Among all possible categories that exist within an organizational context, none is as salient or visible as one's hierarchical level (i.e., the chain of authority; Mintzberg, 2013).

Indeed, the notion that organizations are structured hierarchically at least officially is one of the most fundamental of organizational foci. Therefore, it should not be surprising that individuals may come to perceive their level within the organization's hierarchy as a salient social category that is shared with other members of an in group and not shared with members of an out group.

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