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5-13-2019

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Presented at the 26th ISRI Conference, 2019, Naples, Italy



Abstract

Latent Class Analysis was used to explore different subgroups of individuals based on identity processes (using the DIDS) and protestant fundamentalism. Results indicate that a six group solution provided the best fit for our data. The six- groups differed in terms of identity process variables (especially exploration in breadth, exploration in depth, and identification with commitment), but only modestly in terms of fundamentalism.

Introduction

Previous research has examined associations among personality, identity style, and fundamentalism among undergraduate students who identified as Protestant (Bartoszuk & Deal, 2016). A specific model was tested in which identity style mediated the relationship between personality and fundamentalism. In that work, only moderate direct effects were found between personality and fundamentalism, with four distinct patterns of indirect effects emerging, supporting the model proposed by Duriez and colleagues. The presence of indirect effects suggests that the relationships among these variables might be more complicated than originally thought. Specifically, it suggests that examining the data for different configurations or groupings of individuals in relation to specific levels of variables might be fruitful, particularly examining the relationship between identity processes and fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism inherently suggests a discomfort with uncertainty and change, as well as an embrace of what is traditional. Individuals showing different levels of fundamentalism might be expected to show different paths in their journey through ego identity development. Those high on fundamentalism, for example, might show less exploration, earlier commitment, and more identification with that commitment. Those lower on fundamentalism, in contrast, might show more exploration and less commitment making.

Methodology

Latent Class Analysis (LCA) was used to explore these possibilities. LCA is a person-centered analysis, that allows us to group together individuals who are similar to each other with regard to a particular set of scores, identifying subgroups of similar individuals within a sample (Acock, 2010).

Sample

Data were collected at two universities in the U.S. (upper Midwest and Southeast). 440 students (out of 808) identified as Protestant (54%), with an age range of 18 to 29 (mean = 19.97), with the majority of students female (79%), and White (87.2%).

Measures

The Dimensions of Identity Development Scale, (DIDS), (Luyckx, et al., 2008) was used to assess identity processes. This scale consists of 25 items on a 5-point Likert Scale, and includes 5 subscales:

Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment, and Exploration in Depth. The North American Protestant Fundamentalism Scale (NAPFS; Deal & Bartoszuk, 2014) was used to measure fundamentalism, and consists of 24 items on a 5-point Likert Scale.

Fit statistics in LCA are approximate, rather than definite (Acock, 2010), making identification of the number of groups imprecise. Nonetheless, for exploratory research such as this, they give a good starting point. Usage typically proceeds by testing a number of group sizes, then evaluating for best fit. For this paper, we tested models constraining the sample to one to six groups. Fit indices indicated that a six- group solution fit the sample best (Entropy = .92; Adjusted LRT = 52.287, $p < .20$; see Figure 1).

Discussion

In looking at the six groups, groups 4 and 5 were moderate to moderately low on all variables—no distinctions between variables were found.

Groups 3 and 6 were similar in that both tended to be high on Exploration in Breadth and Identification, but group 6 was also moderately high on Fundamentalism while group 3 was not.

Group 2 was lowest on Exploration in Breadth, high on Commitment and Exploration in Depth, and low on Fundamentalism, but was also relatively high on Rumination. Finally, Group 1 was the highest on all identity processing styles as well as on Fundamentalism.

Differences among groups are more subtle than were expected, but there are clear patterns in terms of how these variables related. Further research will be needed to differentiate between the patterns and understand the differences and their implications.

DIDS and Fundamentalism Scales (6 Classes)

