

IDENTITY CAPITAL IN SERBIAN YOUTH: A PILOT STUDY

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doi: 10.5937/engrami46-49609

submitted: 2025/03/2

accepted: 2025/03/29

published online: 2025/05/11

Abstract

In our study comprising 522 emerging adults, we have tried to determine the level of integration in adult society and the variables that contribute to this that are described in the identity capital model based on Erikson's lifelong development theory. We have found that a highly significant percentage of variance is determined by certain personality characteristics such as self-esteem and locus of control, and by identity variables such as commitment making, identifying with commitment, exploration in breadth, and exploration in depth. Negative outcome identity variables such as ruminative exploration do not significantly influence the model. While examining previous studies, we can make a case that the increase in age of young adults that participate in the study increases the influence of identity variables on the model.

Keywords: Identity capital, Erikson,
Scale adaptation

Introduction

In his seminal works, Erikson ^[1,2] describes his proposed extension of Freud's developmental theories and formulates lifelong development as a concept focusing on the development of adolescents and youth. He proposes that each developmental stage bears with it a crisis that must be overcome if the individual is to continue with uninhibited growth and development through life. One such crisis is the identity formation crisis at the end of adolescence and, at the beginning of adulthood, the crisis of identity.

Many theoreticians have further developed Erikson's theories, and there were many attempts to operationalize his concepts over the last 70 years, but what is of interest to us is the attempt to give a sociological point of view to this theory during the 90s as embodied in the Identity Capital Theory ^[3]. If we were to generalize this theoretical approach in the most loose of terms identity capital is the answer to the question of what one invests into who they are. This investment on the part of the individual will, hopefully, reflect positively on and bring rewards to the individual in the form of successfully navigating the murky waters of late-modern society. Such Identity capital can be divided into two subcategories: tangible and intangible.

Tangible capital stems from several

sources, such as social and technical skills in a wide variety of areas, effective behavioral repertoires, association with key social and occupational networks, and similar assets. What makes these assets visible is the fact that they are socially visible in the sense that they can be readily perceived by another individual. The more sociological components of tangible identity are features such as educational credentials, group membership, and personal deportment (such as the way a person dresses, physical attractiveness, an individual's speech mannerisms, and so on). Here, we also include family backgrounds and connections as an essential part of a sort of passport into social spheres and groups an individual wants to be a part of ^[3]. We must acknowledge that a significant amount of time has passed since the inception of this theory and that there have been several major developments in the field of social capital, such as the rise of the internet and social network sites. Given the connection between social network use and social capital ^[4], we find it necessary to include this form of presence in our deliberation of tangible identity capital in today's world. Therefore, we have added several measures of social media behavior to our research to test this hypothesis.

On the other hand, some resources contribute to identity capital, although they are, in essence, intangible. These more psychological factors include exploration of commitment, ego strength,

self-efficacy, cognitive flexibility, critical thinking abilities, moral reasoning, and other traits that are likely to help in an individual's endeavors to procure successful outcomes in negotiating hurdles of late-modern professional and private life ^[3]. Early research ^[5] has also identified self-esteem, purpose in life, and locus of control as contributing factors in defining intangible identity capital. In Eriksonian terms, a successful resolution to the identity crisis, characterized by high commitment-making and fruitful exploration of commitments resulting in well-developed ego-synthetic and ego-executive abilities, is also essential to intangible identity capital. Modern understanding of Eriksonian identity includes five dimensions: Commitment making, Identification with commitment, Exploration in breadth, Exploration in-depth, and Ruminative exploration ^[6]. This model was used in a more recent identity capital research ^[7].

Rooted in developmental and social psychological approaches, the identity capital model seeks to lend us greater explanatory power when examining the interrelationship between social context and identity formation ^[8]. For instance, it has been proposed that the identity capital framework can be used to identify and define entrepreneurial identity ^[9]. In the aforementioned paper, parallels have been drawn between the accrual of identity capital and the social underpinnings of entrepreneurship and how they

are compatible with each other. This was found true, especially in the creative industries ^[10]. The authors suggest that identity capital differs from other types of career capital in that it depends more on the collective perception of others and requires validation from an external audience. In other words, identity capital is rooted in communities, institutions, and the larger base of consumers, peers, and other gatekeepers.

On the whole, this study aims to measure identity capital in Serbian youth according to the guidelines proposed by Cote ^[11] and get a general idea of the prevalence of certain aspects of identity capital, their interplay and relationship with measurements of adulthood, or better yet, measurements of successfully entering adulthood. For this purpose, we have gathered a sample of young adults and gave them a battery of questions taken from previous studies of this kind.

Method

This study comprises 522 participants, and 368 of them (70.5%) have declared themselves as female. The average age of the participants is 20.6 (min=18; max=25; SD=1.79). The greatest number of students studied social sciences (60.6%) than humanities (14.1%), technological and biotechnical sciences (13.3%), and natural and medical sciences (12%). Out of the sample pool, 74.7%

only study and are not employed, 18.8% study and are precariously employed, and 6.5% study and are permanently employed. With regards to their background, 35.2% are from the countryside, 25.9% are from small towns and 39% are from cities. The testing was conducted via an online survey. Regarding parent education, 34.3% of fathers and 36.2% of mothers have some sort of higher education. Regarding employment, 91.7% of fathers and 81.1% of mothers have some sort of income. The battery of tests consisted of several questionnaires, demographical questions, and questions regarding social network use.

Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) is a 25-item scale consisting of five subscales: Commitment making, Identification with commitment, Exploration in breadth, Exploration in Depth, and Ruminative exploration ^[6]. Each of the subscales consists of five items. This instrument measures exploration and commitment and their facets, as postulated by Erikson (1950), as the driving forces of identity development in adolescents and early adults. The scale was successfully adapted into the Serbian language ^[12]. The internal consistency measured by the alpha for subscales was 0.91, 0.92, 0.86, 0.74, and 0.84.

The identity stage resolution index (ISRI; Cote, 2016) scale was created to approximate identity capital accumulation in the transition to adulthood

based on the Eriksonian identity development model, or better yet, the crisis resolution model. It has six items and two subscales, the Adult Identity Resolution Scale (AIRS) and Society Identity Resolution Scale (SIRS), each of them consisting of three items. The scale was successfully adapted to the Serbian language ^[13]. Internal consistency was good with alpha 0.80 and 0.75 scores on the subscales respectively.

Multy-Measure Agentic Personality Scale (MAPS20) is a 20-item scale created to measure a personality's perceived agentic qualities ^[11]. It has four subscales: self-esteem, purpose in life, locus of control and ego strength. This questionnaire has not been validated in Serbian, and part of this study is its validation effort.

We performed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFI), and we used several model fit indicators, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI). One of the indicators of good model fit that we used is RMSEA. We placed the maximum cut-off value to be 0.08, while we considered <0.05 to reflect a good model fit ^[14]. Next, we used the CFI and the TLI to determine a good model fit. For both indexes, we considered values of at least 0.90 to indicate an acceptable model fit, while values of 0.95 and above represent a good model fit ^[15,16]. We also used correlation, t-test, ANOVA, linear regres-

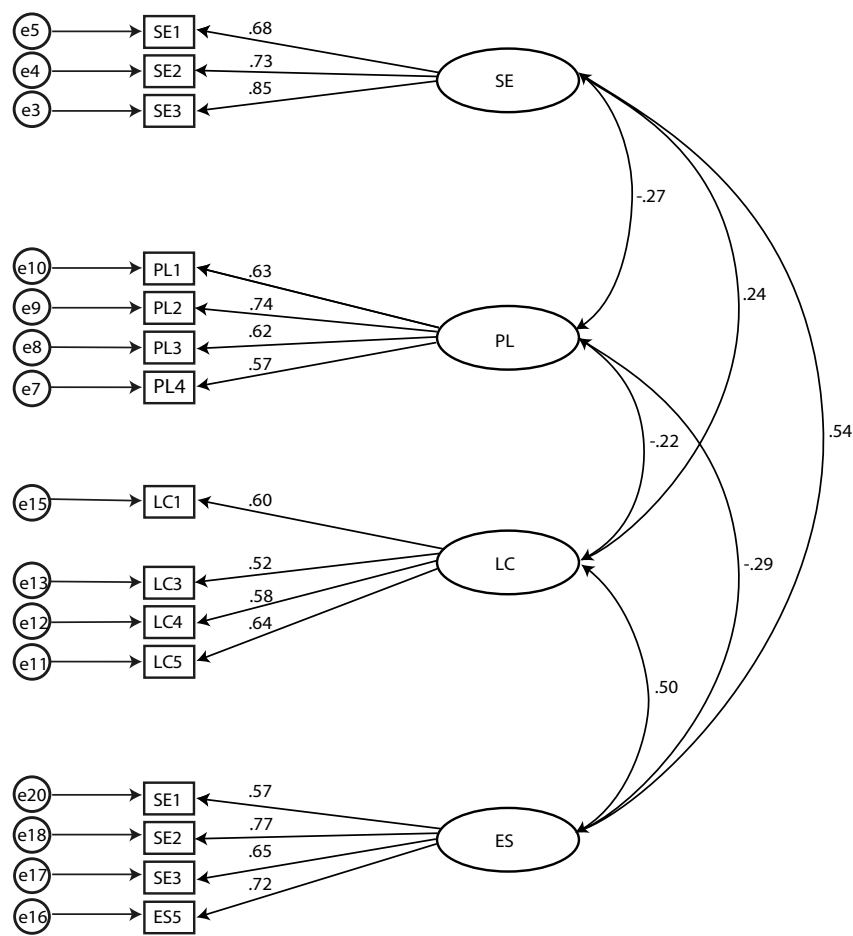
sion, and descriptive statistics methods. The statistical significance levels, p values, taken to be significant were less than 0.05 and less than 0.01.

Results

First, we performed CFI to determine the goodness of fit for the original model of the MAPS20 questionnaire. After

the original model failed to meet the criterion, we proceeded to remove the items with low loadings on the factors and ended up with a model that had satisfactory criterion $X^2(df)=273.160(83)$, CFI=0.908, TLI=0.883, RMSEA=0.066. Graph 1 is the representation of the model with factor loadings. The model we got was viable, and we used it in the rest of the statistical operations.

Graph 1. Representation of the MAPS20 questionnaire with adequate model fit.



Next, we proceeded to correlate the findings from various questionnaires we used in this survey. The results can be found in Table 1. Correlations between satisfaction with one's age and material circumstances on the one hand and other measured constructs on the other can be found in Table 2. There are no statistically significant differences between measured constructs in young individuals with em-

ployed and unemployed parents and with parents who have or do not have higher education. There is also no statistically significant difference between measured constructs and what science groups the participants are studying. This holds the same regarding their place of origin. Gender differences in measured constructs and their statistical significance can be found in Table 3.

Table 1. Correlations between measured constructs (r).

	AIRS	SIRS	SE	PL	LC	ES	CM	IC	EB	ED
SIRS	0.54**	-								
SE	0.44**	0.35**	-							
PL	-	-	-	-						
LC	0.24**	0.26**	0.18**	-	-					
ES	0.47**	0.37**	0.44**	-	0.37**	-				
CM	0.45**	0.63**	0.32**	-	0.26**	0.41**	-			
IC	0.37**	0.50**	0.35**	-0.10*	0.26**	0.39**	0.81**	-		
EB	0.10*	-	-	-	-	0.16**	0.19**	0.28**	-	
ED	0.24**	0.28**	0.26**	-	0.20**	0.27**	0.41**	0.50**	0.59**	-
RE	-0.20**	-0.30**	-0.13**	0.29**	-	-0.13**	-0.38**	-0.31**	0.37**	0.20**

AIRS – Adult Identity Resolution Scale; SIRS - Societal Identity Resolution Scale; MAPS20: SE – Self-Esteem; PL – Purpose in life; LC – Locus of control; ES – Ego strength; DIDS: CM – commitment making; IC – Identification with commitment; EB – Exploration in breadth; ED – Exploration in depth; RE – Ruminative exploration. *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2. Correlations between age and satisfaction with material status and measured constructs (r).

	AIRS	SIRS	SE	PL	LC	ES	CM	IC	EB	ED	RE	MS	Age
MS	0.12**	0.24**	0.21**	-	0.09*	0.09*	0.13**	0.13**	-	-	-	-	-
Age	0.10*	-	-	-0.13**	-	-	-	-	-	0.09*	-0.11*	-	-

MS – Material state satisfaction; AIRS – Adult Identity Resolution Scale; SIRS - Societal Identity Resolution Scale; MAPS20: SE – Self-Esteem; PL – Purpose in life; LC – Locus of control; ES – Ego strength; DIDS: CM – commitment making; IC – Identification with commitment; EB – Exploration in breadth; ED – Exploration in depth; RE – Ruminative exploration. *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 3. Gender differences between measured constructs.

Construct	Gender	Mean
Adult Identity Resolution Scale	Male	3.98
	Female	3.92
Societal Identity Resolution Scale	Male	3.43
	Female	3.26
Self-Esteem*	Male	3.94
	Female	3.76
Purpose in life	Male	2.57
	Female	2.47
Locus of Control **	Male	3.54
	Female	3.26
Ego Strength**	Male	3.74
	Female	3.43
Commitment making	Male	3.93
	Female	3.89
Identification with commitment	Male	3.83
	Female	3.90
Exploration Breadth**	Male	3.82
	Female	4.12
Exploration Depth	Male	3.40
	Female	3.48
Ruminative Exploration**	Male	3.00
	Female	3.31

*p<0.05; **p<0.01

We have also attempted to measure behavior on social networks. We have eliminated those participants who do not use social networks from this part of the survey, 11 in total. In Table 4 we can see the differences in measured construct values between groups of partici-

pants that have been sorted by the number of social networks they are using at the time of the survey. Regarding their behavior on social networks, we have classified the participants into two categories: passive scrollers and active posters. The differences between measured

constructs when considering these categories of internet behavior are presented in Table 5. We have performed ANOVA to determine the relationship between time spent on social networks and measured constructs. The time categories were one hour (N=102), two hours (N=182), three hours (N=112), and more than

three hours (N=126). There were only significant differences in Purpose in life (p=0.011) the highest purpose in life score was detected in those who spent the most time using social networks and ruminative exploration (p=0.029), where the same trend was detected.

Table 4. Differences in measured constructs regarding the number of social networks the participants are using at the moment of the survey.

	One (N=26)	On two (N=197)	On three (N=113)	On more than three (N=186)	ANOVA On significance value (p)
AIRS	4.09	4.03	3.96	3.81	0.019
SIRS	3.49	3.47	3.22	3.18	0.022
SE	4.00	3.82	3.81	3.78	0.611
PL	2.23	2.42	2.56	2.58	0.005
LC	3.48	3.45	3.30	3.26	0.130
ES	3.71	3.59	3.68	3.33	0.002
CM	3.80	4.06	3.87	3.82	0.095
IC	3.75	4.00	3.84	3.83	0.297
EB	3.58	3.97	4.22	4.07	0.004
ED	3.33	3.45	3.55	3.43	0.526
RE	3.09	3.05	3.47	3.24	0.008

AIRS – Adult Identity Resolution Scale; SIRS - Societal Identity Resolution Scale; MAPS20: SE – Self-Esteem; PL – Purpose in life; LC – Locus of control; ES – Ego strength; DIDS: CM – commitment making; IC – Identification with commitment; EB – Exploration in breadth; ED – Exploration in depth; RE – Ruminative exploration.

Table 5. Differences in measured constructs regarding participant behavior on social networks.

	I mostly watch other people’s posts (N=412)	Most of the time I post content (N=104)	p
AIRS	3.88	4.17	0.001
SIRS	3.25	3.55	0.007
SE	3.76	3.99	0.011
PL	2.49	2.50	0.820
LC	3.31	3.52	0.028
ES	3.46	3.79	0.001
CM	3.88	4.08	0.056
IC	3.83	4.13	0.009
EB	4.02	4.14	0.217
ED	3.44	3.5	0.373
RE	3.26	3.01	0.036

AIRS – Adult Identity Resolution Scale; SIRS - Societal Identity Resolution Scale; MAPS20: SE – Self-Esteem; PL – Purpose in life; LC – Locus of control; ES – Ego strength; DIDS: CM – commitment making; IC – Identification with commitment; EB – Exploration in breadth; ED – Exploration in depth; RE – Ruminative exploration.

Since AIRS and SIRS are outcomes of identity formation we have performed regression to find out what percentage of the mentioned variables variance is explained by

DIDS and MAPS20 subscales. The analysis was successful ($F(df)=28.201(509)$; $p<0.001$ and $F(df)=29.898(509)$; $p<0.001$ respectively) results are presented in Table 6. There is no significant difference in AIRS and SIRS values between students of different sciences. Also, there is no difference in the values of these variables concerning student employment, parental education,

parental employment, place of birth (village, small town or city) or social network usage styles.

Table 6. Differences in measured constructs regarding the number of social networks the participants are using at the moment of the survey.

	AIRS		SIRS	
	ß	Sig.	ß	Sig.
SE	0.265	<0.001	0.215	<0.001
PL	-0.006	0.874	-0.065	0.101
LC	0.069	0.086	0.161	<0.001
ES	0.328	<0.001	0.205	<0.001
ΔR2	0.277		0.19	
SE	0.227	<0.001	0.110	0.003
PL	0.022	0.558	-0.017	0.607
LC	0.040	0.308	0.078	0.028
ES	0.258	<0.001	0.069	0.082
CM	0.324	<0.001	0.636	<0.001
IC	-0.135	0.047	-0.146	0.016
EB	0.022	0.651	-0.160	<0.001
ED	0.039	0.454	0.146	0.002
RE	-0.075	0.120	-0.043	0.314
ΔR2	0.334		0.467	

AIRS – Adult Identity Resolution Scale; SIRS - Societal Identity Resolution Scale; MAPS20: SE – Self-Esteem; PL – Purpose in life; LC – Locus of control; ES – Ego strength; DIDS: CM – commitment making; IC – Identification with commitment; EB – Exploration in breadth; ED – Exploration in depth; RE – Ruminative exploration.

Appendix I Serbian translation of the MAPS20 questionnaire / MAPS20 upitnik

Subskala	Stavka	Ne slažem se			Slažem se	
SE1	Ja sam zabavna osoba.	1	2	3	4	5
SE2	Popularan sam meu svojim vršnjacima.	1	2	3	4	5
SE3	Ljudi uglavnom prate moje ideje i slažu se sa njima.	1	2	3	4	5
SE4	Moj izgled je ispodprosečan.(R)	1	2	3	4	5
SE5	Većinu ljudi okolina više voli nego mene. (R)	1	2	3	4	5
PL1	Uglavnom mi je veoma dosadno. (R)	1	2	3	4	5
PL2	Život mi je postao potpuna rutina. (R)	1	2	3	4	5
PL3	Svaki dan je nov i drugačiji.	1	2	3	4	5
PL4	Moj život je prazan i pun očaja. (R)	1	2	3	4	5
PL5	Veoma sam odgovorna osoba.	1	2	3	4	5
LC1	Postati uspešan je pitanje rada i zalaganja. Sreća nema ili skoro da nema ništa sa tim.	1	2	3	4	5
LC2	Ako nešto isplaniram skoro da sam sasvim siguran da mogu to da izguram do kraja.	1	2	3	4	5
LC3	Dobiću onoliku ocenu koliko vredno budem učio/la.	1	2	3	4	5
LC4	Prosto ne verujem da sreća ili šanse imaju naglašeno bitnu ulogu u mom životu.	1	2	3	4	5
LC5	Stvari koje mi se dešavaju zavise samo od mene.	1	2	3	4	5
ES1	Volim zahtevne i izazovne situacije.	1	2	3	4	5
ES2	Imam snažnu volju.	1	2	3	4	5
ES3	Mogu da se koncentrišem bolje od drugih kada se nalazim u situaciji da me nešto ometa.	1	2	3	4	5
ES4	Mogi da se nosim sa fizičkom nelagodnošću bolje nego drugi ljudi.	1	2	3	4	5
ES5	Kada imam neki posao da uradim teško me je omesti.	1	2	3	4	5

SE – Samopoštovanje; PL – Svrha u životu; LC – Lokus kontrole; ES – Snaga Ega;

IDENTITETNI KAPITAL KOD MLADIH U SRBIJI: PILOT STUDIJA

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doi: 10.5937/engrami46-49609

primljeno: 2025/03/2

prihvaćeno: 2025/03/29

objavljeno na internetu: 2025/05/11

Sažetak

U našoj studiji koja se sastojala od 522 ispitanika smo pokušali da utvrdimo nivo integracije mladih u društvo odraslih i koje varijable doprinose ovom osećaju prema modelu identitetnog kapitala zasnovanom na Eriksonovoj teoriji celoživotnog razvoja. Pronašli smo da je visoko značajan procenat varijanse osećaja odraslosti određen odlikama ličnosti poput samopouzdanja i lokusa kontrole i varijablama Ja-identiteta poput formiranje posvećenosti, identifikacijom sa posvećenošću, eksploracijom u širinu i eksploracijom u dubinu. Varijable prediktori negativnog ishoda formiranja identiteta, poput ruminativne eksploracije nemaju značajan uticaj na model. Posmatrajući prethodne studije na ovu temu, možemo postaviti hipotezu da povećanje starosti ispitanika povećava udeo uticaja identitetnih varijabli u predpostavljenom modelu.

Ključne reči: identitetni kapital, Erikson, adaptacija skala

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