



## **Identity and Individuality in Twins and Non-Twins: A Comparative Study**

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### **Abstract**

Comparative Study of the person's identity is his or her own sense of self of who they are. Limited literature reveals that twins experience difficulty in identity development than singletons particularly during adolescence. Twin parents often feel pressured to instil a sense of individuality in each of their children. Aim of this study is to compare identity and individuality of twins and non-twins. The tools used for this study are personal data sheet, Aspects of Identity Questionnaire (AIQ-IV) developed by Jonathan M. Cheek, Linda R. Tropp, Nathan N. Cheek (2002) and 3Component Individualism Scale (3CI) developed by Anu Realo, Kati Koido, Eva Ceulemens and Juri Allik. Samples were collected using snowball sampling method. t-test was used for statistical analysis of the study. Findings suggest that there is no significant difference in identity and individuality of twins and non-twins.

**Keywords:** Twins, Identity, Individuality, t-test, Snowball Sampling.

## Introduction

Twins are of two types: identical and fraternal. Identical twins (also called monozygotic twins) develop from a single zygote that splits into two genetically identical replicas, each which becomes a person. Fraternal twins (also called dizygotic twins) develop from separate eggs and separate sperm, making them genetically no more similar than ordinary siblings. Singleton or non-twin can be defined as a person occurring singly or a child that is only one born at one birth.

Twin bond is an extraordinary relationship wherein they have same nature and receive same nurturing. Since they are united even before birth, most of the twins share a common identity. As twins share a common environment they are likely to become interdependent. Thus, lacking a sense of individualism. However, effective parenting in upbringing twin children will help them overcome this issue. This paper attempts to understand the differences in twins and non-twins concerning identity and individuality.

Psychologists most commonly use the term “identity” to describe personal identity. This would include self-image, self-esteem and individuation –or the things that make a person unique. In cognitive psychology, the term identity refers to the capacity for self-reflection and awareness of self.

A person’s identity is his or her own sense of self of who they are .The way we perceive ourselves, our actions, our thoughts and our interactions with others are all influenced by this identity. Identity is a self – portrait composed of many pieces, including the career and work path the person wants to follow (vocational/career identity), whether the person is conservative,

liberal ,or middle-of-the-road (political identity), the person's spiritual beliefs(religious identity), whether the person is single, married, divorced and so on(relationship identity),the extent to which the person is motivated to achieve and is intellectual (achievement, intellectual identity), whether the person is heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual (sexual identity),which part of the world or country a person is from and how intensely the person identifies with his or her cultural heritage (cultural/ethnic identity), the kind of things a person likes to do, which can include sports, music, hobbies and so on (interests), the individual's personality characteristics, such as being introverted or extroverted, anxious or calm, friendly or hostile and so on (personality), the individual's body image(physical identity) .Erikson defines identity as a constant reproduction of images of self, experiences put together by an individual. Erikson talks about identity from psychoanalytic view. According to Erikson, identity (ego – identity) is a feeling based on two observations: the observation of a consistency and continuity of the self, and the observation that others recognize this continuity and consistency too.

### **Identity is a self- portrait composed of many pieces including**

1. The career and work path the person wants to follow (vocational/career identity)
2. Whether the person is conservative, liberal or middle-of-the-road (political identity)
3. The person's spiritual beliefs(religious identity)
4. Whether the person is single, married, divorced, and so on (relationship identity)
5. The extent to which the person is motivated to achieve and is intellectual (achievement, intellectual identity)
6. Whether the person is heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual(sexual identity)

7. Which part of the world or country a person is from and how intensely the person identifies with his or her cultural heritage(cultural/ethnic identity)
8. The kind of things a person likes to do, which can include sports, hobbies music and so on(interests)
9. The individual's personality characteristics , such as being introverted, or extroverted, anxious or calm, friendly or hostile and so on(personality)
10. The individual's body image (physical identity).

### **Erikson's view**

It was Erikson who first understood the concept of identity. In his theory, eight stages of development unfold as we go through life. At each stage, a unique developmental task confronts individuals with a crisis that must be resolved. According to him, this crisis is not a catastrophe but a turning point marked by both increased vulnerability and enhanced potential. Following are his stages:

1. Trust v/s mistrust: is Erikson's first psychosocial stage, which is experienced in the first year of life. Trust in infancy sets the stage for a lifelong expectation that the world will be a good and pleasant place to live.
2. Autonomy v/s shame and doubt: is Erikson's second stage. After gaining trust in their caregivers, infants begin to discover that their behavior is their own. They start to assert their sense of independence or autonomy.
3. Initiative v/s guilt: Erikson's third stage of development occurs during the preschool years. As preschool children encounter a widening social world, they face new challenges that require active, purposeful and responsible behavior.

4. Industry v/s inferiority: is Erikson's fourth developmental stage, occurring approximately in the elementary school years. Children now need to direct their energy towards mastering knowledge and intellectual skills.
5. Identity v/s identity confusion: is Erikson's fifth developmental stage. During this time, adolescents are faced with deciding who they are, what they are all about.
6. Intimacy v/s isolation: is Erikson's sixth developmental stage, which individuals experience during the early adulthood years. At this time, individuals face the unique task of forming intimate relationships.
7. Generativity v/s stagnation: Erikson's seventh developmental stage occurs during middle adulthood. By generativity Erikson means primarily a concern for helping younger generation to develop and lead useful lives.
8. Integrity v/s despair: is Erikson's eighth and final stage of development which individuals experience in late adulthood. During this stage, a person reflects on the past. If the person's life review reveals a life well spent, integrity is achieved.(Santrock,2011)

The search for an identity is aided by a psychosocial moratorium, which is Erikson's term for the gap between childhood security and adult autonomy. During this period the society leaves adolescents relatively free of responsibilities and free to try out different identities. Adolescents who do not successfully resolve this identity crisis suffer what Erikson calls identity confusion. The confusion takes one of two courses: individuals withdraw, isolating themselves from peers and families, or they immerse themselves in the world of peers and lose their identity in the crowd. Eriksonian researcher James Marcia reasons that Erikson's theory of identity development contains four statuses of identity, or ways of resolving the identity crisis: identity

diffusion, identity foreclosure, and identity moratorium and identity achievement. Marcia classifies individuals based on the extent of their crisis or Commitment. Crisis is defined as a period of identity development during which the individual is exploring alternatives. Commitment is personal investment in identity.

### **The four statuses of identity**

1. Identity diffusion, the status of individuals who have not yet experienced a crisis or made any commitments.
2. Identity foreclosure is the status of individuals who have made a commitment but not experienced a crisis.
3. Identity moratorium is the status of individuals who are in the midst of a crisis but whose commitment are either absent or are only vaguely defined.
4. Identity achievement is the status of individuals who have undergone a crisis and made a commitment.

### **Individuality**

Individuality can be defined in the words of Nathaniel Branden as “an ethical-psychological concept and an ethical-political one. As an ethical –psychological concept, individualism holds that a human being should think and judge independently, respecting nothing more than the sovereignty of his or her mind; thus it is intimately connected with the concept of autonomy. As an ethical-political concept, individualism upholds the supremacy of individual rights”. The foundation of individualism lies in one’s moral right to pursue one’s won happiness .This pursuit requires a large amount of independence, initiative and self-

responsibility. Individuality is the recognition that individuals are different from one another. Suppressing individuality harms not only individuals but also the group to which they belong.

## **Methodology**

### **Sample**

The present study will be conducted in 60 twins and 60 singletons selected from various places. Samples can be selected by using snowball procedure.

### **Types of twins**

Identical and fraternal Identical twins (also called monozygotic twins) develop from a single zygote that splits into two genetically identical replicas, each which becomes a person. Fraternal twins (also called dizygotic twins) develop from separate eggs and separate sperm, making them genetically no more similar than ordinary siblings (Santrock, 2011). Singleton can be defined as a person occurring singly or a child that is only one born at one birth.

### **Inclusion criteria**

The study will be conducted in twins and singletons belonging to the age group 18- 30.

### **Exclusion criteria**

Others not belonging to the age group 18-30 will be excluded.

### **Sampling method**

The sampling method to be used is snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is used by researchers to identify potential subjects in studies where subjects are hard to locate. Researchers use this sampling method if the sample for the

study is very rare or is limited to a very small subgroup of the population. This type of sampling technique works like chain referral. After observing the initial subject, the researcher asks for assistance from the subject to help identify people with a similar trait of interest.

The process of snowball sampling is much like asking subject to nominate another person with the same traits as the next subject. The researcher then observes the nominated subjects and continues in the same way until obtaining sufficient number of subjects.

### **Types of snowball sampling**

1. Linear snowball sampling
2. Exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling
3. Exponential discriminative snowball sampling

### **Variables**

The variable for the present study include psychological variables such as identity and individuality.

<b>Samples</b>	<b>Number</b>
Twins	52
Singletons	40
Total	92

### **Tools**

#### **1. Personal data sheet**

Personal data sheet contains personal details like name, age, gender, education.

Participants were also given space to mention whether they are twin or non-twin.

## **2. Aspects of Identity Questionnaire – IV (AIQ-IV)**

This tool was developed by Jonathan M. Cheek, Linda R. Tropp, Nathan N. Cheek (2002). The 35-item Aspects of Identity Questionnaire-IV using a 5-point likert -type scale ranging from not important to extremely important to my sense of who I am, was used to assess personal, relational, collective, and public identity centrality. The AIQ-IV consists of 10 items for personal (sample item: “My personal values and moral standards”), 10 items for relational (sample item: “Having close bonds with other people”), 8 items for collective (sample item: “My race or ethnic background”), and 7 items for public identity centrality (sample item: “My popularity with other people”).

## **3. Three component individualism scale**

This tool was developed by Anu Realo, Kati Koido, Eva Ceulemans and Juri Allik. This scale was developed to measure the three aspects of individualism. The three aspects of individualism are autonomy (e.g. ‘I am disturbed if anyone tries to intervene in my life’, ‘I don’t let others change me’), uniqueness (e.g. ‘I am not like other people’, ‘I have always wanted to somehow differ from others’), and mature self-responsibility (e.g. ‘I like situations where I have to decide for myself’).

## **Procedure for data collection**

This study aims to assess identity and individuality in twins and singletons. For the purpose of comparing identity and individuality in twins and singletons, personal data sheet along with the scales Aspects of identity Questionnaire –IV (AIQ –IV) and Three Component Individualism scale will be used. Data will be collected either directly approaching the participants or by mailing the questionnaires. Following instructions are given to the participants:

“These questionnaires are meant for psychological investigation and it consists of a number of statements that are related to personal information and your thought about it. Give your responses frankly by a tick mark; your responses will be kept strictly confidential”. After completion, the tools will be collected back and the responses will be scored.

### **Analysis of the data**

t-test is used for comparing the means of two samples even if there is different number of replicates. In other words, it compares the actual difference between two means in relation to the variation in the data. It is a statistical examination of two population means.

## **Results And Discussion**

Aim of this study is to compare identity and individuality in twins and non-twins. The study was conducted in 52 twins and 40 non-twins. The tools used for data collection were 3 Component Individualism Scale (3CI), Aspects of Identity Questionnaire-IV (AIQ-IV) and personal data sheet. The hypothesis formulated for this study was that there will be significant difference in identity and individuality in twins and non-twins. Findings suggest that there is no significant difference, so the hypothesis is rejected.

*Table 1: sampling distribution*

<b>Sample</b>	<b>Number</b>
Twins	52
Non-twins	40
Total	92

**Table 2: Mean Standard Deviation and Standard Error Mean Found out using SPSS.**

Mode	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error mean
Individuality twins	103.07	13.52	1.87
non-twins	101.82	12.54	1.98
Identity twins	132.82	15.41	2.13
non-twins	135.02	20.80	3.28

Illustration table 2 shows the mean, standard deviation and standard error mean found out using SPSS. The mean value of twins and non-twins in individuality was found to be 103.07 and 101.82 respectively. Standard deviation for twins and non-twins was found to be 13.52 and 12.54 respectively and standard error mean was 1.87 and 1.98 respectively. The mean value of twins and non-twins in identity was found to be 132.82 and 135.02 respectively. Standard deviation for twins and non-twins was found to be 15.41 and 20.80 respectively and standard error mean was 2.13 and 3.28 respectively.

**Table 3: t-test value of individuality of twins and non-twins**

Variables	Sig. ( 2 tailed)
Individuality	0.651
Identity	0.562

Illustration table 3 shows the t-test values. t-test value of individuality of twins and non-twins is 0.454 and the significant 2 tailed value is 0.651. The t-test value of identity of twins and non-twins is -0.582 and significant 2 tailed value is 0.562. t-test values shows that there is no significant difference in identity and individuality in twins and non-twins. So the hypothesis is rejected.

### Summary and Conclusion

The study was conducted in 54 twins and 40 non-twins. The tools used for the study are 3 Component Individualism Scale (3CI), Aspects of Identity Questionnaire– IV (AIQ-IV) and personal data sheet. 3CI Scale was developed by Anu Realo, Kati Koido et. al. .It consists of 24 questions and AIQ IV consisting of 45 questions was developed by Jonathan Cheek, Linda R. Tropp et. al. t test is used for comparing the means of two samples even if there is different number of replicates.

The findings of the study indicate that there is no significant difference in identity and individuality among twins and non-twins.

### Limitations of the Study

1. Limited sample size.
2. Used snowball procedure.

### Suggestions and Recommendations

Findings of the study reveal that there is no significant difference in identity and individuality among twins and non-twins. So future studies can be conducted so as to find out other factors that may vary in twins and non-twins.

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