Identity Status of Youth

Lairenlakpam Monica Chanu[*1] and K. Arockia Maraichelvi[2]

[*1]Department of Human Development, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore – 641043.
Email: monicachanu30@gmail.com.
[2]Department of Human Development, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore – 641043.
Email: selvibruhd@gmail.com

Abstract: **The investigator adopted an exploratory design to appraise the Identity Status of Youth in the age ambit group of 21 to 24 years. Marcia's theoretical identity status comprising four identity status, namely Identity Achievement, Identity Moratorium, Identity Foreclosure and Identity Diffusion was used. A total of 494 youth within the age of 21-24 years was randomly selected as the study population. Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status (OM-EIS), was used for identifying the identity status of the selected Youth. Results shows that 41.49 percent of the selected Youth have had achieved their Identity. Men's mean score in identity achievement and the mean score of women in identity foreclosure was significantly higher compared to their counterparts. The Youth in the age group of 22 years procured a higher mean score in identity achievement, and the variation was statistically significant. The family type was statistically significant for the identity diffusion status with the mean score of joint family youth having an augmented score. The ordinal position analysis states that the Youth without siblings obtained significantly lower score compared to the Youth with one or more siblings. Hence, this study on identity status would help to identify the identity status of Youth.**

Index Terms: **Identity Achievement, Identity Diffusion, Identity Foreclosure, Identity Moratorium, Identity Status, Youth**

I. INTRODUCTION

Identity is the understanding by defining oneself, their value, and beliefs towards their lives and society. Identity development is a primary task and a lifelong process with the basement during the adolescence period, and it continues throughout the life of every individual. The formation of Identity is a dynamic process that unfolds as young people assess their competencies and ambitions within a changing social context of expectations, demands, and resources. A variety of potential resolutions of the psychosocial crisis of personal Identity versus identity confusion have been described (Kroger, 2012; Kroger & Marcia, 2011).

Erikson (1968) believed that the period of adolescence as a period of 'identity crisis,' an important turning point in which an individual must develop in one way or another, ushering him/her towards growth and differentiation. Identity formation takes through a process of exploring options or choices and committing to an option based upon the outcome of their experience. When a person Failure to establish a well-developed sense of Identity which results in identity confusion, those experiencing identity misunderstanding do not have a clear understanding of who they are or their role in society (cited in Mannerstrom, R. et al., 2017).

After expanding on Erikson's theory, Marcia (1966), described identity formation during adolescence as involving both *exploration* (a process of actively questioning and searching for adult's roles and values) and *commitment* (decisions regarding aspects, such as vocation, concerning ideologies and occupations, e.g., religion, politics, career, relationships, and gender roles) and formulated four identity status. They are:

1.   Identity Achievement - It is a status in which the person has experienced an identity crisis and has committed to a sense of Identity (i.e. specific role or value) that he or she has chosen.

2.   Identity Moratorium - It is a status in which the person is presently undergoing a crisis, exploring numerous commitments and is ready to make choices, but not yet committed to these choices.

3.   Identity Foreclosure - it is a status in which the person seems willing to commit to an appropriate role, values, or goals for the future. The person in this stage has not experienced a crisis on Identity. Hence, they tend to conform to the expectations of others regarding their future.

4.   Identity Diffusion - The status in which a person does not have a sense of having choices; he or she has not made (nor is attempting/willing to make) a commitment. The person in this stage often considered the least adaptive status and was confused

about their life.

Identities are the characteristics and appearance, social relationship, roles and characters of a person, and social group involvements that define the individual who they are. An individual's identities can also be focused on the past-what used to be true of one, the present-what is true of one now, or the future-the person one expects or wishes to become the person one feels obligated to try to become, or the person one fears one may become. Identities are orienting; they provide a meaning-making lens and focus on some but not other features of the immediate context (Oyserman, 2007; 2009a, 2009b). Together, identities make up one's self-concept variously described as what comes to mind when one thinks of oneself (Neisser, 1993; Stryker, 1980 Tajfcl, 1981; Stets & Burke, 2003).

Hence, the study was an attempt to appraise the Identity Status of Youth as it is the time when a person fully mature and prepare to start an independent life. Youth are considered to be the backbone of any nation, and they play an essential role in societal development. For the Youth to be productive, their identity status is a trait that leads them on the right path. It is at this juncture; the current study gains significance.

A.   *Objectives of the Study:*
•   To identify the identity status of the selected Youth.
•   To assess the influence of age, gender, family type, and ordinal position on the selected Youth's identity status.

II.   METHODOLOGY

The study adopted an exploratory design to assess the Identity Status of Youth and the influence of certain independent on the same. With certain inclusion and exclusion criteria. 494 youth in the age ambit of 21 – 24 years representing two colleges situated in north and south zone of Coimbatore district were chosen to be the respondents for the study. A self - formulated tools to elicit the general profile of the selected Youth was used. Standardised Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status (OM-EIS), devised by Bennion, L.D., and Adams, G.R., (1986) was used to appraise the Identity Status of the selected Youth. The tools comprised of 64 items with 16 questions for each of the Identity Status, namely Identity Diffusion, Foreclosure, Moratorium and Achievement. The scores are added for each of the 16 statements of each domain, and the highest score determined by the Identity Status of the selected Youth. The collected data were analysed statistically using percentile, t-test and ANOVA.

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study "Identity Status of Youth" are discussed under the following sub-heads

A.   *General Profile*

The Table-I depicts the general profile of the selected respondents.

Table I. Personal Information of the Selected Youth

Variable	Details	N=494	Percentage
Age	21 years	117	24%
	22 years	112	23%
	23 years	124	25%
	24 years	141	28%
Gender	Male	217	44%
	Female	277	56%
Family Type	Joint	91	19%
	Nuclear	297	60%
	Extended	106	21%
Ordinal Position	No Sibling	61	13%
	Eldest	148	30%
	Middle	171	34%
	Youngest	114	23%

The age-wise distribution of the respondents shows a more or less equal distribution within the four different ages. Female respondents were more when compared to their counterparts (56% vs 44%). The family type of the respondents was found to be equally distributed among the joint and nuclear family type (40% and 41% respectively), and only a few (95 respondents) hailed from extended family. This data evidently proves that the extended family system is diminishing.

Though the government enforces small family norm, around 34 per cent of the respondents, have had more than one sibling, and they were middle born. Only 13 per cent of them are a single child for the family.

B.   *Distribution of Identity Status among selected Youth*

Table-II indicates the overall identity status of the selected Youth.

Table II. Overall Identity Status of Youth

Identity Status	N=494	Percentage
Identity Achievement	205	41.49
Identity Moratorium	134	27.15
Identity Foreclosure	82	16.59
Identity Diffusion	73	14.78

Out of 494 youth chosen for the study, 205 respondents achieved their Identity. In other words, they have understood their Identity, their roles and their values about themselves and society. More than 1/4th of the respondents were found to be in identity moratorium status. Consequently, these respondents are still exploring various commitments of their life and yet not has resolved the identity crisis. However, 82 of them were found to be in the foreclosure status as they are still dependent on others to guide them and never had faced the identity crises. The table also clearly depicts that nearly 15 per cent of the identified Youth are in the diffusion status. Hence, it is strongly recommended that a well-planned intervention has to be formulated to facilitate them to change their path in Identity for better.

C. Influence of Age on Identity Status

Table-III portrays the influence of age on the four Identity Status.

Table III. Influence of Age on Identity Status

Identity Status	Age	N=494	Mean	df	F	Sig. value
Identity Achievement	21	117	51.47	3	3.910	.009*
	22	112	54.33			
	23	124	51.27			
	24	141	52.45			
Identity Moratorium	21	117	49.84	3	1.739	.158NS
	22	112	51.73			
	23	124	51.02			
	24	141	50.21			
Identity Foreclosure	21	117	44.95	3	1.407	.240NS
	22	112	44.56			
	23	124	46.66			
	24	141	44.88			
	21	117	47.79	3	.880	.451NS
Identity Diffusion	22	112	46.84			
	23	124	48.02			
	24	141	47.06			

NS-Not Significant, *1% Significant, **5% Significant

Except for identity achievement, none of the other states is influenced by the age of the respondents. Looking deeper into the mean score, the 22-year-old Youth were found to procure a higher score on the two positive status of identity status (Identity Achievement – 54.33 and Identity Moratorium – 51.73) when compared to their counterparts. However, the other two Identity Status, namely Identity Foreclosure and Identity Diffusion was found to be predominant among the 23 years old Youth and least among the 22 years old. Though a notable variation between the mean scores was observed, age was found to be a significant factor only in the path of Identity Achievement.

With respect to age, many researchers expected in line with the identity development suggested that there will always be dissimilarity in development of the Identity from one person to another with the difference on individual's age, though none of them identify a particular age with achievement or either in diffusion status, a progressive identity development from diffusion to achievement is described with increasing age (Kroger et al., 2010: Meeus, 2001).

Table IV. Influence of Gender on Identity Status

Identity Status	Gender	N=494	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig.
Identity Achievement	Male	217	54.26	7.757	5.037	.000**
	Female	277	50.85	7.237		
Identity Moratorium	Male	217	51.27	7.195	1.696	.091
	Female	277	50.20	6.768		
Identity Foreclosure	Male	217	44.06	9.890	-2.711	.007*
	Female	277	46.22	7.825		
Identity Diffusion	Male	217	47.94	6.914	1.528	.127NS
	Female	277	47.02	6.445		

NS-Not Significant, *1% Significant, **5% Significant

D. Influence of Gender on Identity Status

Table-VI depicts the influence of gender on the four Identity Status.

The table associating the variable – Gender - on the four Identity Status clearly states that the Identity Achievement and Foreclosure Status is being significantly influenced by gender. Subsequently, the mean scores of the male were found to be significantly higher and augmented towards the positive status, i.e. Identity Achievement and female respondents score on the negative state, i.e. Identity Foreclosure. Even the mean score of the male youths was comparatively higher in both the Identity Moratorium and Diffusion Status though not significant.

Gender differences on identity status done by Yunus and Kamal, (2020), showed that male scored highest in identity achievement status as similar to the present study. As for the female, they had scored highest on moratorium status that was quite contradictory to the present finding.

E. Influence of Family Type with Identity Status

Table-V interprets the influence of family type on the four Identity Status.

Table V. Influence of Family Type on Identity Status of Youth

Identity Status	Family Type	N=494	Mean	df	F	Sig. value
Identity Achievement	Joint	91	51.91	2	.638	.529NS
	Nuclear	297	52.67			
	Extended	106	51.84			
Identity Moratorium	Joint	91	51.35	2	.540	.583NS
	Nuclear	297	50.55			
	Extended	106	50.43			
Identity Foreclosure	Joint	91	45.49	2	.121	.886NS
	Nuclear	297	45.33			
	Extended	106	44.92			
Identity Diffusion	Joint	91	48.64	2	1.944	.014*
	Nuclear	297	47.07			
	Extended	106	47.42			

NS-Not Significant, *1% Significant, **5% Significant

The table presents an interesting finding that the family type being an influencing variable only for identity diffusion. It was found that the mean score on identity diffusion of Youth hailing from a joint family, followed by the extended family were higher when compared to Youth from a nuclear family. The finding can be understood that the Youth from a family of more members are in a confused state when compared to Youth from the nuclear family. Hence, the nuclear family is found to be better in terms of identity status. Other states of Identity was not significantly influenced by the family type.

F. Influence of Ordinal Position with Identity Status

Table-VI represents the influence of ordinal position on the four Identity Status.

Table VI. Influence of Ordinal Position on Identity Status of Youth

Identity Status	Ordinal Position	N=494	Mean	df	F	Sig. value
Identity Achievement	No Sibling	61	49.90	3	2.450	.043*
	Eldest	148	52.64			
	Middle	171	52.58			
	Youngest	114	52.94			
Identity Moratorium	No Sibling	61	50.54	3	1.135	.335NS
	Eldest	148	50.36			
	Middle	171	50.29			
	Youngest	114	51.72			
Identity Foreclosure	No Sibling	61	43.85	3	1.090	.353NS
	Eldest	148	45.64			
	Middle	171	44.88			
	Youngest	114	46.14			
Identity Diffusion	No Sibling	61	46.54	3	.605	.612NS
	Eldest	148	47.88			
	Middle	171	47.44			
	Youngest	114	47.27			

NS-Not Significant, *1% Significant, **5% Significant

The ordinal position, like the age of the respondent, significantly influence the Identity Achievement Status alone. The mean score was found to be at its maximum for the youngest sibling and minimum for the Youth with no sibling. Hence, the single child syndrome has got its own disadvantages and does not allow them to establish an identity when compared to others. The other three states though were not statistically significant; there was variation in the mean score.

CONCLUSION

  The present study can be concluded that each and every person has got his /her own Identity either they can fall to any of the four statuses. Formation of an individual identity takes place in a large range which includes the age of the person, gender roles, and family background, which play an important role in the development of one's Identity which shows the influence on identity status of Youth in the present study. It is a lifelong process that goes ups and down depending on the situation and experience over their lifetime. Identity in today's modern society is like dealing with a person actively or reactively challenges to adjust into a society of strangers in order to gain their approval by creating the right impressions and producing the right behaviours. The present study would also contribute to the literature as well as focus on the development of individual's Identity to enhance the life of today's Youth and to embed the nation to help in becoming a better citizen in future. The present research would also hold a key in changing the mindset and the life roles of today's Youth and help them in choosing the right path and in creating the right choices in their future life.

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