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**The Contribution of Attachment
Security/Insecurity and Self-Esteem to Identity
Formation in Late Adolescence**

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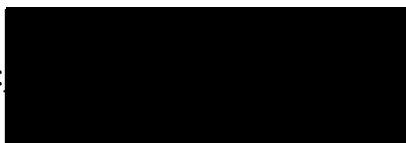
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I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text. The material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for any academic award at this or any other tertiary educational institution.

Ljubica Bosnjak

Signed:



Date: 13/11/03

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Abstract

This study examined the contribution of attachment security/insecurity and self-esteem to identity formation. A convenience sample of 120 volunteer university students, 106 women and 14 men, aged between 18-25 years, participated in this study. The Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status –Two, (EOMEIS –2), (Adams, Bennion & Huh, 1989) was used to measure the participants' identity status, the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) (Collins and Read, 1990) to measure attachment styles and the Self-Liking Self-Competence Scale (SLSC) (Tafarodi and Swann, 1995) to measure self-esteem. A Hierarchical Multiple Regression analysis showed that the three attachment subscales, Secure, Ambivalent and Avoidant, together contributed significantly to the variance in all the identity statuses except for Achievement. Contrary to what was expected the Avoidant subscale made a significant independent contribution to the variance in Achievement status scores and the Ambivalent subscale made a significant independent contribution to the variance in Moratorium status scores. A Hierarchical Multiple Regression analysis showed that the two self-esteem subscales together contributed significantly only to the variance in Achievement status scores. Independently Self-Liking was found to contribute positively to the variance in Achievement scores and Self-Competence was found to contribute negatively to the variance in the Diffusion scores. These results were discussed in relation to theories of attachment and identity formation.

Introduction

Identity

The formation of identity in adolescence is an important developmental milestone in the human life cycle. Identity is a part of the self-concept (Baumeister, 1997). Marcia (1980) conceptualised identity as a

...self-structure – an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organisation of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history. The better developed this structure is, the more aware individuals appear to be of their own uniqueness and similarity to others and of their own strengths and weaknesses in making their way in the world. The less developed this structure is, the more confused individuals seem about their own distinctiveness from others and the more they have to rely on external sources to evaluate themselves (p.159).

During adolescence and in particular late adolescence individuals' physical development, cognitive skills, and social expectations coincide to initiate a clarification and syntheses of childhood experiences and to construe a pathway toward adulthood (Marcia, 1980). Healthy identity formation during adolescence is crucial and prerequisite for healthy functioning during later life (Blos, 1962; Erikson, 1968; A. Freud, 1958; Marcia, 1980, 1993). Adolescence is a period of a resolution of major issues without which further psychological and identity developments are likely to be retarded (Blos, 1962; A. Freud, 1958).

Blos (1962) wrote that adolescents undergo four challenges. The first challenge, which Blos termed the second individuation process, is to separate and individuate further from parental bonds. The loosening of ties with the parent allows for the development of new extra-familial romantic attachments. Unless this is achieved, the new love object is likely to be a mere substitute for the parental attachment (Blos,1962).

The second challenge of adolescence is to undergo the reworking and mastering of childhood trauma (Blos, 1962). In adolescence a greater mental capacity develops, which may enable the adolescent to deal with unresolved childhood issues. The third challenge is ego continuity. In a healthy identity the ego develops a capacity for historical continuity, that is, a capacity to have a view of the past, present and future. Such development provides for a sense of wholeness, which if not achieved, as in some cases of trauma, may result in distorted reality (Blos).

The last challenge is the establishment of a sexual identity (Blos, 1962). During adolescence the positive and negative Oedipus complex (sexual love for both the opposite and same sex parent) is revived to be reworked and resolved. Unlike Freud (1914), who emphasised the positive Oedipus complex (love for the opposite sex parent and the denigration of the same sex parent), Blos emphasised the negative Oedipus complex (love of the same sex parent and the denigration of the opposite sex parent). Hence, the last challenge of adolescence is coming to terms with the homosexual component of pubertal sexuality.

Where Blos's (1962) conceptualisation of identity development is in terms of the intra-psychic, Erikson's (1968) is in terms of the psycho-social. While trained as a psychoanalyst Erikson became concerned with how individuals adjust to the social and historical circumstances into which they are born (Cote & Levine, 2002; Kroger, 1995). Adjustment to society lies in the interaction of the psychological and social or environmental factors and therefore the identity formation, according to Erikson, is dependent on the interaction between psychological and environmental factors.

The primary psychological processes or mechanisms that underlay identity formation are identification and introjection (Erikson, 1968). To simplify what are complex processes, identification and introjection are processes by which persons identify with another's characteristics and incorporate them into their personality as their own. Identification and introjection involve a complex interaction of perceptual, memory and affective response systems (Meisner, 1980).

During adolescence the ego is responsible for synthesizing earlier childhood identifications with new ones in order to arrive at a newly structured self (Erikson, 1968). When Erikson wrote about ego identity he defined it as the "self sameness and the continuity to the ego's synthesizing methods, the style of one's individuality, and that this style coincides with the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for significant others in the immediate community" (p.50). A person with a healthy identity has a conscious awareness of the "selfsameness and continuity of one's existence in time and space and

the perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity" (Erikson, 1968, p.50).

For Erikson (1968) adolescence is the major formative period in the human life cycle and identity formation the major task of adolescence. To Erikson identity has properties of both continuity and fluidity. With his stage theory Erikson allowed for the individual to redefine the self as he/she adapts to changes brought by each of the psycho-social stages.

During adolescence individuals try to find their place in relation to their society (Erikson, 1968). While identity formation depends on the skills and competencies accumulated through the resolution of the psycho-social crises in the previous four stages, it is a life long process. Successful identity formation is a prerequisite to healthy functioning during the later developmental stages (Erikson).

Erikson's psycho-social theory of development is based on the 'epigenetic principle' which implies that each stage develops on top of another and the resolution of the succeeding stage depends on the resolution of the previous one (Kroger, 1995). According to Erikson (1968) at each of the developmental stages, development occurs through a basic psycho-social crises or conflict. The psycho-social crises are initiated through the child's interaction with his parents, school environment, etc. The outcome of the conflict may lay along a continuum, from positive to negative. A healthy or maladaptive outcome is determined by the ratio of the positive to negative outcomes. For

a healthy personality an individual must incorporate both negative and positive aspects of the crisis. For example unless children develop a sense of mistrust as well as trust during the first psycho-social crisis (trust versus mistrust), they are not equipped to deal with situations in which they could be manipulated or exploited (Erikson).

Identity formation belongs to Erikson's (1968) fifth developmental stage that of the psycho-social crisis of Identity versus Identity Confusion. In this period of identity crisis adolescents undergo a process of exploration and decision making about who they are and their place in society. Having to choose from different alternatives, adolescents may experience conflict. For most adolescents this conflict which is characterized by movement, change and anxiety, fosters the process of identity formation.

The successful resolution of the identity crises is characterized by exploration of and commitment to roles in different areas of social life, such as occupation, religion, politics, relationships etc (Erikson, 1968). The inability to explore and become committed to different social roles results in adolescents being confused about who they want to be and their place in society. The unsuccessful resolution of identity crisis results in identity confusion.

For mild cases of identity confusion, in time individuals may resolve the identity crisis (Erikson, 1968). In more acute cases identity confusion may become a factor that underlines mental disturbances, such as borderline personality and schizophrenic disorders. Unlike those individuals who successfully resolve the identity crisis, those who

do not may fail to fit into society. According to Erikson the society provides adolescents with a psycho-social moratorium in which their identity formation process is stimulated. This moratorium involves a limited time at the end of which adolescents are expected to achieve a relatively fixed self-definition and to make commitments related to future social roles.

Marcia (1966) operationalized Erikson's (1968) psychosocial crisis of identity versus identity confusion, placing the emphasis on the processes of exploration and commitment. Erikson would have agreed with Marcia's descriptions of crisis as "the times during adolescence when the individual seems to be actively involved in choosing among alternative occupations and beliefs" and with commitment as the "... degree of personal investment the individual expresses in an occupation or belief" (p.119).

In order to operationalize the different ways that adolescents may deal with identity formation, in his unpublished doctoral dissertation Marcia (1964 cited in Marcia, 1966,1967) developed a semi-structured interview utilizing the concepts of exploration and commitment. Examining the presence or absence of exploration and commitment in relation to adolescents' vocational choice, religion and political ideology, Marcia identified four ways or modes of dealing with identity formation. These modes are ego identity statuses of Achievement, Foreclosure, Moratorium and Diffusion.

Marcia 's (1964 cited in Marica, 1966,1967) study revealed two groups of committed adolescents (Achievement and Foreclosure) and two groups of uncommitted

adolescents (Moratorium and Diffusion). Adolescents in Achievement and in Foreclosure statuses both showed commitment to vocational and ideological choices. Only those in the Achievement status, however, had explored alternatives; their choices differed from their childhood ones. Those in the Foreclosure status had not explored alternatives and their commitment appeared to be related to that of their parents or other authority figures (Marcia).

The other two groups of adolescents, those in the Moratorium and Diffusion statuses, showed vague or no genuine commitment to vocational or ideological choices (Marcia, 1966, 1967). While individuals in the Moratorium status were not committed to specific choices, they were actively engaged in exploring alternatives. On the other hand, individuals in the Diffusion status were neither engaged in exploring alternatives nor concerned about becoming committed to specific choices (Marcia).

Marcia (1966,1967) conceptualized Achievement and Diffusion statuses as situated on opposite ends of the continuum of identity formation. This theoretical continuum of identity formation is based on the proximity of one's identity status to that of Achievement. The Moratorium status is closest to the Achievement status, followed by Foreclosure status, and last is Diffusion.

According to Marcia (1993), a healthy identity formation process is characterized by Moratorium-Achievement-Moratorium-Achievement (MAMA) cycles. These are cycles in which individuals explore, then commit and explore further, then commit again.

While Achievement and Moratorium statuses are healthy routes to identity formation, Foreclosure and Diffusion are limited and less healthy. Achievement and Moratorium are the higher statuses, Foreclosure and Diffusion the lower (Marcia).

Individuals with lower identity statuses are limited in their capacity for movement toward the higher ones (Marcia, 1980, 1988, 1993). Individuals in the Foreclosure status are limited in their movement toward Moratorium and Achievement statuses because they are set in their commitments and experience less need for exploration and change. These individuals become committed to choices influenced by the views and values of their parents without having explored them for themselves. Similarly, individuals in the Diffusion status are set back by their lack of capacity/interest in either exploring or committing to goals (Marcia). Unlike those individuals in the Foreclosure status, who find it most difficult to move toward the higher statuses, those in the Diffusion status have the potential to shift into Moratorium and consequently into the Achievement status (Marcia). The status Diffusion includes those who are fragmented as well as those who are temporarily unwilling to explore or commit to identity choices (Marcia).

Unlike Marcia's (1966,1967) progressive transitions from lower to higher statuses, Waterman (1982) proposed that the movement between identity statuses describes sequential patterns of identity development. Depending on the changes within the exploration and commitment dimensions, individuals could move in either direction along the identity formation continuum (Waterman). For example, an individual with Diffusion status could move to Moratorium if he/she decides to start exploring different

alternatives or could move to Foreclosure status if he/she becomes committed to identity choices without exploring. Unlike Marcia (1966, 1967) Meeus (1996) disagreed that the identity status model is a developmental theory. Meeus proposed that rather than the development of identity the identity status model is useful in describing developmental trends in identity formation. He argued that as some well-explored commitments can at times lose their value, the identity achievement status is not necessarily the ultimate point of identity development. Identity development is not necessarily characterized by transition from the lower to the higher statuses.

Individuals differ psychologically depending on their identity status (Marcia, 1980, 1988, 1993). Higher statuses (Achievement and Moratorium) have a positive association with desirable psychological variables (Marcia). For example, on the measures of cognitive differences, early studies by Marcia showed that college males with higher identity statuses (Achievement and Moratorium) set goals more realistically (Marcia, 1966) and performed tasks under stress conditions better than those with lower identity statuses (Foreclosure and Diffusion) (Marcia, 1966, 1967). Individuals with Achievement status were found to score higher on measures of self-cohesion compared to those with other identity statuses (Blustein and Paladino, 1991). Similarly, in a study by Slugoski, Marcia and Koopman (1984) a sample of senior university males with higher identity statuses tended to have a more complex cognitive style than those in other statuses.

Berzonsky and Kuk (2000) found that depending on identity statuses, individuals differ in the social-cognitive processes they utilize in problem solving, decision-making and processing identity relevant information. Individuals with Achievement and Moratorium status have an informational identity orientation (Berzonsky & Kuk). This orientation is characterized by a willingness to investigate solutions to a problem and to explore options before committing to one (Berzonsky & Kuk). The informational orientation has been positively associated with self-reflection, problem focused coping, cognitive complexity, vigilant decision making, and the conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness factors of the big five personality dimensions (Berzonsky & Kuk).

Individuals with Foreclosure status have a normative orientation (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000). This orientation is characterized by a preemptive problem solving approach, conformity to social and familial expectations and high degree of commitment to authority. Individuals with this orientation are also conscientious and agreeable. On the other hand, they have a low tolerance for ambiguity and a strong need for structure and cognitive closure (Berzonsky & Kuk).

Individuals with Diffusion status have a diffuse-avoidant cognitive orientation (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000). This orientation is characterized by a tendency to procrastinate and to avoid making decisions. A diffuse-/avoidant cognitive orientation is positively associated with avoidant coping, self-handicapping, other-directedness, maladaptive decision-making strategies and negatively associated with self-reflection, conscientiousness and cognitive persistence (Berzonsky & Kuk).

On measures of anxiety, individuals with Moratorium status were found to be the most anxious of the statuses and those with Foreclosure the least (Marcia, 1966, 1967). The process of exploration characteristic of Moratorium status provokes uncertainty and anxiety. The identity choices made without sufficient exploration characteristic of Foreclosure status may be a way of avoiding anxiety. Hence individuals in the Foreclosure status, possibly for defensive reasons tend to be the least anxious (Marcia).

On measures of authoritarianism, compared to other identity statuses, individuals with Foreclosure status tend to endorse authoritarian values (Marcia, 1966, 1967; Marcia & Friedman, 1970). Donovan (1975) found that those in Foreclosure status, like their parents, had similar or the same values about religion, politics and sexuality. These individuals seemed to have internalized their parents' plans for them, especially the vocational ones.

According to Donovan (1975) individuals with Moratorium status seemed to be the exact opposite of those in Foreclosure. They were found to be independent, counter-dependent on peers, dominant, socially controlling, low on submissiveness and rebellious towards authority figures. They were often in direct opposition to parental value systems (Donovan). Studies by Toder and Marcia (1973) and Adams, Rayan, Hoffman, Dobson and Nielsen (1985) found those with Achievement status to be more resistant to peer pressure and social conformity than those in Foreclosure and Diffusion.

These findings suggest that individuals with different identity statuses vary in their interactions with parents. Add to this Erikson's (1968) theory that the social environment (i.e. the parents) influences the resolution of the psychosocial crises. The child-parent interaction influences the resolution of the childhood psychosocial crisis (Erikson). Thus relationships with parents are important in the formation of identity. An understanding of how relationships with parents may contribute to the formation of identity may be found in attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969,1973, 1980; Ainsworth, 1989).

Attachment

Attachment theory, developed by Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) and extended by Ainsworth (1989), is a theory about the developmental consequences of the attachment styles that children may develop through receiving qualitatively different types of care from their care givers/attachment figures. Bowlby (1969) referred to attachment as an 'affectional bond'. Ainsworth (1989) defined this bond as a "...relatively long-enduring tie in which the partner is important as a unique individual and is interchangeable with non other" (p.711). In addition, attachment is also an "...experience of security and comfort obtained from the relationship with the partner and ...[an] ability to move off from the secure base provided by the partner, with confidence to engage in other activities" (Ainsworth, 1989, p.711). The type of attachment experienced by the child

influences the development of his/her personality and identity (Bowlby, 1973; Bretherton, 1994; Marcia, 1988; Mikulincer, 1995; Samuolis, Layburn & Schiaffino, 2001).

Attachment is a behavioural system that has evolved through natural selection and has survival value (Bowlby, 1969). Its purpose is to obtain and maintain the homeostasis of security provided by the proximity of the care giver and hence to eliminate threats and dangers to the newborn's existence (Bowlby). Attachment behaviour is activated in situations in which the proximity of the care giver to the infant or child is threatened or is terminated (Bowlby). In newborns and infants attachment behaviour is reinforced and mediated through the interaction with their mother or primary care giver (Bowlby).

Attachment behaviour observed in early childhood is also a type of social behavior, which later develops into more complex forms that persist throughout the lifetime (Bowlby, 1969). In early childhood, these behaviours are at first directed toward the primary care giver who is usually the mother and soon after to secondary care givers such as father, siblings and grandparents (Bowlby). In adolescence, these behaviours are directed toward special peers. During adolescence, a period in which adolescents start to individuate from their parents, attachment behaviours toward parents undergo change (Bowlby, 1973).

While adolescents start to direct their attachment behaviour toward special peers, their attachment to parents does not discontinue (Allen & Land, 1999). Instead, they start to depend less on their parents for care-giving, but still use them as a safe base to return

to in times of need (Allen & Land). In early adulthood, attachment behaviour is directed toward romantic partners and special long lasting friendship partners (Ainsworth, 1989). That is, in times of stress where a person is in need of physical or emotional care, protection, support, comfort or security, they turn to their special loved ones (Ainsworth). The person or persons with whom attachment is established, Bowlby (1973) referred to as the attachment figure(s).

From the earliest interactions with their attachment figures children start to develop internal or representational working models about themselves, their attachment figures and the rules and behaviours related to those attachment relationships (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980). In addition to these representations, the internal models contain information about communication, problem resolution and other issues related to the attachment relationships (Bowlby, 1973). While the sense of attachment developed in early childhood may be reasonably fixed and serve as prototypical in later attachment relationships, it still may be modified if individuals experience substantial change in the quality of interaction with their attachment figures (Bowlby). Changes in attachment patterns are also likely to occur in adolescence due to the experience of new significant relationships as well as the development of greater cognitive capacity which enables them to reflect and reinterpret the past and present experiences (Bowlby).

Individuals who experience their attachment figures as readily available and responsive when needed are likely to develop a sense of secure attachment and a sense of self as acceptable, lovable, worthy and deserving (Bowlby, 1973). Individuals who

experience their attachment figures as unpredictable in their responses and or as unavailable and rejecting are likely to develop a sense of insecure attachment and a sense of self as less acceptable, less lovable, less worthy and less deserving (Bowlby). Secure attachment is essential to the development of personality and psychosocial functioning (Bowlby). On the other hand, insecure attachment, which is characterised by an impaired sense of security, trust and confidence in the attachment figure and by heightened anxiety about access to the attachment figure, is disadvantageous to the development of personality and psychosocial functioning (Bowlby).

On the basis of infants' responses to separation and reunion with mothers in her "Strange Situation" procedure, Ainsworth identified three styles of attachment: Secure, Anxious/ Ambivalent and Anxious/Avoidant (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978). In designing an adult attachment scale Hazan and Shaver (1987) applied Ainsworth's attachment criteria. Conceptualising romantic relationships as attachment relationships Hazan and Shaver also identified three attachment styles. Individuals with secure attachment feel comfortable being close to others, are comfortable depending on others and are not worried about being abandoned or unloved. Individuals with Ambivalent attachment feel that others are reluctant to get as close as they would like them to. They feel that their need for extreme closeness often scares people away. They often worry that their partner does not really love them and may leave them. Individuals with Avoidant attachment feel uncomfortable being close to others. They find it difficult to trust others and depend on them. They do not worry about being unloved or abandoned (Hazan & Saver).

When Collins and Read (1991) factor analysed items of Hazan and Shaver's (1987) attachment instrument they found that these loaded on three dimensions of Close, Depend and Anxiety. The Close dimension refers to how comfortable the person is being close to others. The Depend dimension refers to how comfortable a person is about depending on others. The Anxiety dimension refers to how anxious or worried a person is about not being loved and a possibility of being abandoned (Collins & Read).

Using Bowlby's (1969, 1973, 1980) concept of working models of the self and of the other, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) developed a four-category attachment model. Secure attachment is associated with positive view of both self and other and is comparable to the Secure style of Hazan and Shaver (1987). Preoccupied attachment is associated with a negative view of self and a positive view of other and is comparable to the Anxious/Ambivalent style of Hazan and Shaver. Dismissing attachment is associated with a positive view of self and a negative view of other and is comparable to the Anxious/Avoidant style of Hazan and Shaver. Fearful attachment is associated with a negative view of both self and other; while it shares aspects of both ambivalent and avoidant attachment, it has no comparable style in Hazan and Shaver's model.

The model of attachment styles has also been applied to adolescents (Mikulincer, 1995). Adolescents with a Secure attachment style had positive representations of self and were accepting of their negative self attributes. Self-schemas, such as, "I" as a friend and "I" as a student" tended to be well-differentiated and well-integrated. Securely

attached individuals also tended to have less discrepancy between the actual, ideal and ought selves compared to those with other attachment styles.

Adolescents with an Anxious/Avoidant attachment style tended to have positive representations of the self, but differed from the securely attached in that they were not accepting of negative self attributes (Mikulincer, 1995). Self-schemas were differentiated, but not well integrated. These avoidantly attached individuals tended to have significant discrepancy between the actual, ideal and ought selves.

Adolescents with Anxious/Ambivalent attachment style had negative self-representations, characterized by negative self-attributes and negative affect (Mikulincer, 1995). Their self-schemas tended to be less differentiated and less integrated compared to individuals with other attachment styles. This group, too, tended to have significant discrepancy between the actual, ideal and the ought selves.

Kobak and Sceery (1988) also found adolescents self and parent representations as dependent on their attachment styles even when they were conceptualized as reflecting affect regulation. Adolescents with a Secure attachment style perceived their parents as supportive, loving and available during distressing events. According to self and peer ratings, compared to adolescents with other attachment styles, the secure group was found to have greater social competence and greater ability to modulate their negative feelings constructively in problem solving and in social contexts (Kobak & Sceery).

Adolescents with an Anxious/Avoidant attachment style reported experiencing rejection and lack of love from parents (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). These individuals had difficulty in recalling distressing events from childhood. Peers rated them as the most hostile group. Kobak and Sceery interpreted this hostility as an expression of frustrated attachment needs. In order to avoid the risk of additional rejection from parents these individuals tend to displace these frustrations onto their peers. Avoidantly attached individuals were rated as more anxious than those securely attached, but less anxious than the ambivalently attached.

Ambivalently attached individuals were found to be the most anxious of the groups (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). They tended to deal with their anxiety by continuing efforts to gain support from parents. While they reported having loving parents, they tended to idealize them. Ambivalently attached individuals tended to recall distressing events in a confused and incoherent manner. Ratings by peers indicate that this group had low social competence and tended to be preoccupied and dependent on their attachment figures. Kobak and Sceery suggested that such experiences of the ambivalently attached adolescents are likely to inhibit the development of self-confidence and of autonomy.

Adams (1985) found that membership within identity statuses was associated with interactions with parents that resemble those found by Kobak and Sceery (1988) in individuals with different attachment styles. Adolescent females with Moratorium and Achievement statuses perceived their mothers and fathers as affectionate and supportive

of them. They also perceived their parents as being highly involved with them through companionship. Adolescent females with Diffusion and Foreclosure statuses reported experiencing more rejection and control by their parents. They tended to have less companionship experiences with both parents and their fathers tended to be withdrawn.

Such experiences of rejection and withdrawal may result in internalisation of poor self-concepts and inhibit the exploration of life choices and opportunities (Adams, 1985). Supportive child-parent relationships are important contributors to identity formation, while non-supportive, rejecting and controlling parenting practices are likely to impair adolescents' exploration of identity choices (Adams). The findings by Kobak and Sceery (1988) and Adams suggest that relationships with parents are important in both attachment and identity formation.

Marcia (1988) proposed that attachment styles relate to the degree of individuation in adolescence. Attachment precedes and fosters individuation and identity formation. When the quality of the attachment is less than optimal, then the individuation process and hence the development of identity is less optimal (Marcia). In line with Marcia's reasoning, secure attachment is likely to contribute positively to identity formation and insecure attachment negatively. For example Ambivalent attachment seems to be mirrored in the Foreclosed identity status and Avoidant in the Diffusion status. While individuals with Foreclosure status like those with Ambivalent attachment are most dependent on their parents those with a Diffusion status like those are most alienated from their parents (Marcia, 1988).

Empirical studies have shown some support for Marcia's (1988) theory that attachment styles are associated with identity statuses. For example, Samoulis, Layburn and Schiaffino (2001) found that attachment security as expressed in attachment to father and attachment to mother in a sample of male and female college students was positively related to female, but not to male, commitment and exploration experiences of identity formation. However a longitudinal study by Zimmermann and Becker-Stoll (2002) revealed that in both male and female adolescents, Secure attachment style was associated with the Achieved identity status and Anxious/Avoidant attachment style was associated with Diffusion identity status.

Kennedy (1999), who used Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) four-category model of attachment, found that first year university students (male and female) with Secure attachment had higher Achievement identity scores than did those with a Fearful attachment style. Individuals with a Preoccupied attachment style had higher scores on Diffusion and Moratorium identity statuses. Individuals with a Fearful attachment style had higher scores on Diffusion identity status than did those with a Secure attachment style. In this study the Foreclosure identity status was not associated with any of the attachment styles.

In all the above studies, except for the one by Samoulis, Layburn and Schiaffino (2001), Secure attachment in both males and females was associated with Achieved identity status. Less than optimal attachment, whether expressed in Anxious/Avoidant, Anxious/Ambivalent or Fearful, Dismissive and Preoccupied categorizations, tended to

be associated with Diffusion status. Such findings stand in support of Marcia's (1980) theory that attachment security is positively associated with more optimal identity formation and that attachment insecurity is associated with less than optimal identity formation. Hence, consequences of attachment security/insecurity, such as self-representations and psychosocial functioning, are likely to contribute to identity formation. According to Erikson (1968) self-representations in terms of self-evaluations or self-esteem are also important in identity formation.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is an evaluative aspect of the self-concept (Baumeister, 1997). Coopersmith (1967) defined self-esteem as the "...evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy" (p.5). While identity could be seen as referring to 'who' a person is in relation to different roles (Erikson, 1968), self-esteem then could be seen as referring to 'how' a person feels about her/himself in relation to different roles.

In his symbolic interaction theory Mead (1934) proposed that significant members of the immediate community serve as a mirror from which individuals derive their sense of self as well as attitudes toward themselves. Mead believed that if the person was

treated with concern and respect he/she comes to appraise him/herself highly. If a person was treated as inferior she/ he develops a low sense of self-worth (Mead).

Horney's (1945) humanistic theory on the development of the capacity for self-actualization gives some insight into the development of self-esteem. Horney believed that the capacity for self-actualization has to do with the development of innate talents, capabilities and potentials. Appropriate parental care in early childhood is likely to foster those innate capacities, which in turn foster healthy or positive self-appraisals or self-esteem. On the other hand, inappropriate parental care is likely to undermine the development of both the innate capacities and of self-esteem.

In relation to feelings of anxiety provoked by lack of warmth, lack of admiration and respect, isolation, indifference and similar conditions of inappropriate parental care, a child develops an idealized image of his/her capacities and goals (Horney, 1945). The idealized image helps the child compensate for and guard against this anxiety. The idealized image may effect self-appraisals in two ways (Horney). When self-appraisal or self-esteem is diminished by an external source the person's idealized image may compensate for and increase it. However, if the individuals' unrealistic expectations of their idealized self are not met than their self-esteem may be decreased (Horney).

The sense of self and self-esteem that develops in relation to appropriate parental care is likely to be related to the 'real self', that is, to the innate talents, capabilities and potentials (Horney, 1945). Such self-esteem is likely to be healthy and genuine. The sense of self and self-esteem that develops in relation to inappropriate parental care is likely to be related to the idealized image and not to the 'real self' (Horney). In such cases individuals are forever striving to fulfill the idealized and therefore unrealistic expectations. They are likely to develop unhealthy or defensive self-esteem (Horney).

Freud (1914/1984) believed that self-regard or self-esteem develops as a reaction to the loss of primary narcissism or self-love that has to do with self-preservation instincts in a newborn child. A newborn's libido (psychic energy conceptualized as desire) is first attached or cathected to instinctual drives for nourishment. Not yet understanding that the fulfillment of desire depends on the object outside him/herself (mother, nourisher), in this state the infant feels omnipotent (Freud).

With the development of mental capacity the child becomes aware that the fulfillment of his/her desires depends on the outside object (Freud, 1914/1984). When this awareness is reached, in order to compensate for the previously experienced perfect state of being, the child may either idealize the outside object (nourisher) and attach his/her love to it or idealize his/her own ego and attach his/her love to the self-object. This structure is also known as the ego-ideal or the superego which guides the child's motivations and strivings (Freud).

According to Freud (1914/1984) healthy self-esteem in adult life is a source of many strivings, for example, strivings for social status, material possessions, relationships, etc. Such strivings are motivated by a desire for pleasurable affective states that resemble those experienced early in life. While all strivings are underlined with an instinctual need to experience satisfaction, what a person chooses to strive for is socially determined (Freud).

Freud's (1914/1984) discussion on the relationship between self-regard and the erotic desires for another person offers some insight into factors that increase and decrease self-esteem. Freud wrote: "Loving in itself, in so far as it involves longing and deprivation, lowers self-regard; whereas being loved, having one's love returned, and possessing the loved object, raises it once more" (p.94). This may imply that succeeding to achieve or fulfill one's goals and or desires raises one's self-esteem and that striving, without achievement, decreases it.

Turning from theoretical to empirical matters, research has found that individuals with different self-esteem vary in their reactions to success and failure (Baumeister & Tice, 1985; Mc Farling & Blaskovich, 1981), in their self-presentations in relation to negative feedback (Ford & Hersen, 1967; Schneider, 1969; Schneider & Turkat, 1974) and in their self-concept clarity (Campbell, 1999). All these factors are important in the formation of identity.

Mc Farling and Blaskovich (1981) and Baumeister and Tice (1985) found that both individuals with high and those with low self-esteem desire success but differ in their expectations of success. That is, individuals with high self-esteem expect to succeed and those with low self-esteem do not. While individuals with high self-esteem seem to be primarily concerned with achieving exceptional success, those with low self-esteem seem to be primarily concerned with avoiding failure (Baumeister & Tice).

Ford and Hersen (1967), Schneider (1969) and Schneider and Turkat (1974) found that in reaction to failure feedback, some individuals with high self-esteem tend to present themselves more positively than others. Schneider and Turkat proposed that some individuals' self-esteem might be more dependent on external evaluations. Rather than having genuine high self-esteem, theirs is likely to be defensive. Hence, in reaction to challenging or threatening information they tend to compensate with a positive self-presentation or self-aggrandizement (Schneider & Turkat).

Baumeister and Jones (1978) and Baumeister (1982) had similar findings but interpreted them differently. Baumeister proposed that, when facing negative feedback, individuals with high self-esteem have a capacity to focus on and present positive information about themselves. These researchers also found that unlike individuals with high self-esteem, those with low self-esteem did not engage in self-aggrandizing or self-enhancing tactics. Instead they tended to conform to the feedback presented by others. Baumeister and colleagues proposed that unlike individuals with high self-esteem, those

with low self-esteem do not have the capacity to deal positively with negative feedback and failure.

Leary, Tambor, Terdal and Downs (1995) argue that self-esteem is based primarily on the affective processes. They proposed that while self esteem is related to the beliefs about oneself and the evaluations of oneself based on those beliefs, not all cognitions about the self are relevant to a person's self-esteem. Only those self-relevant cognitions that provoke positive or negative affective states are likely to be important in the development of self-esteem.

Individuals with low self-esteem are found to have less clear self-concepts than those with high self-esteem (Campbell, 1999). That is, they have more poorly articulated notions of who and what they are (e.g. self-concept uncertainty). Campbell proposed that the relationship between an individual's self-views and his/her self-evaluations might account for differences in self-concept clarity.

Self-evaluations could be seen as the affective components of the self-concept and self-views as the cognitive components (Campbell, 1999). Individuals with high self-esteem affectively prefer positive feedback and have positive self-views. Individuals with low self-esteem also prefer positive feedback but have negative self-views (Campbell).

Unlike individuals with high self-esteem, those with low self-esteem experience a conflict between the affective and cognitive components of the self (Campbell, 1999). Most people prefer positive evaluations but are more accepting of information that is consistent with their self-views. That is those with low self-esteem are likely to be accepting of the negative feedback. The conflict between the affective and cognitive components experienced by individuals with low self-esteem might account for self-concept uncertainty (Campbell).

The relationship between self-esteem and self-concept clarity described by Campbell (1999) can be compared to the relationship between self-esteem and identity formation. That is, in both cases the direction of the influence is difficult to determine. It is unclear whether self-esteem influences self-concept clarity or whether self-concept clarity influences self-esteem. Similarly it is difficult to determine whether self-esteem influences identity formation or whether identity formation influences self-esteem.

According to Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory, both identity and self-esteem develop simultaneously through the resolution of the previous psychosocial crises. While Erikson proposed that self-evaluations influence and, therefore, contribute to identity choices during the stage of identity crisis, Marcia (1988) proposed that the process of identity formation may contribute to changes in self-esteem.

Marcia's (1988) argument was based on a psychoanalytic viewpoint of self-esteem as the ratio between the experience of one's personal attributes and one's ego ideal standards. That is, the closer one's personal attributes are to one's ego ideal standards the greater the self-esteem. Ego-ideal refers to that which the self desires to become (Rycoft, 1995) and contains childhood idealizations of self and other (Marcia).

The match between one's personal attributes and one's ego ideal standards improve during the identity formation process in adolescence (Marcia, 1988). The identity formation processes of exploration and commitment modify the ego ideal standards (internalized childhood idealizations) towards becoming more realistic and more achievable. Individuals with Achievement identity status are expected to have higher self-esteem than those in other identity statuses (Marcia, 1988).

A longitudinal study by Block and Robins (1993) offers some support for both self-esteem influencing identity formation and vice versa. They found that self-esteem stays relatively consistent over time. Individuals with high self-esteem at age 14 tended to stay relatively high in self-esteem at ages 18 and 23. This suggests that self-esteem may depend on the previously developed self-views and competencies.

For example, Harter (1990), and Tatarodi and Swann (1995) suggested that self-esteem is dependent on the evaluations of one's competencies and on one's sense of social-worth. The sense of self-competence is derived from the strivings towards different

achievements and the objective evaluation of the achieved. It results from the successful manipulations of one's environment and from the achievement of one's goals. Social-worth or Self-Liking is derived from the internalized positive regard from others (Tafarodi & Swan).

Block and Robins (1993) also found that there was a tendency for males to increase and females to decrease in self-esteem from early to late adolescence. Males were also found to be less consistent in their self-esteem over this time span. Block and Robins explained these differences as due to different socializing practices. Males are given autonomy earlier than females and are exposed to a greater range of socializing experiences outside the home. With these additional experiences their sense of self and self-esteem gets tested and reorganised more often than in females (Block & Robins). These findings may suggest that beside the previously developed self-views and competencies, new experiences of adolescence may contribute to some changes in self-esteem. These changes may vary for males and females.

Marcia (1967) found that college males in high identity statuses (Achievement and Moratorium), had higher self-esteem and greater resistance to self-esteem manipulations than these in lower identity statuses (Foreclosure and Diffusion). In a similar study of college females, however, Marcia and Friedman (1970) found that individuals with a Foreclosure status scored highest on self-esteem, followed by those with Achievement.

Marcia and Friedman (1970) explained that such results might be due to traditional sex roles. This sample of females was largely in the Foreclosure status and formulating their identity in accordance with their parents' expectations. For this they were likely to receive parental approval and support. This, in turn, would have positively influenced their self-esteem.

In a sample of college females, Prager (1982) also found that those with Foreclosure status had the highest self-esteem followed by those with Achievement and Diffusion statuses. Those with Moratorium status had the lowest self-esteem. Given that only females show low self-esteem in the Moratorium status, Prager proposed that this may be due to traditional sex roles. While males are expected to rebel and question values, females are expected to be more conforming and pliable (Prager). Perhaps the process of exploration characteristic of Moratorium status may diminish the self-esteem of females who are expected to be more conforming and pliable.

While personality characteristics associated with self-esteem differed for males and females at age 14, they became progressively similar over time (Block & Robins, 1993). In early adolescence, boys with high self-esteem were characterized by observers as stern, meticulous, humorless, unexpressive, and lacking in warmth. Girls with high self-esteem were characterized as cheerful, sociable, expressive, assertive and decisive individuals. By the age of 23 the personality characteristics associated with male self-esteem seemed organized similarly to those of the early adolescent girls. They were found to be cheerful, interpersonally poised, functionally effective and somewhat dominant. At

age 23 females tend to differ from males only in that they place a greater concern on achieving intimate interpersonal ties than males (Block and Robins).

Aim

The aim of this study was to investigate the contribution of attachment security/insecurity and self-esteem to identity formation in late adolescence and early adulthood. Given Bowlby's (1976, 1973, 1980) theory that attachment security/insecurity influences the formation of individuals' interactional skills, problem solving skills and internal representational models of self and others the first hypothesis predicted that attachment would contribute to identity formation. In other words, the first hypothesis predicted that attachment security/insecurity measured by the Secure, Ambivalent and Avoidant attachment subscales of the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) (Collins & Read, 1990) would contribute to the variance in the identity status scores of Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure and Diffusion as measured by the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status II (EOMEIS-2) (Adams, Bennion & Huh, 1989). Specifically, it was predicted that attachment security (Secure attachment subscale) would contribute positively and be related positively to higher identity statuses (Achievement and Moratorium) and that attachment insecurity (Ambivalent and Avoidant attachment

subscales) would contribute positively and be related positively to the lower identity statuses (Foreclosure and Diffusion scores).

Given Erikson's (1968) theory that self-evaluations in relation to different roles and performances contribute to the identity formation the second hypothesis predicted that self-esteem would contribute to identity formation. In other words, self-esteem, as measured by the two subscales of the Self-Liking Self-Competence scale (SLSC) (Tafarodi & Swan, 1995) would contribute to the variance in the identity status scores of Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure and Diffusion. Specifically, it was predicted that Self-Liking and Self-Competence subscales would contribute positively and be related positively to the higher identity statuses (Achievement and Moratorium) and that they would contribute negatively and be related negatively to the lower identity statuses (Foreclosure and Diffusion).

Method

Participants

Participants were 120 (14 male, 106 female) students of the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, Australia. Twenty-nine participants were in their first year of undergraduate studies, 24 participants were in their second year of undergraduate studies, 27 participants were at the third year of undergraduate studies and 38 participants were in their fourth year. One participant was in the second year of a Masters degree and one

participant did not report year level. Age of participants ranged from 18 to 25 years (M=22 years).

Research Design

This study was a one off survey design using a convenience sample of university students. No experimental manipulation of participants was implemented. The dependent variable was identity statuses as measured on Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure and Diffusion subscales. The independent variables were attachment style as measured on Secure, Ambivalent and Avoidant subscales, and the self-esteem as measured on Self-Liking and Self-Competence subscales. All variables were measured and utilized in statistical analysis as continuous variables.

Materials

Materials for this study included an information letter to the participants, two consent forms, background information form and three questionnaires. (See Appendix A).

The Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status -Two (EOMEIS-2) (Adams, Bennion & Huh, 1989) is a self-report questionnaire used to assess identity statuses of Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure and Diffusion. It consists of 64 statements, each rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1(Strongly agree) to 6 (Strongly disagree). So that the higher the score the more agreement with a particular

identity status, all items are reversed. The EOMEIS-2 consists of Ideological and Interpersonal subscales, each represented by 8 statements, two statements per each of the four identity statuses. Hence each subscale consists of 32 statements. The ideological subscale provides the scores for the four identity statuses (Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, Diffusion) across dimensions of Occupation, Religion, Politics and Philosophical Life Style. For example a high score on statements such as “ It took me a while to figure it out, but now I really know what I want for a career” reflect the Achievement status on the occupation dimension. A high score on a statements such as “I’m still trying to decide how capable I am as a person and what jobs will be right for me” reflect the Moratorium status on the occupation dimension. A high score on statements such as “I might have thought about a lot of different jobs, but there’s never really been any question since my parents said what they wanted” reflect the Foreclosure status on the occupation dimension. A high score on statements such as “I’m really not interested in finding the right job, any job will do. I just seem to flow with what is available” reflect the Diffusion status on the occupation dimension. Statements contributing to Achievement status are Occupation (33,49) Religion (18,42), Politics (8,40) and Philosophical Life Style (20,60). Statements contributing to Moratorium status are Occupation (9,57), Religion (26,34), Politics (32,48), Philosophical Life Style (12,36). Statements contributing to Foreclosure status are Occupation (17,41), Religion (50,58), Politics (24,64), Philosophical Life Style (28,44). Statements contributing to Diffusion status are within Occupation (1,25), Religion (2,10), Politics (16,56), Philosophical Life Style (4,52).

The Interpersonal subscale provides scores across the four identity statuses (Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure, Diffusion) on the dimensions of Friendship, Dating, Sex Roles and Recreation. For example high score on statements such as “I’ve dated different types of people and now know exactly what my own ‘unwritten rules’ for dating are and who I will date” reflect the Achievement status on the Dating dimension. High score on statements such as “I’m trying out different types of dating relationships. I just haven’t decided what is best for me” reflect the Moratorium status on the Dating dimension. A high score on statements such as “I only go out with the type of people my parents expect me to date” reflect the Foreclosure status on the Dating dimension. A high score on statements such as “I haven’t really thought about a “dating style”. I’m not too concerned whether I date or not” reflect the Diffusion status on the Dating dimension. Statements contributing to Achievement status are Friendship (13,45), Dating (15,55), Sex Roles (35,51) and Recreation (22,46). Statements contributing to Moratorium status are Friendship (5,61), Dating (31,47), Sex Roles (11,43) and Recreation (14,54). Statements for the Foreclosure status are numbered: within Friendship (21,37), Dating (39,53), Sex Roles (3,27) and Recreation (38,62). Statements for the Diffusion status are numbered: within Friendship (29,53), Dating (7,23), Sex Roles (19,59) and Recreation (6,30).

Within each of the Ideological and Interpersonal subscales, scores for each identity status range from 8 to 48. The overall score on any one identity status generated from the two subscales range from 16-96. While a computerized scoring system can be used to categorize individuals within a single identity status across the Ideological and

Interpersonal subscales (Adams, Bennion & Huh, 1989. p.29) for the purposes of this study the continuous scores derived from the two subscales were used for the identity statuses. Adams Bennion and Huh (1989) reported Cronbach alpha ranging from .30 to .89 and test- retest reliability with a median correlation of .76 (p.31-32). Cronbach's alphas for the current sample were all moderate: .55 for Achievement, .58 for Moratorium, .59 for Foreclosure, and .57 for Diffusion status.

The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) designed by Collins and Read (1990) consists of 18 statements and utilises a five-point Likert-type scale, rating items from 1 (Not at all characteristic) to 5 (Very characteristic). Collins and Reed (1990) created this scale utilizing Hazan and Shaver's (1987) Attachment Style Measure, which contained three paragraphs describing the Secure, Avoidant and Anxious/Ambivalent attachment styles, and Ainsworth's (1982) and Maccoby's (1980) research (cited in Collins and Read, 1990) to create attachment statements corresponding to each attachment style. For example, Secure attachment is reflected by higher scores on statements such as " I know that others will be there when I need them". The Anxious/ Ambivalent attachment is reflected by higher scores on statements such as " I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me". The Avoidant attachment is reflected by higher scores on statements such as "I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others". Six statements represent each attachment style. The statements of the Secure attachment style are numbers 3, 4, 7, 13,14 and 17. The Statements of the Anxious/Ambivalent attachment style are numbers 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. The statements of the Avoidant attachment style are numbers 1, 2, 5, 15, 16 and 18. The scores on each attachment style range form 6-30.

The higher the score the more characteristic is that attachment style of the individual's attachment.

When factor analyzed these statements loaded on three distinct dimensions: Close (comfort with closeness), Depend (being willing and able to depend on others in times of need), and Anxiety (anxiety about being abandonment and unloved) (Collins and Read, 1990). Like the attachment styles these dimensions consist of 6 items, each with a score range of 6-30. Collins and Read (1990) found that Securely attached individuals were comfortable with closeness, are able to depend on others and were not worried about being unloved or abandoned. The individuals with Anxious/ Ambivalent attachment style were found to be comfortable with closeness and depending on others but were worried about being unloved or abandoned. The individuals with Avoidant attachment style were found to be uncomfortable about closeness, not confident in others' availability and not worried about being unloved or abandoned.

The AAS can be used to assess either the attachment styles or the attachment dimensions from which the attachment styles can be inferred. For the purposes of this research the attachment styles were used. The internal consistencies for the Depend, Anxiety and Close items were acceptable with Cronbach's alphas of .75, .72 and .69 respectively. The test retest correlations for these dimensions were .68, .51 and .68 respectively (Collins and Read, 1990). Cronbach's alphas for the present sample were .71 for Secure subscale, .76 for the Ambivalent subscale and .77 for the Avoidant subscale.

The Self-Liking -Self-Competence Scale (SLSC) (Tafarodi & Swann,1995), assesses self-esteem. The SLSC consists of 20 statements and utilises a five-point Likart scale, on which the scores range from A (Strongly disagree) to E(Strongly agree). The SLSC scale is a two-dimensional scale containing Self -Liking (SL) and Self-Competence (SC) subscales. Each of the two subscales consist of ten statements in which five statements are positively worded and five negatively. On each of these two subscales scores range from 10 -50. The overall score for the global Self-Esteem (SL + SC) can range from 20 -100 (Tafarodi and Swann, 1995).

A high score on the SL scale is associated with positive affect, self-acceptance and comfort in social settings. This sub-scale, made up of items 2,8,12,13 and 16, contains statements such as “ I feel comfortable about myself”. A low SL is associated with negative affect, self-derogation, and social dysfunction. It contains statements such as “I tend to devalue myself” and is made up of items 6,7,9,14 and 18. High SC is associated with a perception of oneself as being capable, effective and in control. It contains statements such as “I have done well in life so far” and is made up of items 1,4,5,10 and15. A low SC is associated with stunted motivation, anxiety and depression. It contains statements such as “I deal poorly with challenges” and is made up of items 3,11,17,19 and 20. The internal consistency of both SL and SC scales is high: Cronbach’s coefficient alphas are .93 for the Self-Liking and .89 for the self-competence sub-scales (Tafarodi and Swan, 1995). Cronbach’s alphas for the current sample were high: .77 for Self-Like and . 78 for Self-Competence subscales.

Procedure

The participants were approached in classes and asked to volunteer for the study. The aim of the study was briefly explained and that they would need to complete three questionnaires, taking approximately 20 minutes. They were given an information sheet and consent forms and were informed that the data collected would be kept confidential. They were informed where to return the completed questionnaires. No manipulation or experimental procedures were involved in collecting the data.

Results

The data was analyzed using SPSS for Windows (Version 10.0, SPSS, 1999). Descriptive statistics were used to examine the scoring patterns of the sample as well as the relationships between the variables generated by this sample. Four two-step Hierarchical Regression analyses were performed. Each Hierarchical Regression analysis was performed on one of the dependent variables, the identity status scores of Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure or Diffusion. The predictor variables were Secure, Ambivalent and Avoidant attachment subscales and Self- Liking and Self-

Competence self-esteem subscales. The first hypothesis was tested through the first regression model of each of the four regression analyses; the second hypothesis through the second regression model of each analysis. An alpha level of .05 was used for all the analyses.

The assumptions of the Multiple Regression analysis were investigated. All of the variables used in the analysis were continuous variables. There was a minimum of 20 cases per variable. The Mahalanobis distances were all below the critical value of 22.5, indicating that there were no outliers in this sample (Francis, 2000). The Tolerance figures for all the variables were above 0.3, indicating that the assumption of multicollinearity was upheld (Francis). The histograms and the scatter plots generated in the Regression analyses indicate that the assumptions of normality, linearity and equal variances were upheld.

Table 1 below shows the sample means and standard deviations for the dependent and independent variables.

Table1

Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent Variables (Identity Status Scores) and Predictor Variables (Attachment and Self-Esteem Subscale Scores)

Variables	M	SD
Dependent Variable		
Identity Status		
Achievement	62.10	9.62
Moratorium	49.28	11.14
Foreclosure	33.73	11.63
Diffusion	48.80	9.22
Predictor Variable		
Attachment		
Secure	21.14	3.70
Ambivalent	13.79	4.51
Avoidant	14.33	4.61
Self-Esteem		
Self-Liking	35.70	7.96
Self-Competence	35.38	5.39

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. $N=120$

Table 1 shows mean scores and standard deviations for the variables. The mean scores for the identity statuses vary from their theoretical mean of $M = 56.00$. The obtained mean for Achievement is higher than the theoretical mean, whereas the obtained means for the other three identity statuses are all lower. The obtained mean scores for the attachment subscales also vary from their theoretical mean $M = 18.00$.

While the mean score of the Secure subscale, is close to this theoretical mean the mean, those of the other two attachment subscales are lower. The obtained mean scores of the self-esteem subscales, Self-Liking and Self-Competence, are both higher than their theoretical mean score $M = 30.00$.

Table 2 below shows inter-correlations for dependent and independent variables.

Table 2
Inter-correlations for Dependent Variables (Identity Status Scores) and Predictor Variables (Attachment and Self-Esteem Subscale Scores)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
ID status									
1 Achievement	--	.19*	.22*	-.17	.06	-.03	.12	.26**	.20*
2 Moratorium		--	.38**	.39**	-.28**	.46**	.34**	-.26**	-.31**
3 Foreclosure			--	.22*	.04	.29**	.03	-.05	-.17
4 Diffusion				--	-.22*	.21*	.20*	-.22*	-.30**
Attachment									
5 Secure					--	-.23*	-.53**	.36*	.40*
6 Ambivalent						--	.41**	-.39**	-.36**
7 Avoidant							--	-.48**	-.38**
Self-Esteem									
8 Self-Liking								--	.71**
9 Self-Compet									--

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. $N=120$

Table 2 shows inter-correlations between the variables. Significant positive but low correlations were found between the scores of Achievement and Moratorium statuses and Achievement and Foreclosure statuses. Significant, positive correlations were also found between the scores of Moratorium and Foreclosure statuses and Moratorium and Diffusion statuses. A significant, positive but low correlation was found between scores of Foreclosure and Diffusion statuses. No significant correlations were found between Achievement and the attachment subscales. However, significant positive, and low correlations were found between Achievement and Self-Liking and Achievement and Self-Competence. Significant but low correlations were found for Moratorium and the attachment subscales and for Moratorium and the self-esteem subscales. Moratorium was negatively correlated with Secure and positively correlated with both Ambivalent and Avoidant subscales. Moratorium was negatively correlated with both Self-Liking and Self-Competence subscales.

Foreclosure was significantly correlated only with the Ambivalent attachment subscale. Significant but low correlations were found between Diffusion and attachment and between Diffusion and self-esteem subscales. Diffusion was positively correlated with Ambivalent and Avoidant subscales, but negatively correlated with the secure subscale. Diffusion was negatively correlated with both Self-Liking and Self-Competence.

All independent variables were intercorrelated significantly. The Secure subscale was negatively correlated with the Ambivalent and Avoidant subscales and positively correlated with both self-esteem subscales. The Ambivalent subscale was positively correlated with the Avoidant subscale and negatively correlated with both self-esteem subscales. The Avoidant subscale was also negatively correlated with both of the self-esteem subscales. Self-Liking subscale was positively correlated with the Self-Competence subscale.

Table 3 below shows the results of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis for attachment and self-esteem variables predicting identity status of Achievement.

Table 3

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Attachment and Self-Esteem Variables Predicting Identity Status Achievement

Variables	B	SEB	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Step1				.04	
Secure	.42	.28	.16		
Ambivalent	-.18	.21	-.08		
Avoidant	.49	.24	.23*		
Step 2				.15**	.12**
Secure	.26	.27	.10		
Ambivalent	.10	.21	.01		
Avoidant	.75	.24	.36**		
Self-Liking	.47	.16	.30**		
Self-Competence	.03	.22	.02		

Note. $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. N = 120

Table 3 shows that the first regression model including three attachment variables, Secure, Ambivalent and Avoidant, explained less than 4% of the variance in the Achievement scores. While the overall contribution was not significant $F(3,116) = 1.53, p = .21$, the Avoidant attachment subscale was a significant independent contributor in this model ($t = 2.04, p = .044$). The results show, however, that the size of the beta weight for the Avoidant subscale is significantly larger than that of the correlation coefficient. When the Self-Liking and Self-Competence variables were entered into the regression equation, they explained an additional 11.5% of the variance in the Achievement scores. The change in R Square in this model was significant $F(2, 114) = 7.72, p = .001$. In this model Self-Liking was a significant independent contributor. Avoidant attachment style was also an independent contributor to the Achievement status. The R Square in the second model, when Secure, Ambivalent, Avoidant, Self-Liking and Self-Competence variables were included was significant $F(5, 114) = 4.11, p = .002$. Together these variables explained 15% of the variance in the Achievement scores.

Table 4 below shows the results of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis for attachment and self-esteem variables predicting identity status of Moratorium.

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Attachment and Self-Esteem Variables Predicting Identity Status Moratorium

Variables	B	SEB	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Step 1				.25**	
Secure	-.39	.28	-.13		
Ambivalent	.95	.22	.38**		
Avoidant	.26	.24	.11		
Step 2				.26**	.01
Secure	-.31	.29	-.10		
Ambivalent	.91	.22	.37**		
Avoidant	.27	.25	.11		
Self-Liking	.11	.17	.08		
Self-Competence	-.31	.24	-.15		

Note. $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. $N = 120$

Table 4 indicates that the first regression model when attachment variables, Secure, Ambivalent and Avoidant, were included explained 25% of variance in the Moratorium variable. This contribution was significant $F(3,116) = 12.89, p = .000$. However, only the Ambivalent attachment subscale was a significant independent contributor. When the self-esteem variables, Self-Liking and Self-Competence subscales were added to the regression equation no significant change in R Square was found $F(2,114) = .82, p = .442$.

Table 5 below shows the results of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis for attachment and self-esteem variables predicting identity status Foreclosure.

Table 5

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Attachment and Self-Esteem Variables Predicting Identity Status Foreclosure

Variables	B	SEB	β	R ²	ΔR^2
Step 1				.10**	
Secure	.27	.32	.09		
Ambivalent	.86	.25	.33**		
Avoidant	-.15	.28	-.06		
Step 2				.13**	.03
Secure	.40	.33	.13		
Ambivalent	.81	.26	.31**		
Avoidant	-.09	.29	-.03		
Self-Liking	.26	.19	.18		
Self-Competence	-.53	.27	-.25		

Note. $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. $N = 120$.

Table 5 indicates that the first regression model when attachment variables, Secure, Ambivalent and Avoidant, were included explained 10% of the variance in the Foreclosure scores. This contribution was significant $F(3, 116) = 4.22$, $p = .007$. When self-esteem variables, Self-Liking and Self-Competence, were entered into the regression equation they explained an additional 3% of the variance in the Foreclosure scores. The Change in R square of the second model was not significant $F(2, 114) = 1.92$, $p = .151$. Ambivalent attachment variable was the only significant independent contributor to the variance in the Foreclosure scores.

Table 6 below shows the results of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis for attachment and self-esteem variables predicting identity status Diffusion.

Table 6

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Attachment and Self-Esteem Variables Predicting Identity Status Diffusion

Variables	<u>B</u>	<u>SEB</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>R²</u>	<u>ΔR²</u>
Step1				.08*	
Secure	-.35	.26	-.14		
Ambivalent	.30	.20	.14		
Avoidant	.14	.22	.07		
Step 2				.12*	.04
Secure	-.20	.27	-.08		
Ambivalent	.20	.20	.10		
Avoidant	.10	.23	.05		
Self-Liking	.06	.15	.05		
Self-Competence	-.44	.22	-.26*		

Note. *p < .05. **p, .01. N = 120

Table 6 indicates that the first regression model when attachment variables, Secure, Ambivalent and Avoidant subscales, were included explained 7% of the variance in the Diffusion scores. This contribution was significant $F(3, 116) = 3.12$, $p = .029$. No significant independent contributors were found in the first model. When self-esteem variables, Self-Liking and Self-Competence subscales, were included in the regression equation they explained an additional 4% of variance in the Diffusion

scores. While the change in *R* Square in the second regression model was not significant $F(2, 114) = 2.56, p=.082$, Self-Competence subscale was found to be a significant independent contributor to the second model.

Discussion

The first hypothesis predicted that attachment security/insecurity, as measured by the three attachment subscales Secure, Avoidant and Ambivalent (Collins & Reed, 1990), would contribute to the variance in the scores of identity statuses. Except for the status of Achievement this was supported. The second hypothesis, which predicted that self-esteem, as measured by the Self-Liking and Self-Competence subscales, would contribute to the variance in scores of identity was also partially supported.

First hypothesis

The results failed to support the first part of hypothesis one, which dealt with the identity status of Achievement. In terms of the regression analysis, together the attachment subscales did not contribute to the variance in the Achievement identity status. Avoidant attachment scale on its own, however, made a significant independent contribution to Achievement identity status. The correlation coefficient matrix showed no significant correlations between the attachment subscales and Achievement status, indicating no bivariate associations between any of the three attachment subscales and

Achievement identity status. The fact that the size of a beta weight for one of the independent variables was significantly larger than the correlation coefficient (in this case the Avoidant attachment subscale) this indicates possible suppressor variables operating (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996).

Other studies (Zimmermann & Becker-Stoll, 2002; Kennedy, 1999) that have examined the relationship between attachment styles and identity statuses did not use regression analysis. The correlation coefficients of this study, however, can be compared to theirs. In terms of the correlation analyses, the findings of the present study are inconsistent with the findings of Zimmermann and Becker-Stoll (2002) and Kennedy (1999) who found that Secure attachment style was associated with Achievement status. The explanation for this study's result for Achievement status is given below with that for Moratorium.

The results supported the second part of hypothesis one which dealt with the identity status of Moratorium. Together the three attachment style subscales accounted for 25% of the variance in the Moratorium scores. Only the Ambivalent attachment subscale, however, made a significant independent contribution to the variance in Moratorium scores. The correlation coefficient matrix indicated that Secure attachment had a weak but negative association with Moratorium status and that Ambivalent and Avoidant subscales had moderate positive associations with Moratorium. The relationship between Ambivalent attachment and Moratorium found in this study is similar to that found by Kennedy (1999). Kennedy reported that Preoccupied attachment

style, which is comparable to the Ambivalent, was positively related to Moratorium status.

Both the findings of the present study and that of Kennedy are contrary to Marcia's (1988) theory that secure attachment would be positively associated with the higher identity statuses of Achievement and Moratorium. The findings in the current study were unexpected in that Secure attachment did not contribute independently in the Multiple Regression analyses and in the correlation matrix was not associated with Achievement status and was even negatively associated with the Moratorium one. As a group this sample scored its highest mean in the Achievement identity status and second highest in Moratorium. This pattern may reflect that most of the individuals in this sample have either explored and become committed to identity choices (Achievement) or were in the process of exploring them (Moratorium). Another possibility is that suppressor variable(s) which are difficult to identify among the independent variables in this study are responsible for such a pattern. Suppressor variables may be difficult to identify even when the search is narrowed down to two variables (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996).

While the findings related to Achievement status are difficult to explain, those related to Moratorium may be explained through previous research on identity formation and attachment theory. That Ambivalent attachment contributed independently to Moratorium status may be explained by Blos's (1962) theory on the second individuation process. During the individuation process adolescents may experience ambivalence in

relation to their parents. That is, while they want to explore life options independently, in times of stress they may want to return to the security of parental bonds.

Marcia (1980) explained that the process of exploration in Moratorium is stressful and provokes feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. Adolescents in the Moratorium status are most anxious compared to those in other statuses (Marcia, 1967, 1988). Perhaps a temporary period of insecurity may be experienced by individuals in the Moratorium status that resembles Ambivalent attachment. That is, in times of stress, they may feel conflicted about seeking closeness, love and support from parents, while at the same time desiring to become independent. They may also become uncertain and worry about whether their parents are willing to provide for their needs after having communicated that they want to be independent and do not need them. This may help explain the finding that Ambivalent attachment contributed to Moratorium status.

The results supported the third part of hypothesis one, which dealt with the identity status of Foreclosure. Together the three attachment subscales accounted for 10% of variance in the Foreclosure scores. The Ambivalent attachment subscale was the only one that made a significant independent contribution to the variance in the Foreclosure scores. The correlation coefficient matrix also showed that the only attachment subscale associated with Foreclosure status was the Ambivalent one. It had a weak but positive association with Foreclosure status. This finding is inconsistent with that of Kennedy (1999) who found that the Foreclosure identity status was not associated with any of the attachment styles.

The findings that Ambivalent attachment contributed to Foreclosure status may also be explained by Marcia's (1988) theory on the influence of attachment insecurity on the individuation process, which, in turn, influences the identity formation. Marcia proposed that attachment insecurity results in less than optimal individuation and, in turn, in less than optimal identity formation. In particular, Ambivalently attached adolescents tend to be preoccupied with attachment relationships and dependent on attachment figures (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). They tend to deal with their anxiety by continuing efforts to gain support from parents and other attachment figures (Kobak & Sceery). Such experiences of the ambivalently attached adolescents are likely to inhibit the development of self-confidence and of autonomy (Kobak & Sceery). As adolescents with Ambivalent attachment are likely to be less individuated from their parents, this may prevent them from independent exploration and commitment to identity choices.

Perhaps lack of individuation may also be a reason for why individuals with a Foreclosure status process the identity related information differently from those in other statuses (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000). They have a normative identity style, which is characterized by a preemptive problem solving approach, conformity to social and familial expectations, high degree of commitment to authority and the exercise of judgment (Berzonsky & Kuk). Conformity to social and familial expectations and a high commitment to authority are likely to be consequences of Ambivalent attachment. The findings of the present study that Ambivalent attachment contributed to Foreclosure

status stand in support of Marcia's (1988) theory that Ambivalent attachment is likely to be mirrored in the Foreclosure identity status.

In addition to the attachment insecurity's influence on the individuation process the finding that Ambivalent attachment contributed to and was positively related to Foreclosure identity status may also be explained by the consequences of attachment insecurity conceptualised by Bowlby (1973). Attachment insecurity results from experiencing attachment figures as unpredictable, unavailable and or rejecting which affects negatively the development of self-representations (Bowlby, 1973).

Bowlby (1973) proposed that individuals who have experienced their attachment figures as unpredictable, unavailable and or rejecting are likely to develop representations of self as less acceptable, less lovable, less worthy and less deserving. In addition attachment security affects negatively the development of psycho-social skills such as communication, problem resolution and other skills. Impaired self-representations and psychosocial skills are likely to affect negatively the exploration and commitment experiences of the identity formation process.

Results related to the last part of hypothesis one, which dealt with the identity status of Diffusion, supported hypothesis one. Although no significant independent predictors were found among the attachment subscales, together attachment subscales accounted for about 8% of the variance in the Diffusion scores. The correlation

coefficient matrix showed that there was a weak but negative relationship between the Secure attachment subscale and the Diffusion status and a weak but positive relationship between both of the insecure attachment subscales (Ambivalent and Avoidant) and Diffusion. In other words, insecure attachment is associated with Diffusion status.

These relationships are similar to those found by other researchers. Zimmermann and Becker-Stoll (2002) also found that the Anxious/Avoidant attachment style was associated with Diffusion identity status. Kennedy (1999) found that a Preoccupied attachment style, which is comparable to the Ambivalent style, was positively related to Diffusion status.

The finding of the present study that insecure attachment was related positively to Diffusion status may be explained by attachment theory. Although Ambivalent and Avoidant attachment styles are different they have some common elements. What is common for the two is that both are insecure attachment styles and share some developmental consequences. According to Bowlby (1973) consequences of insecure attachment are impaired self-representations and impaired psychosocial functioning. Insecurely attached individuals, that is, those who have experienced their attachment figures as unpredictable, unavailable and or rejecting are likely to develop representations of self as less acceptable, less loving, less worthy and less deserving (Bowlby, 1973).

Due to impaired attachment relationships with their attachment figures insecurely attached individuals are also likely to developed insufficient communication, problem

resolution and other psychosocial skills (Bowlby, 1973). Kobak and Sceery (1988) found that Ambivalently and Avoidantly attached adolescents are less socially competent than Securely attached ones. Perhaps the finding that attachment insecurity is related to Diffusion status may be explained by such consequences of attachment insecurity. That is, impaired self-representations and impaired psychosocial skills are related to lack of motivation and or interest in exploring identity choices, characteristic of Diffusion status.

The differences between Ambivalent and Avoidant attachment styles may be again differently related to the Diffusion status. The differences between Ambivalent and Avoidant attachment styles are in the way individuals deal with their attachment needs. Ambivalently attached individuals tend to be preoccupied with attachment relationships and to be dependent on and seek support from their attachment figures (Collins & Read, 1990). In addition to this, in Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) model of attachment the individuals with a Preoccupied style, which is comparable to the Ambivalent, have negative view of self and a positive view of others. Kobak and Sceery (1988) found that adolescents with an Ambivalent attachment style had negative self-representations but tended to idealise their parents.

Avoidantly attached individuals are uncomfortable being close to others and avoid seeking support from attachment figures (Collins & Read, 1990). In addition to this, in Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) model of attachment the individuals with a Fearful style, which is comparable to the Avoidant, have a positive view of self and a negative view of others. Kobak and Sceery (1988) found that adolescents with an Avoidant

attachment style had positive self-representations but were not accepting of their negative self-attributes. Avoidantly attached adolescents appear to be most isolated from their parents compared to other attachment styles (Adams, 1985; Kobak & Sceery, 1988; Marcia, 1993).

The preoccupation with attachment relationships, the dependency on attachment figures and a negative view of self in Ambivalently attached adolescents may be related to lack of motivation and or interest in independently exploring identity choices and especially those ideological ones (Occupation, Religion, Politics and Philosophical Life Style). That is, because they are preoccupied by attachment relationships and dependent on others, they may also rely on others for direction, and be accepting of their views and values rather than their generating or exploring their own. Hence, their identity formation would depend more on the influences of others than their personal interest in different identity choices. This may be the reason that Ambivalent attachment was related to Diffusion status

Being uncomfortable with closeness, unable to seek support and perhaps trust others in Avoidantly attached adolescents may also be related to lack of motivation and or interest in exploring identity choices both those ideological (Occupation, Religion, Politics and Philosophical Life Style) and interpersonal (Friendship, Dating, Sex Roles and Recreation). In order to explore most of those identity choices individuals are required to interact with others. This may be difficult for those Avoidantly attached

adolescents. This may be the reason Avoidant attachment was related to Diffusion status in the present study.

Second hypothesis

The results supported the first part of hypothesis two, which dealt with the identity status of Achievement. Together the two self-esteem subscales accounted for 11% of variance in the Achievement status scores. The regression analysis, revealed that only the Self-Liking subscale contributed positively to Achievement status. The correlation matrix showed that there was positive but weak correlations between each of the self-esteem subscales, Self-Liking and Self-Competence, and Achievement status.

Some associations found in other studies (Marcia, 1967, Marcia & Friedman, 1970, Prager, 1982) may be compared to those of the present study. For example, the findings of the present study that the two self-esteem subscales were related positively to Achievement status are consistent with those of Marcia (1967) who found that self-esteem is associated positively with higher identity statuses. In his study college males in the high identity statuses, Achievement and Moratorium, had higher self-esteem than those in the lower ones, Foreclosure and Diffusion .

However, in other studies by Marcia and Friedman (1970) and by Prager (1982), college females with Foreclosure (a lower) status scored highest on self esteem followed

by those in Achievement (a higher) status. Marcia and Friedman explained that the societal values at the time encouraged female conformity to parental authority and to parental influences on occupation and on other identity related choices. This in turn would have contributed to the higher self-esteem in females in Foreclosure status (Marcia & Friedman). Even though the sample of the present study is predominantly female, the findings of the present study are consistent only with the findings of Marcia (1967), who found that self-esteem is positively related to the higher identity statuses rather than the lower ones.

The findings of the present study that both Self-Liking and that Self-Competence subscales were related positively to Achievement status supports both Erikson's (1968) and Marcia's (1988) conceptualisations of the possible relationships between self-esteem and identity formation. Erikson stated that positive self-evaluations contribute positively to identity formation. Marcia suggested that the exploration and commitment processes of identity formation contribute to self-esteem. He suggested that the exploration and commitment processes of identity formation may modify individuals' internalised childhood idealisations (ego ideal standard) so that the discrepancy between the ego ideal standards and the actual personal attributes is lessened resulting in greater self-esteem.

Both of these relationships may explain why both Self-Liking and Self-Competence subscales were correlated positively with Achievement status in the correlation matrix and why Self-Liking contributed independently to Achievement in the

regression analyses. However, that Self-Competence did not contribute independently to Achievement status in the regression analysis is difficult to explain.

The results failed to support the second part of hypothesis two, which dealt with the identity status of Moratorium. Contrary to what was expected neither of the self-esteem subscales contributed significantly to the variance in the Moratorium scores. The correlation matrix, however, revealed that both of the self-esteem subscales, Self-Liking and Self-Competence, were correlated negatively but weakly with Moratorium status.

The negative relationship between the self-esteem subscales and Moratorium status found in this study is contrary to findings of Marcia (1967) that self-esteem is associated positively with higher identity statuses (Achievement and Moratorium). They are, however, consistent with Prager's (1982) finding that self-esteem was associated negatively with Moratorium status. That is, college females with Moratorium status had the lowest self-esteem compared to those with other identity statuses. Prager explained this finding in terms of traditional sex roles. She suggested that while males are expected to rebel and question values, females are expected to be more conforming and pliable.

Since the sample of the present study was predominantly female such an explanation may be applied to the results of the present study. That is, that in this study self-esteem subscales were negatively related to the Moratorium status may also be due to traditional sex roles. Perhaps the self-esteem of females undergoing exploration of

identity choices (Moratorium) may be diminished by lack of approval for questioning values and exploring choices openly compared to their male counterparts.

These findings may also be explained by Marcia's (1980,1988,1993) theory that the process of exploration characteristic of Moratorium status induces anxiety and a sense of uncertainty. This is a time when individuals are at the zenith of identity crisis and are likely to be highly anxious. It is possible that in this psychological state individuals may be uncertain and anxious about who they are and what they want to become and may feel dissatisfied with them selves and evaluate themselves negatively. Campbell (1999) found that low self-esteem was associated with individuals' self-concept uncertainty, that is poorly articulated notions of who and what they are. That anxiety and uncertainty may result in low self-esteem in individuals with Moratorium status may be the reason that self-esteem subscales were related negatively to Moratorium status. That neither of the two self-esteem subscales contributed to the Moratorium status may be due to the possibility that the process of exploration, characteristic of Moratorium status, contributes negatively to self-esteem rather than vice versa.

The results failed to support the third part of the hypothesis two, which dealt with the identity status of Foreclosure. Contrary to what was expected neither of the self-esteem subscales significantly contributed to the variance in the Foreclosure scores. Furthermore, the correlation matrix indicated that there were no significant correlations between self-esteem subscales and the Foreclosure status. This finding is inconsistent with previous findings that Foreclosure status was related negatively to self-esteem in

college males (Marcia, 1967) and related positively to self-esteem in college females (Marcia & Friedman, 1970; Prager, 1982).

That no significant relationships between the self-esteem subscales and Foreclosure status were found in the present study may suggest that self-esteem is not related to identity formation in individuals with Foreclosure status. Because they are dependent on their parents and are less likely to be individuated from them, their self-esteem may be more dependent on their parents' appraisals of them than on their own. In Foreclosure, the commitments they make are related to those of their parents. They may feel successful only if they are appraised as successful by their parents. This may explain why Self-Esteem subscales were not related to Foreclosure status.

The results partially supported the forth part of the hypothesis two, which dealt with the identity status of Diffusion. While there was no significant contribution from the combination of Self-Liking and Self-Competence subscales, on its own Self-Competence had a negative contribution to the variance in the Diffusion status. The correlation matrix showed that as expected both self-esteem subscales had negative relationships with the Diffusion status.

The findings of the present study are consistent with the findings of other studies (Marcia, 1967; Marcia & Friedman, 1970; Prager, 1982) that self-esteem was negatively associated with identity formation. Marcia (1967) found that college males with

Diffusion and Foreclosure statuses had lower self-esteem compared to those with higher identity statuses, Achievement and Moratorium. Marcia and Friedman (1970) and Prager (1982) found that college females with Diffusion status also had lower self-esteem compared to those in higher identity statuses.

The findings of the present study that both Self-Liking and Self-Competence subscales were correlated negatively with Diffusion status may be explained by Erikson's (1968) theory and by Campbell's (1999) finding. Erikson proposed that the inability to explore and become committed to different social roles results in adolescents being confused about who they want to be and who they are in relation to society. That is, the unsuccessful resolution of identity crisis results in identity confusion, which is comparable to the Diffusion status. In addition to this Campbell (1999) found that self-concept uncertainty, that is poorly articulated notions of who and what individuals are, is associated negatively with self-esteem. This may explain the findings of the present study that self-esteem subscales were associated negatively with Diffusion status.

The finding of the present study that self-competence contributed negatively to Diffusion status supports Erikson's (1968) theory that self-esteem contributes to identity formation. Individuals whose sense of self-competence is low may feel less confident to engage in exploration of different identity choices in both ideological domains

(Occupation, Religion, Politics and Philosophical Life Style) and in interpersonal domains (Friendship, Dating, Sex Roles and Recreation).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated the contribution of attachment security/insecurity and self-esteem to identity formation in late adolescence. In this research Marcia's (1966) operationalization of Erikson's (1968) theory of identity formation was used. That is, the four identity statuses of Achievement, Moratorium, Foreclosure and Diffusion, which are reflected in the presence or absence of exploration and commitment processes, were used to determine adolescents' way of dealing with identity formation. Since Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory suggests that the successful identity formation is dependent on the successful resolution of childhood psychosocial crisis, the contributing variables, attachment and self-esteem, were selected due to some of their developmental antecedents and consequences overlapping with identity formation.

According to Erikson (1968) psychosocial crises are initiated through the interaction between the individuals and their social environment. In childhood the interaction between the children and their parents and later their social environment at school initiate the development of different competencies and psychosocial skills. That is, these interactions influence the development of children's psychosocial functioning. The

consequences of successful identity formation are that individuals find their place and are able to function in a society.

Attachment theory is based on the developmental consequences of early interactions between children and their attachment figures. The consequences of attachment security/insecurity, according to Bowlby (1973), influence the development of individuals' psychosocial functioning and personality. Similarly, the development of self-esteem is dependent on interactions with others and with the social environment. The consequences of self-esteem also contribute to psychosocial functioning. Hence identity formation, attachment security/insecurity and self-esteem may be linked at different points.

The interest of this study was in the contributions of attachment security/insecurity and self-esteem to identity formation. The first hypothesis was that attachment security/insecurity contributes differently to the four identity statuses. In particular it was predicted that attachment security would contribute positively to higher identity statuses of Achievement and Moratorium and that attachment insecurity would contribute positively to lower identity statuses of Foreclosure and Diffusion. The second hypothesis was that self-esteem would contribute positively to the higher identity statuses and negatively to lower ones. The findings of the present study related to the contribution of attachment security/insecurity support the first hypothesis except for the attachment

contribution to Achievement status. The findings related to the contribution of self-esteem supported the second hypothesis only partially.

Although most of the findings of this study have been explained by related theories and studies, some of them were difficult to explain. The relationship between identity statuses and attachment security/insecurity and those between self-esteem and identity statuses have proven to be complex.

Furthermore, that small contributions from both attachment and self-esteem subscales to the identity statuses were found suggests that other variables not included in this study may be involved in the formation of identity. For example, variables not examined in this research such as some psychological variables like temperament, intelligence and personality may also be important in identity formation. Secondly, individuation from parents is likely to be associated with the processes of identity formation.

Furthermore, environmental influences such as socio-economic status and parental education level may be important factors in the formation of identity. Socio-economic status and parental education level may be related to opportunities and resources that a person has when exploring occupational and other choices related to identity.

While some of these variables, including those examined in this study, may have direct affects on identity formation others may have indirect effects. That is, some of these variables may have large contributions to identity formation while others may mediate some of the processes linked to identity formation. Due to the design and the selection of variables in this study, the possible mediating effects such as those of the individuation from parents were not examined. Nevertheless, this research and the ideas generated herein may prove useful to future research in this field.

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Appendix A: Materials

Information letter

Consent form

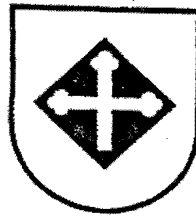
Background information form

Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Statuses – Two (EOMEIS-II)

Adult Attachment Scale (AAS)

Self-Liking Self-Competence Scale (SLSC)

Information letter to the participants



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EGO IDENTITY, SELF ESTEEM, AND ATTACHMENT STYLE
Student Researcher: LJUBICA LAZIC
Supervisor: DR CECELIA WINKELMAN

You are being asked to participate in a study to investigate factors involved in the development of one's identity, in particular, the relationships between identity, self esteem, and attachment. The aim of the study is to understand the contributions of these factors in development during late adolescence and early adulthood. As a participant in this study you will be asked to complete three questionnaires.

No ill effect nor inconvenience is anticipated from taking part in this study. To protect your privacy and maintain confidentiality all testing materials will be kept securely locked in files without any identifying information so that your complete confidentiality is assured. The total time involved in filling the questionnaires should be about 20 minutes.

By participating in this study you may benefit by becoming aware of factors in development of late adolescence and early adulthood. As well, the study's findings may contribute to understanding of related psychological processes.

You are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time without giving a reason.

Any questions regarding this project can be directed to the Supervisor, Dr Cecelia Winkelman on 9953-3112, in the School of Psychology, St. Patrick's Campus, Fitzroy.

This study has been approved by the University Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.


In the event that you have any complaint about the way you have been treated during the study or a query that the Student Researcher has been unable to satisfy, you may write to:

The Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee
C/o Office of Research, Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy VIC 3065,
Tel: 03 9953 3157, Fax: 03 9953 3315

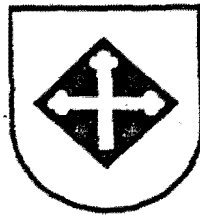
Any complaint made will be treated in confidence, investigated fully and the participant informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the informed consent form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the investigator.


Ljubica Lazic, Student Researcher


Cecelia Winkelman, Supervisor

Consent form



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EGO IDENTITY, SELF ESTEEM, AND ATTACHMENT STYLE

NAME OF RESEARCHER: LJUBICA LAZIC

I.....(the participant) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to the Participant and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I can withdraw at any time.

I agree that the research data collected for the study may be published or provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:.....
(block letters)

SIGNATURE..... DATE.....

NAME OF RESEARCHER LJUBICA LAZIC
.....
(block letters)

SIGNATURE... [redacted] DATE 4/9/01.....

NAME OF SUPERVISOR CECELIA WINKELMAN
.....
(block letters)

SIGNATURE [redacted] DATE 4/9/01.....

Background information form

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

(PLEASE CIRCLE THE RESPONSE WHERE APPROPRIATE)

HIGHEST LEVEL OF SCHOOL COMPLETED: _____

CURRENT UNIVERSITY COURSE: _____

CURRENT YEAR LEVEL AT UNIVERSITY: _____

GENDER: **MALE** **FEMALE**

AGE: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TO L.
LAZIC'S RESEARCH BOX, AT THE SCHOOL OF
PSYCHOLOGY RECEPTION DESK, LEVEL 2.

Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status –Two (EOMEIS-2)

Instructions: Read each item and indicate to what degree it reflects your own thoughts and feelings. If a statement has more than one part, please indicate your reaction to the statement as a whole. Indicate your answer on the line preceding the question number.

- 1 = strongly agree 4 = disagree
2 = moderately agree 5 = moderately disagree
3 = agree 6 = strongly disagree

- ___ 1. I haven't chosen the occupation I really want to get into, and I'm just working at whatever is available until something better comes along.
- ___ 2. When it comes to religion, I just haven't found anything that appeals and I don't really feel the need to look.
- ___ 3. My ideas about men's and women's roles are identical to my parents'. What has worked for them will obviously work for me.
- ___ 4. There's no single "life style" which appeals to me more than another.
- ___ 5. There's a lot of different kinds of people. I'm still exploring the many possibilities to find the right kind of friends for me.
- ___ 6. I sometimes join in recreational activities when asked, but I rarely try anything on my own.
- ___ 7. I haven't really thought about a "dating style." I'm not too concerned whether I date or not.
- ___ 8. Politics is something that I can never be too sure about because things change so fast. But I do think it's important to know what I can politically stand for and believe in.

- ___ 9. I'm still trying to decide how capable I am as a person and what jobs will be right for me.
- ___ 10. I don't give religion much thought and it doesn't bother me one way or the other.
- ___ 11. There are so many ways to divide responsibilities in marriage, I'm trying to decide what will work for me.
- ___ 12. I'm looking for an acceptable perspective for my own "lifestyle" view, but I haven't found it yet.
- ___ 13. There are many reasons for friendship, but I choose my close friends on the basis of certain values and similarities that I've personally decided on.
- ___ 14. While I don't have one recreational activity I'm really committed to, I'm experiencing numerous possibilities in marriage, I'm trying to decide what will work for me.
- ___ 15. Based on past experiences, I've chosen the type of dating relationship I want now.
- ___ 16. I haven't really considered politics. It just doesn't excite me much.
- ___ 17. I might have thought about a lot of different jobs, but there's never really been any question since my parents said what they wanted.
- ___ 18. A person's faith is unique to each individual. I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.
- ___ 20. After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "lifestyle" and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective.
- ___ 21. My parents know what's best for me in terms of how to choose my friends.

- ___ 22. I've chosen one or more recreational activities to engage in regularly from lots of things and I'm satisfied with those choices.
- ___ 23. I don't think about dating much. I just kind of make it as it comes.
- ___ 24. I guess I'm pretty much like my folks when it comes to politics. I follow what they do in terms of voting and such.
- ___ 25. I'm really not interested in finding the right job, any job will do. I just seem to flow with what is available.
- ___ 26. I'm not so sure what religion means to me. I'd like to make up my mind but I'm not done looking yet.
- ___ 27. My ideas about men's and women's roles came right from my parents and family. I haven't seen any need to look further.
- ___ 28. My own views on a desirable life style were taught to me by my parents and I don't see any need to question what they taught me.
- ___ 29. I don't have any real close friends, and I don't think I'm looking for one right now.
- ___ 30. Sometimes I join in leisure activities, but I really don't see a need to look for a particular activity to do regularly.
- ___ 31. I'm trying out different types of dating relationships. I just haven't decide what is best for me.
- ___ 32. There are so many different political parties and ideals. I can't decide which to follow until I figure it all out.
- ___ 33. It took me a while to figure it out, but now I really know what I want for a career.
- ___ 34. Religion is confusing to me right now. I keep changing my views on what is right and wrong for me.
- ___ 35. I've spent some time thinking about men's and women's roles in

- marriage and I've decided what will work best for me.
- ___ 36. In finding an acceptable viewpoint to life itself, I find myself engaging in a lot of discussions with others and some self-exploration.
- ___ 37. I only pick friends my parents would approve of.
- ___ 38. I've always liked doing the same recreational activities my parents do and haven't ever seriously considered anything else.
- ___ 39. I only go out with the type of people my parents expect me to date.
- ___ 40. I've thought my political beliefs through and realize I can agree with some and not other aspects of what my parents believe.
- ___ 41. My parents decide a long time ago what I should do for employment and I'm following through their plans.
- ___ 42. I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual.
- ___ 43. I've been thinking about the roles that husbands and wives play a lot these days, and I'm trying to make a final decision.
- ___ 44. My parent's views on life are good enough for me, I don't need anything else.
- ___ 45. I've tried many different friendships and now I have a clear idea of what I look for in a friend.
- ___ 46. After trying a lot of different recreational activities I've found one or more I really enjoy doing by myself or with friends.
- ___ 47. My preferences about dating are still in the process of developing. I haven't fully decided yet.
- ___ 48. I'm not sure about my political beliefs, but I'm trying to figure out what I can truly believe in.
- ___ 49. It took me a long time to decide but now I know for sure what direction to move in for a career.

- ___ 50. I attend the same church my family has always attended. I've never really questioned why.
- ___ 51. There are many ways that married couples can divide up family responsibilities. I've thought about lots of ways and now I know exactly how I want it to happen for me.
- ___ 52. I guess I just kind of enjoy life in general, and I don't see myself living by any particular viewpoint to life.
- ___ 53. I don't have any close friends. I just like to hang around with the crowd.
- ___ 54. I've been experiencing a variety of recreational activities in hopes of finding one or more I can enjoy for some time to come.
- ___ 55. I've dated different types of people and now know exactly what my own "unwritten rules" for dating are and who I will date.
- ___ 56. I really have never been involved in politics enough to have made a firm stand one way or the other.
- ___ 57. I just can't decide what to do for an occupation. There are so many that have possibilities.
- ___ 58. I've never really questioned my religion. If it's right for my parents it must be right for me.
- ___ 59. Opinions on men's and women's roles seem so varied that I don't think much about it.
- ___ 60. After a lot of self-examination I have established a very definite view on what my own lifestyle will be.
- ___ 61. I really don't know what kind of friend is best for me. I'm trying to figure out exactly what friendship means to me.
- ___ 62. All of my recreational preferences I got from my parents and I haven't really tried anything else.

_____ 63. I date only people my parents would approve of.

_____ 64. My folks have always had their own political and moral beliefs about issues like abortion and mercy killing and I've always gone along accepting what they have.

Adult Attachment Scale (AAS)

The items below describe how people often feel and behave. Please score each item according to how characteristic it is of you, from (1) not at all characteristic, to (5) very characteristic. There are no right wrong answers, just your own responses.

		Not at all characteristic			Very characteris	
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others	1	2	3	4	5
2.	People are never there when you need them.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I am comfortable depending on others.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I know that others will be there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I find it difficult to trust others completely.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I do not often worry about being abandoned.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I often worry that my partner does not really love me.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I find others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I often worry my partner will not want to stay with me.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I want to merge completely with another person.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	My desire to merge sometimes scares people away.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I find it relatively easy to get close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I do not often worry about someone getting too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I am nervous when anyone gets too close.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I am comfortable having others depend on me.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.	1	2	3	4	5

Self-Liking Self-Competence Scale (SLSC)

This questionnaire deals mainly with your general thoughts and feelings about yourself. Indicate how much you agree with each of the 20 statements below. Be as honest and as accurate as possible. Do not skip any questions. Respond to the questions in the order they appear. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Use the following scale: CIRCLE ONLY ONE LETTER FOR EACH QUESTION.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. Owing to my capabilities, I have much potential.	A	B	C	D	E
2. I feel comfortable about myself	A	B	C	D	E
3. I don't succeed at much	A	B	C	D	E
4. I have done well in life so far	A	B	C	D	E
5. I perform very well at a number of things	A	B	C	D	E
6. It is often unpleasant for me to think about myself	A	B	C	D	E
7. I tend to devalue myself	A	B	C	D	E
8. I focus on my strengths	A	B	C	D	E
9. I feel worthless at times	A	B	C	D	E
10. I am a capable person	A	B	C	D	E
11. I do not have much to be proud of	A	B	C	D	E
12. I'm secure in my sense of self-worth	A	B	C	D	E
13. I like myself	A	B	C	D	E
14. I do not have enough respect for myself	A	B	C	D	E
15. I am talented	A	B	C	D	E
16. I feel good about who I am	A	B	C	D	E
17. I am not very competent	A	B	C	D	E
18. I have a negative attitude towards myself	A	B	C	D	E
19. I deal poorly with challenges	A	B	C	D	E
20. I perform inadequately in many important situations	A	B	C	D	E