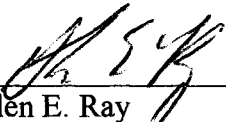# THE ROLES OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSION, LIVING CIRCUMSTANCES,

AND GENDER IN LATE ADOLESCENT IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

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THE ROLES OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSION, LIVING CIRCUMSTANCES,

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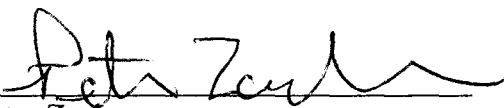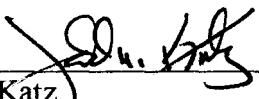

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Submitted to

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Degree of

Master of Science

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THE ROLES OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSION, LIVING CIRCUMSTANCES,

AND GENDER IN LATE ADOLESCENT IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

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Melody Marie Griffin, daughter of Edward Barr and Peggy (Phipps) Griffin, was born July 11, 1979, in Montgomery, Alabama. She graduated from Robert E. Lee High School as Valedictorian in 1997. She attended Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama, and graduated _summa cum laude_ and University Honors Scholar with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminology in December, 2000. In 2001, she entered the Graduate School at Auburn University Montgomery in Montgomery, Alabama, and graduated _summa cum laude_ with a Master of Science degree in Psychology in May, 2003.

THESIS ABSTRACT

THE ROLES OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSION, LIVING CIRCUMSTANCES,

AND GENDER IN LATE ADOLESCENT IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Melody Marie Griffin

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'Identity development' involves the growth of a person's distinct, persisting

personality. This study assessed what roles educational progression, living

circumstances, and gender play in the development of an individual's identity. One

hundred and seventy-eight undergraduate students at Auburn University Montgomery

completed questionnaire packets for this study. Results provided partial support for the

hypothesis concerning educational progression, which predicted that freshmen and

sophomores would be in either identity diffusion or identity foreclosure, and juniors and

seniors would be in either identity moratorium or identity achievement. Specifically,

freshmen and sophomores were more likely than juniors and seniors to be in identity

foreclosure. Partial support also was provided for the hypothesis about an interaction

between gender and living circumstances. It was predicted that females living at home

would be further along in identity development than females living away from home. In addition, it was predicted that males living away from home would be further along in identity development than males living at home. A statistically significant interaction was found only with regard to identity achievement. Males living away from home were more likely to have achieved an identity than both males who lived at home and females who lived away from home. Results are discussed in terms of how the current research extends previous research on identity development. Implications of the findings, as well as possible areas for future research, are also discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Introduction to the Problem

'Identity' refers to an individual's distinct, persisting personality (Costello, 1997). In other words, it is how someone defines himself/herself. It also may involve one person comparing himself/herself to another person in order to determine one's uniqueness from others (Nairne, 2000). Significant problems regarding identity arise during its development, and these problems are commonly termed identity crises (Côté, 2000). An identity crisis may arise during adolescence, and it consists of a disoriented condition, as well as role confusion. Role confusion, according to Côté (2000), refers to a person being unsure of his/her role in the community. The identity crisis results from anxiety over not having personally chosen values and goals, such as with regard to beliefs and occupations. Identity develops as one learns what he/she believes in and wants to attain in life. The values and goals chosen affect the identity that develops within a person.

Identity development has been the focus of psychological theories, as well as research attempting to collect support for those theories. It is important to note that the notions of 'identity' and 'identity development' are very broad. They can be studied in

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terms of one's sexual, gender, and/or racial identity, just to name a few aspects of identity. The focus in this study is the concept of 'identity' in terms of how Erik H. Erikson (1968) and James E. Marcia (1980) defined it.

Erik H. Erikson (1968) made a great contribution to the understanding of identity through his Psychosocial Theory of Development, and this contribution extended beyond his theory to paradigms and research inspired by it. In particular, it led to James E. Marcia's (1980) operationalization of the identity v. role confusion stage of Erikson's theory through his Identity Status Paradigm. Many research studies have focused on gathering empirical support for both Erikson's theory, specifically his notion of identity, and Marcia's paradigm. Some of the variables studied in relation to identity include the following: personality (Cramer, 1997, 2000; Kidwell, Dunham, Bacho, Pastorino, & Portes, 1995), identity style (Dollinger & Dollinger, 1997), exploration and commitment (Kemp, 1998), race/ethnicity (Grove, 1991), the cultural context (Schwartz & Montgomery, 2002), parental attachment/involvement (Samuolis, Layburn, & Schiaffino, 2001; Bartle-Haring, Brucker, & Hock, 2002; Sartor & Youniss, 2002), relativistic thinking (Regeth, 1997), and the false self (Beatman, 1996).

Research regarding identity development is abundant and varied. Despite the large amount of research done to date, identity development is far from being completely understood, as many variables have yet to be examined adequately. Thus, we must examine variables thought to have an impact on the process that have either not been

examined at all or, at least, not examined adequately to allow reliable conclusions to be drawn about their influence. Such new research will enable us to understand better the mechanics at work in identity development.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to our understanding of identity development by examining whether or not three variables (educational progression, living circumstances, and gender) play a role in the developmental process. The first variable is educational progression, which is how far someone has progressed through college. Wright (1982) suggested that as a person proceeds through college, he/she has to make decisions, such as what career to pursue, and these types of decisions encourage identity development. Therefore, people who are closer to finishing college are more likely to have successfully resolved their identity crises and, thus, developed their identity than are people who have just begun college. While educational progression is thought to play a role, this variable has yet to be adequately researched in relation to identity development, so it has been reassessed in this study.

The second variable is living circumstances, which is whether or not someone still lives with his/her parents. The literature review did not show any evidence of previous research regarding this variable; however, Beatman (1996) suggested that it might be an important aspect of identity development for future research. The reason for considering this variable is that the independence associated with people living on their own can facilitate the growth of their individuality. Consequently, it could encourage their identity development.

The third variable is gender, and existing literature yields mixed results about this variable. Cramer (2000) demonstrated that gender moderates the relationship between identity and personality, but no gender differences were found when gender was considered apart from personality. In addition, Samuolis, Layburn, & Schiaffino (2001) found that the identity development of females was aided by connectedness (also known as attachment) to their parents. However, Bartle-Haring, Brucker, & Hock (2002) suggested that females' connectedness to their fathers hindered identity development (i.e., less able to resolve identity issues independently), as well as that viewing the mother as a secure base could encourage identity achievement regardless of the child's gender. This study also indicated that gender does not produce any differences regarding identity development. In contrast, Regeth (1997) found that gender does influence identity development. However, she measured identity at three different times, and the results of each time period did not agree with one another in terms of the exact nature of these gender differences. Schwartz and Montgomery (2002) found that gender has the most effect on identity when considering the identity status, or stage of identity development, of the person, as opposed to the processes/mechanisms through which identity development occurs. As a result of the varying findings from the above studies, it was important to assess the influence of gender in identity development in this study, as the nature of its role could not be simply assumed based on the literature review.

Literature Review

Overview of Erikson's Psychosocial Theory

Erik H. Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development, which was built out of

Freud's Psychosexual Developmental Theory, consists of eight epigenetic stages that he

believed characterized each individual's development throughout their life cycle

(Erikson, 1968; Wright, 1982). It is epigenetic in that both the progression of the stages

and their nature is predetermined and common to all people (Lewis, 2000). Each stage

deals with a crisis, or turning point, which needs to be resolved in order to gain the

associated vital strength, also referred to as a virtue. These strengths/virtues are qualities

that are necessary for a person to experience a healthy development. Successful

resolution of a stage results in the person acquiring one of these virtues (Wright, 1982).

The childhood stages identified by Erikson are trust v. mistrust, autonomy v.

shame/doubt, initiative v. guilt, and industry v. inferiority. The way the person defines

himself/herself changes as he/she progresses through each stage (Hoyer, Rybash, &

Roodin, 1999). The respective self-definitions of each stage are, "I am what I am given,"

"I am what I will be," "I am what I can imagine," and "I am what I learn" (Hoyer, et al.,

1999, p. 379). Successful resolution of the crisis occurring at each stage results in the

vital strengths of hope, will, purpose, and competence, respectively. The quality of hope

involves a positive view of life and a confidence or trust that any basic needs the person

has will be met (Funder, 1997). Will is the quality in which a person has a persistent

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determination and is able to balance his/her free choice with self-restraint. Purpose involves the initiative to pursue whatever goals the person values. Competence deals with the ability to complete tasks, as well as both to learn and to master new skills (Hoyer, et al., 1999; Nairne, 2000).

After these childhood stages, there is an adolescence stage. It consists solely of the identity v. role confusion crisis as the focus of development, and fidelity is the strength gained through its successful resolution. Erikson (1968) said that fidelity involves loyalty to an ideology. In other words, this virtue allows the person the ability of having sustained loyalties to people and their ideals (Lewis, 2000). The self-definition of a person at this stage can be described as, "I am who I define myself to be" (Hoyer, et al., 1999, p. 379).

Following the adolescence stage are the stages associated with adulthood. These stages include the following: intimacy v. isolation, generativity v. stagnation, and integrity v. despair (Hoyer, et al., 1999). These stages also involve changing self-descriptions that can be depicted as, "We are what we love," "I am what I create," and "I am what survives me," respectively (Hoyer, et al., 1999, p. 379). The vital strengths gained by successful resolution of each stage are love, care, and wisdom, respectively. The virtue of love involves a mutual devotion, such as that found in an intimate, committed relationship with another person (Hoyer, et al., 1999; Nairne, 2000). Care is the quality consisting of a broadening concern for people or things the person encounters in everyday life. Wisdom is a strength characterized by an active concern, although detached, for a life bounded by death (Hoyer, et al., 1999).

Identity development is involved in all of the above-mentioned stages, as it is a part of Erikson's entire theory, but it is most explicit in the identity v. role confusion stage of adolescence (Hart, Maloney, & Damon, 1987). Consequently, the foundation of this study about identity development is Erikson's identity v. role confusion stage, which Côté (2000) said is also the most researched stage of this theory. A reason why it would be the most researched stage is that it is the one stage that explicitly deals with identity, whereas the other stages deal more implicitly with identity. This stage also has been operationalized through Marcia's Identity Status Paradigm, thereby allowing for more ease in conducting research on it. Given the importance of this particular stage to this study, it is essential that it be discussed more thoroughly before proceeding on to Marcia's paradigm.

The identity v. role confusion stage involves people attempting to discover who they are and what is important to them. The main task of this stage is for the person to choose values and goals. These values and goals are to be consistent and meaningful to the person, as well as useful (Funder, 1997). It is at this stage that the identity crisis, a term coined by Erikson, of adolescence occurs. Côté (2000) defined the identity crisis as involving confusion regarding one's identity, as well as a person not having any recognized roles in the community. Wright (1982) described Erikson's notion of identity as a person sensing a sameness and continuity between himself/herself and society. In contrast, the identity crisis would involve the person lacking such a sense of sameness and continuity with society.

Many different events or needs in one's life may trigger the lack of sameness and continuity. According to Wright (1982), the need to determine a career is one of the most important needs creating the crisis. The determination of what career to pursue is one of the fundamental events occurring while one is in college. As people progress through college, they must select a major field of study. People tend to change their college majors, usually multiple times, during the completion of coursework as they get a better sense of what interests them most and what they would like to accomplish in their lifetime. Eventually, most students find a discipline that fulfills their interests and choose it for their major. Then, they go on to get a degree in that area, so they can work towards establishing a career with regard to that field of study. The process of choosing a major and, subsequently, a career is tied inherently to a person's progression through college. The further a person proceeds through college, the more likely he/she is to know the type of career he/she desires to have, or, at least, has the ability and opportunity to have.

Just as progression through college is important to identity development, it is also important for a person to separate from one's family. Lewis (2000) explained this importance in the following way, "With the end of adolescence and the establishment of an identity which is anchored in a sense of self that is located in the world beyond one's immediate family, childhood comes to an end and adulthood begins" (p. 20). In other words, one must realize one's individuality apart from one's family, which is the essence of identity formation, in order to transition from adolescence to adulthood. Part of establishing oneself as separate from parents and siblings is to move out of the family

home and learn to live independently from them. Consequently, a person would be more likely to have a developed identity if he/she is no longer living at home.

Overview of Marcia's Identity Status Paradigm

James E. Marcia (1980) developed the Identity Status Paradigm (see Appendix A) to allow empirical testing of Erikson's concept of identity, specifically the identity v. role confusion stage already discussed. Since this model is about identity, it is important, first, to note how Marcia characterized identity. Marcia (1980) defined it as an internalized self-structure that is dynamic in nature and consists of such aspects of oneself as one's drives, abilities, beliefs, and history. This definition may not appear to be the same as the one of Erikson mentioned above, which involves a sense of sameness and continuity between one's inner self and society (Wright, 1982). However, the following passage from Marcia's essay "Identity in Adolescence" shows they are clearly defining identity the same way:

> 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 (1980, p. 159).

Not only does this passage make it clear they used 'identity' in the same way, but it also further clarifies exactly what identity involves.

This paradigm is much more than a definition of identity, however. Marcia (1987) intended that any late adolescent (age 18 to 22) could be categorized according to this model. The model consists of four identity statuses, to be discussed below, that are distinguished by the presence or absence of crisis/exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1967). Crisis/exploration refers to a decision-making period, where the person actively chooses between alternatives (Marcia, 1967; 1980). Such alternatives involve choosing between different occupations or between beliefs. Commitment involves making a personal investment in an occupation or belief (Marcia, 1967).

Based on the amount of exploration and commitment, Marcia (1967) said that each status serves as a type of coping style with regard to the identity crisis. By coping style, he meant that each status involves different ways that a person deals with his/her life depending upon the circumstances at the time. At a certain time, the person might cope by not making any commitments and not searching actively for any, which is the style of identity diffusion discussed below. Under different circumstances, a person might be actively searching for commitments, and there are no commitments currently in place, which is the form of coping for someone in identity moratorium described below. It is important to remember that a person can move between the statuses, and it is possible for the same person to have been in each of the four statuses at different points of the developmental process. An individual's circumstances change over time, even if ever so slightly, and spur on the development of a person's identity. Each stage of identity development provides a way for the person to cope at whatever point to which the circumstances of life have brought him/her. This discussion will now turn to a further

description of the four identity statuses of identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, identity moratorium, and identity achievement, which will be followed by a review of the literature regarding these stages of identity development.

Identity diffusion is the least mature status of identity development. Marcia (1980) described it as involving no apparent commitments to occupation and/or ideology, as well as a lack of a crisis. Thus, a person in this status is not attempting to choose actively between alternatives involving occupations, ideology, etc., even though he/she is not committed to any. A mentally healthy person with this coping style might be viewed as carefree, charming, and independent. In stark contrast, an unhealthy person might be viewed as careless, psychopathic, and schizoid (Marcia, 1980). Regardless of how the person is perceived, he/she is content, at this point, with not having personal investments in occupations or ideologies. However, as circumstances in the person's life change, the person may move either into identity foreclosure or identity moratorium.

In contrast to identity diffusion, identity foreclosure occurs when a person has made firm commitments. The individual has invested himself/herself in some occupation and/or ideology. The problem, however, is that the person's commitments were chosen by someone else (i.e., parents). Since someone else chose them, then the person did not have to actively search and explore in order to make them. No struggle/crisis occurred through which the person decided for himself/herself what to believe, what career to pursue, etc. The person merely adopts what others want for him/her. A mentally healthy person with this coping style might be viewed as steadfast, committed, and cooperative. On the other hand, the person could be seen as rigid, dogmatic, and conforming (Marcia,

1980). Regardless of the perceptions others hold, simply adopting the commitments other people want the person to make keeps the person from truly developing an identity. In order to develop an identity, the person must actively choose the commitment in question. The reason that such active exploration is necessary is because of the fact that it allows the person to develop a sense of who he/she is apart from other people. An alteration of life circumstances could potentially lead a person to want to find occupations and beliefs that he/she has personally chosen, which brings about a crisis. At this point, the person has moved into the status called identity moratorium.

As alluded to in the previous paragraphs, identity moratorium can follow either identity diffusion or identity foreclosure. However, it is harder for a person to move from foreclosure to moratorium, as firm commitments have already been made. Identity moratorium occurs when the person is experiencing the identity crisis. Any commitments the person has at this time are vague (Marcia, 1967). In the event of a shift from foreclosure to moratorium, the person no longer has the firm commitments chosen by other people. Identity moratorium also differs from identity diffusion in that moratorium involves a crisis. The crisis of this status initiates a search or exploration for commitments. People who reach such a point in their lives seek to actively choose these commitments. Consequently, it is during this time that a person begins to personally invest in goals/beliefs, as well as occupations. A mentally healthy person with this coping style may be seen as sensitive, highly ethical, and flexible. In contrast, a person might be viewed as anxiety-ridden, self-righteous, and vacillating, because of this coping style. Despite the different ways one can be perceived, the person who is in this status

decides what it is that he/she wants out of life and believes about life (Marcia, 1980). It is important to note that the stage of identity moratorium is an extremely meaningful time in a person's life. The crisis that takes place is integral to the formation of a person's identity, thereby allowing the person to view himself/herself as an independent individual. Upon making the personally chosen commitments resolving this crisis, the person moves to the identity status of identity achievement.

Identity achievement is the most mature status of identity development. It comes about upon resolution of the identity crisis. The identity crisis has been resolved by making self-chosen commitments to occupation, ideology, etc. Therefore, it differs from the identity foreclosure status in that the person's commitments result from resolution of a crisis, rather than adoption of the commitments. Achieving an identity allows one to pursue the commitments he/she has personally chosen. People in this status tend to be perceived as strong, self-directed, and highly adaptive. No negative perceptions of these people are apparent, while they were as noted in the other three statuses (Marcia, 1980). The person knows what he/she wants and believes, and, now, can set forth to lead a life in accordance with these commitments.

As should be evident from the above description, a person can move from one status to another, rather than being permanently stuck in one status. For simplicity, the description above was in the form of moving along from identity diffusion to identity achievement. However, it is possible to shift back and forth between the statuses. The pattern a person's identity development takes depends upon the circumstances of his/her life. One exception to this movement is that, after experiencing a crisis, a person does

not return to the foreclosed state. Therefore, the foreclosed state could not be repeated after identity moratorium. However, the person could cycle through the other three statuses. An identity is not something that is necessarily achieved once and for all. It is possible that a severe environmental shift could bring about the diffuse state, but such an occurrence is not very likely for someone who has already achieved an identity (Marcia, 1967).

Marcia's Research on Identity Development

Research regarding the adolescent identity crisis typically deals with Marcia's (1967, 1980) operationalization of Erikson's identity v. role confusion stage with the Identity Status Paradigm, which was described in detail above. In one of his studies, Marcia (1967) examined identity as related to self-esteem and authoritarianism. His reasons for choosing self-esteem and authoritarianism were that these two variables seemed very connected to the process of identity development. Self-esteem refers to the pride a person has about himself/herself. Since identity deals with a person's sense of self, it would seem that how much pride a person holds would be connected in some way to the perception of himself/herself. The other variable of authoritarianism deals with unquestioning obedience to authority. Since identity involves seeing oneself as having a distinct personality from other people, it again appears that the way a person relates to authority figures, such as one's parents, would have some connection to the formation of identity. In order to measure the relationship between these two variables and identity, it

was necessary to determine the identity status of each person in Marcia's sample consisting of college males by conducting 30-minute semi-structured interviews with each participant.

With regard to self-esteem, Marcia (1967) attempted to manipulate the participants' self-esteem by employing confederate experimenters. These confederates administered a concept-attainment task, which participants were told was indicative of intelligence and academic success. After the task, each participant was given either negative or positive feedback that was not truly connected to the person's performance on the task. The type of feedback was, actually, determined prior to testing according to an alphabetical listing of their names, so as to not have it dependent upon their performance.

The results of Marcia's (1967) study indicated that people in identity diffusion and identity foreclosure were more vulnerable to self-esteem manipulation than people in moratorium and identity achievement. According to Marcia (1967), people in the diffused and foreclosed states are more likely to have an external locus of self-definition. An external locus of self-definition means that how they define themselves depends upon what they believe to be other people's views of them. In other words, they have not yet developed a sense of self that does not depend upon others' perceptions. Another finding in the study was that participants classified as identity foreclosed were much more likely to endorse authoritarian values. With regard to this finding, Marcia (1967) said that it is in keeping with the notion that people in this identity status become their parents' alter egos.

Development of Identity Measures

As noted above, Marcia (1967) used a 30-minute semi-structured interview to determine the identity status of each participant. This interview has several limitations. For example, it has a subjective component in the line of questioning, a complex method of categorization, and a time-consuming nature. Consequently, other researchers (e.g., Adams, Shea, & Fitch, 1979; Bennion & Adams, 1986) developed self-report measures to remedy these problems, and Marcia (1967) had even suggested such alternatives be developed. Some measures take the form of questionnaires instructing respondents to answer based on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" [i.e., Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (OM-EIS; Adams, Shea, & Fitch, 1979), Extended Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status (EOM-EIS; Grotevant & Adams, 1984), EOMEIS-2 (Bennion & Adams, 1986), Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ; Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger, 1995)]. These measures are now widely used in identity development research.

Identity Development and Personality

Several studies have examined the relationship between identity development and personality. Cramer (1997, 2000) investigated this relationship in a couple of studies that are worth noting. In her 1997 study, a relationship was found to exist between defense mechanisms and identity status. It is important to note that the use of defenses is not a function of the identity status, but, rather, the personality characteristics associated with the status. In other words, the person's personality patterns lead to the use of defenses. For example, defense mechanisms can ease anxiety, and anxiety is more likely in people

who are experiencing the identity crisis than those people who are not. Consequently, it was found that people in the identity statuses where anxiety was related to crisis in some way (identity diffusion and identity moratorium) were the people most likely to use defense mechanisms. An additional finding of Cramer's (1997) study was that people in diffused and moratorium statuses had low self-esteem, while those in the other two statuses had high self-esteem. Thus, people who have made firm commitments have higher levels of self-esteem than people who have not done so.

In a later study, Cramer (2000) studied the relationship between identity formation and personality for the purposes of examining whether gender influences this relationship. She examined four personality characteristics: ego resiliency, self-monitoring, self-esteem, and openness to experience. Ego resiliency involves resourcefulness and adaptability to new circumstances. Self-monitoring refers to the way a person's surroundings affect his/her behavior. Self-esteem refers to the overall judgment people hold about themselves. Openness to experience involves receptiveness to new situations. These four characteristics were thought to encourage exploration, an important component of identity development. Thus, all four characteristics were expected to be positively associated with both moratorium and identity achievement, but negatively associated with identity diffusion and identity foreclosure.

Cramer's (2000) study demonstrated that self-monitoring and openness to experience were only positively associated with moratorium for male participants. Self-esteem and ego resiliency were found to be only positively associated with identity achievement. In addition, openness to experience was negatively related to identity

foreclosure and identity achievement. While self-esteem, ego resiliency, and self-monitoring appeared to be negatively related to identity diffusion, the presence of ego resiliency and self-monitoring was only significantly low in the case of the female participants.

Cramer (2000) concluded that self-monitoring and openness to experience promote the exploration process, while self-esteem and ego resiliency are a consequence of the exploration process. Also, males and females apparently do not utilize these personality characteristics in the same way during identity development. The two genders were more alike in what personality characteristics were present when they were in the identity statuses involving commitment (identity achievement and identity foreclosure), rather than when in the other two statuses (identity diffusion and identity moratorium). Thus, it was concluded that gender does moderate the relationship between identity and personality. Cramer (2000) suggested that gender differences exist because of females having a wider range of possibilities to consider about identity. More pressure exists for females than males in terms of being connected to others and, yet, establishing a separate identity from others. Females are, also, allowed to consider both male and female life pathways, whereas males may only choose from typical male pathways.

Kidwell, Dunham, Bacho, Pastorino, and Portes (1995) investigated Erikson's theory to determine personality patterns associated with the adolescent identity crisis. They found that ten of the twenty-three scales on the Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory (MMPI) correlated with exploration. Seven of these ten scales were positively correlated with exploration, and the other three were negatively correlated. Only one scale was

correlated with commitment, and the direction of the correlation was not reported. An exploratory factor analysis of the ten scales that correlated with exploration showed one common factor, which researchers termed the Identity Exploration Crisis (IEC) factor. The characteristics measured by this factor were determined to be the same type of characteristics that Erikson associated with the identity crisis. Those people identified as being in an identity crisis showed evidence of such characteristics as self-doubt, conflicts with authority figures (i.e., parents), reduced ego strength (i.e., the capacity to cope with stressors), and confusion. These symptoms were related to the use of ego defenses, also known as defense mechanisms. The reduction in ego strength, in particular, suggests an inability to cope with stressors, thereby encouraging the use of defenses as a way of coping. These findings confirmed Erikson's claim that exploration is equivalent to the identity crisis.

Identity Status and Identity Style

Other studies have examined variables besides the ones mentioned in the above studies in order to expand the knowledge base with regard to identity development. Dollinger and Dollinger (1997) focused on identity status as related to identity style in their study of college-age individuals. A person's identity status is his/her classification into one of the four statuses in Marcia's Identity Status Paradigm. A person's identity style is his/her way of dealing with identity issues, as well as solving problems and making decisions. Identity styles take the form of either an information-seeking style, a normative style, or a diffuse/avoidant style. The information-seeking style involves introspection and viewing one's personal identity as self-defining. In contrast, the

normative style deals with conforming to values and standards held by a reference group and/or significant others. Finally, the diffuse/avoidant style involves the use of defensive behavior to avoid conflicts.

Dollinger and Dollinger (1997) asked participants to complete autophotographic essays consisting of twelve pictures used to answer the question, "who are you?" and a verbal elaboration of how the pictures answer that question. Essays were scored on the basis of whether or not they had individuality and richness, which were defined as deep self-reflection, creativity, and abstractness. More individuality and richness were apparent in the essays for people in moratorium or identity achievement than the other two statuses. These findings indicate the individualistic essays came from people who were going through, or had already experienced, the identity crisis. It was also found that people producing essays with more individuality and richness had the information-oriented style of processing identity information. This finding is consistent with the previous finding, as the identity crisis leads to the self-scrutiny and introspection characteristic of this style.

Components of Identity

Kemp (1998) studied identity through empirical examination of the roles of exploration and commitment in psychosocial development. Psychosocial development was defined as progression through the stages of Erikson's Psychosocial Theory. Exploration occurs during a critical period of vulnerability and growth, and it involves

examining the different possible identities available to the person. Commitment results from exploration as new choices and decisions are made regarding issues facing the person.

The findings of Kemp's (1998) study involving college students supported the importance of exploration and commitment in the developmental process, particularly the identity crisis. Psychosocial development was found to be enhanced by making commitments, especially with regard to Erikson's identity v. role confusion stage. Thus, commitments to identity are necessary to a person's psychosocial development. An inverse relationship was found between exploration and commitment. As commitments increase, exploration would decrease. Overall, commitment seemed to have a stronger role than exploration. These findings indicate that commitment is more involved in the resolution of the psychosocial stages, whereas exploration occurs when the identity crisis is just beginning and is in progress.

Identity and Race/Ethnicity

Grove (1991) examined the role of race/ethnicity in the development of identity. This research was accomplished through comparing the identity development of interracial Asian/white adolescents with both Asian and white adolescents. Grove did not find any significant differences between the three groups of participants in terms of their identity status classifications. In addition, the race of the parent to whom interracial participants felt closest did not have any significant relationship to identity achievement. The importance of race in identity formation was, also, rated as significantly less important by the interracial participants when compared with the Asian participants.

The findings of this study suggest that race/ethnicity does not play a significant role in identity development. However, since it is just one study, more research must be conducted to determine the accuracy of this result. The finding that race was less important to interracial participants coincides with participants' remarks indicating that they had more freedom to choose their identity. Since they could not be easily categorized by race, then it would be less likely that people could have preconceived expectations of them based on their race. However, these participants still faced conflicts that had to be resolved, just as Asian and white participants. The difference was their periods of conflict were centered around their mixed racial status, as it was more of a struggle for them to determine how they fit into American society.

Identity and the Cultural Context

Schwartz and Montgomery (2002) examined identity formation as it relates to acculturation, as well as gender. Acculturation was described as a process of adaptation occurring when people from different cultures interact with one another, and this variable was examined by using a sample consisting of first, second, and third/subsequent generation immigrants. The researchers examined the roles of acculturation and gender with regard to two aspects of identity formation: its processes and its outcomes. The processes involve the components of identity development, such as exploration, commitment, and identity style. The outcomes of identity development are the different levels of identity status. The ideological and interpersonal domains of each identity status, as well as exploration and commitment, were considered separately along with the three identity styles for a total of 15 variables.

Schwartz and Montgomery (2002) found that, overall, gender had a greater impact on identity development than immigrant generation did. Specifically, gender was significantly related to 8 variables, which were normative style, diffuse/avoidant style, interpersonal commitment, ideological foreclosure, ideological achievement, interpersonal diffusion, interpersonal foreclosure, and interpersonal achievement. However, immigrant generation was only significantly related to 4 variables, including informational style, ideological exploration, interpersonal commitment, and interpersonal foreclosure. The researchers found that immigrant generation was more related to the identity processes examined, while gender had more influence on identity outcomes. Therefore, the complex relationships revealed by this study suggest that the impact of acculturation and gender depends upon the aspect of identity examined (i.e., identity process versus identity outcome).

Identity and Relationships with Parents

Samuolis, Layburn, and Schiaffino (2001) examined identity development with regards to the parental attachment of college students. In this study, the researchers were interested in whether or not the relationship between identity development and parental attachment would differ between male and female participants. As a way of elucidating developmental trends, identity development was considered in terms of its two components, commitment and exploration, rather than in terms of identity statuses.

Samuolis, et al. (2001) found that, regardless of the participants' gender, attachment to one's mother was positively related to attachment to one's father. In addition, no relationship existed between identity development and parental attachment

for the male participants. In contrast, female participants' identity development did appear to be influenced by parental attachment, and their attachment to their mothers was associated with commitment. The finding that females had higher commitment and exploration levels than males, further, suggests that this attachment is beneficial to the developmental process. The explanation given for the above findings is that it is the connectedness with one's parents, rather than individuation, that facilitates identity development in females. On the other hand, connectedness is not as important to the developmental process of males.

Bartle-Haring, Brucker, and Hock (2002) did research that was similar to that of Samuolis, Layburn, and Schiaffino (2001) in that it took into account the role a college student's relationship with his/her parent(s) plays in identity development. In this study, they looked at the impact of parental separation anxiety on late adolescent identity development over time. Parental separation anxiety was defined as feelings of discomfort/worry in a parent that are related to a psychological/physical separation from the child.

Anxiety was higher in the parents of first-year students than the parents of seniors when the initial data was collected. However, over time the anxiety decreased to the point where the levels of anxiety between the two sets of parents were the same. This finding suggests that the initial separation anxiety experienced when one's child goes away to college dissipates by the end of the first year. It also was found that the anxiousness of the parent was independent of the child's gender. However, the fathers' separation anxiety was positively associated with females' foreclosure scores, while it

was negatively associated with males' foreclosure scores. The explanation given for this finding was that females might interpret their fathers' anxiety as a sign of more connectedness, and they, subsequently, become less able to resolve identity issues on their own. The inability to resolve issues independently would contribute to the slowing down of their identity development. In contrast, when mothers were able to provide a secure base, it appeared that identity achievement was more likely regardless of the child's gender. Finally, overall, females had lower foreclosure scores, as well as higher achievement scores, than males during the initial data collection, but these differences disappeared over time.

Identity and Relativistic Thinking

Regeth (1997) conducted research on college students with the overall goal being to examine identity development as related to relativistic thinking. The reason for examining this relationship is that a person's identity is thought to develop as the way a person views the world shifts. Dualistic thinking involves viewing knowledge and values as absolute and seeing everything as black and white, or right and wrong. Relativistic thinking, then, involves one's ability to grasp the subjective nature of both knowledge and values, as well as the recognition of the possibility of more than one solution for a problem. Relativistic thinking causes people to begin to see their perceptions of reality as relative, and they realize that others' beliefs, as well as their own, cannot be fully trusted. This realization brings about the identity crisis within the person.

Limited evidence suggested relationships exist between each identity status and either dualistic or relativistic thinking. The evidence was limited because not all of the

statistical correlations were in agreement. The evidence tended to suggest that identity

diffusion and identity foreclosure were positively correlated with dualistic thinking, while

moratorium was positively correlated with relativistic thinking. Thus, someone in

identity diffusion would be more likely to have dualistic thinking, while a person in

moratorium is more likely to have relativistic thinking. The findings with regard to

identity achievement suggested that people in this status might actually shift back to

dualistic thinking, but, again, the evidence for this finding is limited. If such a shift does

occur, it would mean that, upon achieving an identity, the person's way of thinking

becomes dualistic because the person no longer questions his/her positions, as firm

commitments have recently been made.

In studying the relationship between relativistic thinking and identity, Regeth

(1997) also looked at the relationships between identity and other variables, including

year in college and gender. No significant correlations were found to exist with year in

school. A problem with this finding, though, is that most of the people in the sample

were freshmen. Consequently, it was not possible to adequately examine the relationship

between identity and year in school.

Regeth's (1997) findings yielded mixed results about gender. Her investigation of

identity development, as it relates to relativistic thinking, involved three different phases.

Consequently, she was able to examine the role played by gender on separate occasions.

However, the results were inconsistent. For example, the results of one phase of

Regeth's (1997) study did not show any gender difference for moratorium, but more

males than females were in identity diffusion or identity foreclosure, while more females were in identity achievement. In contrast, a subsequent phase of the study indicated more males were in identity foreclosure, and more females were in moratorium. Thus, the results were different depending on the phase of the study, so there was no clear indication of what role, if any, gender plays in identity development.

Identity Foreclosure and the False Self

The theoretical article by Beatman (1996) involved an attempt to provide an intrapsychic framework for explaining identity development. In order to accomplish this goal, he examined the identity status of foreclosure as it relates to the false self. The false self is a notion formulated by Winnicott (1960, 1965) in his explanation of an infant's development of self. Beatman described it as, "a reactive process that functions to protect the true self by complying with environmental demands" (1996, p. 2). Furthermore, Beatman (1996) characterized the true self as the source of internal spontaneous experiences and needs. He theorized that identity foreclosure was really a manifestation of the false self in adolescence.

In explaining how identity foreclosure is a manifestation of the false self, Beatman stated, "the achievement of identity is accomplished by the adolescent's abandonment of infantile objects as well as the ability to see parents as individuals in their own right" (1996, p. 70). He, then, went on to discuss the importance of an individual separating from his/her parents and becoming autonomous in order to be able to develop an identity. Identity foreclosure represents an individual's inability to separate from his/her parents. One of Beatman's (1996) suggestions for future research was that

the differential development of identity for those people who do move out of their

family's home and those people who do not should be investigated.

Statement of the Problem

Findings by Regeth (1997) indicate that year in school (i.e., freshman, etc.) is not associated with identity development. However, Regeth's (1997) study had a sample with a restricted range. Since this variable was possibly not adequately assessed in that study, this variable is worthy of further research. In addition, the information provided earlier from Wright (1982) suggests that the further a person proceeds through college, the more likely he/she is to know the type of career he/she desires to have. Such decisions encourage identity development. Therefore, a person's year in college appears to be logically related to identity development. This study reassessed the influence of educational progression by attempting to have a sample consisting of an adequate number of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, to resolve the restricted range problem in Regeth's (1997) study.

Beatman (1996) suggested that research should investigate the identity crisis with regard to living circumstances, specifically whether or not a person still lives with his/her parents. The reason for this suggestion is that it seems plausible that it would be difficult to fully form one's identity until one lives independently from the person(s) responsible for raising him/her. The thoughts of Lewis (2000) that were included in the discussion of Erikson's theory echo this suggestion. Consequently, the role of living circumstances was assessed in this study.

The findings of various researchers (Bartle-Haring, Brucker, & Hock, 2002;

Cramer, 2000; Regeth, 1997; Samuolis, Layburn, & Schiaffino, 2001; Schwartz &

Montgomery, 2002) concerning the role of gender in identity development are mixed.

Cramer (2000) indicated that gender moderates the relationship between personality and

identity, and, specifically, gender differences were more evident in terms of the

personality characteristics utilized during identity diffusion and identity moratorium, as

opposed to identity foreclosure and identity achievement. Samuolis, et al. (2001) found

that the identity development of females was aided by connectedness/attachment,

particularly to their parents, whereas no such benefit was found for males. In contrast,

Bartle-Haring, et al. (2002) suggested that connectedness with one's father hindered

identity development only in females, but the viewing of the mother as a secure base

could encourage identity achievement regardless of the child's gender. In addition,

although females had both lower foreclosure scores and higher achievement scores than

males during the initial data collection, these differences disappeared over time.

Schwartz and Montgomery (2002) found that gender had the most effect on identity when

considering the identity status of the person, as opposed to the processes through which

identity development occurs. The three phases of the study by Regeth (1997) lacked

agreement about what gender differences existed regarding identity development.

As a result of these varying findings from the above studies, it was important to

assess the influence of gender in identity development in this study, as the role it plays

cannot be simply assumed from past research. Naturally, the mere assessment of this

variable in this one study will not settle the issue of this variable's role in identity

development. However, it is possible to contribute additional evidence in support of some prior research finding(s), so as to help in generating mounting evidence regarding its role.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the identity development (i.e., identity status—diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, achievement) of college students is affected by educational progression, living circumstances, and gender. "Educational progression" is operationally defined as the participants' class standing (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior). "Living circumstances" is operationally defined as whether or not the participants' still live with their parents (or the person(s) who raised them). "Gender" is operationally defined as whether the participants are male or female.

The dependent variable of "late adolescent identity development" is operationally defined as the participants' identity status (identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, identity moratorium, identity achievement). The identity status is measured by the Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status (EOMEIS-2; Bennion & Adams, 1986), which is described in the "Instruments" section. This design is a between-participants design in that a different group makes up each level of variation of the independent variables.

Hypothesis 1. Progression through college will result in the development of a person's identity. Educational progression results in a clearer idea of career interests and what he/she wants to do in life. Students who are freshmen and sophomores will be more likely to be in either identity diffusion or identity foreclosure, whereas juniors and seniors will be more likely to be in either moratorium or identity achievement.

Hypothesis 2. Females' connectedness to their parents aids identity development, and connectedness is greater for females living at home. Since connectedness does not have the same impact for males, their identity development might be encouraged by independence from their parents. Consequently, it is predicted that females living with their parents will have a more developed identity than females who live away from home. In addition, males will have a more developed identity if they have moved away from home than males who still live at home.

Method

Participants

Participants were 58 male and 120 female students from a public university in Montgomery, Alabama. The recruitment of these participants was done through their classes. Each participant read and signed a consent form (Appendix B). The number of participants from each class standing were as follows: 73 freshmen, 43 sophomores, 30 juniors, and 32 seniors. They were between the ages of 18 and 23, which is approximately the late adolescent period defined by the literature (Beatman, 1996). The mean ages of the freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors participating in this study were 19, 20, 21, and 22, respectively. With regard to living circumstances, 59% of the sample still lived at home, while 41% of participants lived away from home.

Instruments

Background Information Questionnaire. This questionnaire (see Appendix C) was used to collect background data on each participant. This data was used to identify participants' levels on the independent variables.

Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status (EOMEIS-2; Bennion & Adams, 1986). The EOMEIS-2 is a 64-item questionnaire with responses made on a six point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (see Appendix D). This measure contains subscales for each of Marcia's four identity statuses with the ideological and interpersonal domains of each status considered as

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separate subscales. The ideological domain includes the areas of occupation, politics, religion, and philosophy. The interpersonal domain includes the areas of sex roles, recreation, friendship, and dating. Two items from each of these eight areas, for a total of 16 items, represent each identity status.

Validity is supported by evidence of agreement with interviews and other tests related to identifying identity status (Bennion & Adams, 1986). The test-retest reliability of the subscales ranges from .59 to .89 during a four-week period (Grotevant & Adams, 1984). The Cronbach alphas for the identity status subscales in this study were .74 for diffusion, .87 for foreclosure, .80 for moratorium, and .73 for achievement.

Procedure

Participants were presented with questionnaire packets in a group setting at either the beginning or end of a class period. Each packet included: an informed consent form, a Background Information Questionnaire, and an Extended Version of Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status (EOMEIS-2). After explaining the consent information, instructions were reviewed, and any questions were answered before participants were asked to complete the packets. Participants also were told to complete the material included in the packets in the same order as listed above. While it was estimated that it would take twenty to thirty minutes for the students to complete the packet, most students completed it in fifteen minutes. The completed packets were handed directly to the researcher, who checked for completeness of the packets.

Results

The current study included three independent variables all of which were between-participants variables: 1) educational progression (class standing: freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), 2) living circumstances (living with parents or living apart from parents), and 3) gender (male or female). (Note: The dependent variables of the four identity statuses were treated as continuous variables in the statistical analyses below.)

For hypothesis one, predicting that freshmen and sophomores would tend to be in either diffusion or foreclosure and juniors and seniors would tend to be in either moratorium or achievement, a one-way MANOVA was performed with diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement as the dependent variables. For hypothesis two, investigating identity status as a function of gender and living circumstances, a 2(Gender) X 2(Living Circumstances) MANOVA was conducted with diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement as the dependent variables. Follow-up tests to the statistically significant interaction were conducted as tests for simple effects followed by Newman-Keuls post hoc tests ($p < .05$) to determine sources of the differences.

Hypothesis One: Identity Status as a Function of Class Standing

Results partially support hypothesis one, which predicted that freshmen and sophomores would tend to be in either diffusion or foreclosure and juniors and seniors would tend to be in either moratorium or achievement. In order to clearly analyze the

data for this hypothesis, the freshmen and sophomores were grouped together, and the juniors and seniors were grouped together. Analysis revealed significant differences only in the case of identity foreclosure, Wilk's Lambda = .917, F (1, 176) = 5.67, $p < .05$. The freshman/sophomore group (M=39.30, SD=11.93) was more likely to be in identity foreclosure than the junior/senior group (M=34.92, SD=11.27). (Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and significance levels for each identity status.)

Table 1: One-way MANOVA results for class standing differences in identity status

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Sig. of F
Identity Diffusion:				.059
Freshman/Sophomore	116	42.01	(10.04)	
Junior/Senior	62	39.10	(9.11)	
Identity Foreclosure:				.018 *
Freshman/Sophomore	116	39.30	(11.93)	
Junior/Senior	62	34.92	(11.27)	
Identity Moratorium:				.395
Freshman/Sophomore	116	47.86	(10.88)	
Junior/Senior	62	46.40	(10.84)	
Identity Achievement:				.127
Freshman/Sophomore	116	68.30	(9.33)	
Junior/Senior	62	66.03	(9.56)	

* $p < .05$

Hypothesis Two: Identity Status as a Function of Gender and Living Circumstances

Results partially support the second hypothesis, which predicted that identity status would vary as a function of gender and living circumstances. Specifically, it was predicted that females living at home would be further along in identity development than females not living at home, while the opposite was predicted for males. Analysis

revealed a statistically significant Gender X Living Circumstances interaction only in the case of identity achievement, Wilk's Lambda = .929, F (1, 174) = 7.99, $p < .01$. (Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and significance levels for each identity status.) Further analysis did not reveal any significant main effects for any of the four statuses. Results from the Newman-Keuls test indicated that males who do not live at home (M=73.19, SD=10.36) were more likely than males who live at home (M=66.73, SD=8.79) to have achieved an identity, F (1, 174) = 5.79, $p = .017$. In addition, males not living at home (M=73.19, SD=10.36) were more likely to have achieved an identity than females not living at home (M=65.54, SD=9.77), F (1, 174) = 9.07, $p = .003$.

Table 2: 2(Gender) X 2(Living Circumstances) MANOVA results

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Sig. of F
Identity Diffusion:				.202
Males/Living at Home	37	42.32	(11.32)	
Males/Not Living at Home	21	38.57	(11.17)	
Females/Living at Home	68	40.84	(9.42)	
Females/Not Living at Home	52	41.23	(8.56)	
Identity Foreclosure:				.076
Males/Living at Home	37	36.08	(10.72)	
Males/Not Living at Home	21	40.24	(13.03)	
Females/Living at Home	68	39.09	(12.50)	
Females/Not Living at Home	52	36.27	(11.21)	
Identity Moratorium:				.664
Males/Living at Home	37	47.16	(9.71)	
Males/Not Living at Home	21	46.76	(12.93)	
Females/Living at Home	68	48.37	(11.08)	
Females/Not Living at Home	52	47.35	(10.86)	
Identity Achievement:				.005 *
Males/Living at Home	37	66.73	(8.79)	
Males/Not Living at Home	21	73.19	(10.36)	
Females/Living at Home	68	67.69	(8.72)	
Females/Not Living at Home	52	65.54	(9.77)	

* $p < .01$

Discussion

The current study investigated the roles of educational progression, living circumstances, and gender on identity development during late adolescence.

As stated in hypothesis one, it was predicted that freshmen and sophomores would be in diffusion or foreclosure, while juniors and seniors would be in moratorium or achievement. Educational progression was considered for two reasons. First, Wright (1982) suggested that as a person proceeds through college, he/she has to make decisions, such as what career to pursue, and these types of decisions encourage identity development. Second, a study by Regeth (1997) indicated that the restricted range of her sample (i.e., mostly freshmen) could have interfered with her results, thereby leading to her finding that year in school is not associated with identity development.

Analysis revealed only the part of the hypothesis dealing with freshmen and sophomores had any support from the data. Specifically, freshmen and sophomores were more likely to be in identity foreclosure than were juniors and seniors. This finding of class standing having partial influence on identity development provides some support for Wright's (1982) suggestion that the progression through college facilitates identity development. A possible reason why freshmen and sophomores would be more likely to be in identity foreclosure compared to juniors and seniors is that early on in their college career they have not yet begun to question the commitments chosen for them by others. In contrast, juniors and seniors likely have had more exposure to various beliefs and

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ideas, so they might be less inclined to simply accept what someone, such as a parent, wants for them. (Even though the sample came from a school that has a large number of nontraditional students, the mean ages for each class standing listed earlier indicate that the sample largely consists of traditional students. Therefore, this explanation should be applicable to this sample.)

In terms of identity diffusion, lack of support for class standing's influence on this identity status might be explained by the possibility that, at any point during college, a person may not have any commitments and not be searching for any. Lack of support for identity moratorium could be explained by people in all class standings having some pressure to make such decisions as in what to major based on their desired career, as well as other important academic and/or social decisions. Therefore, it is possible for all of them to be experiencing the identity crisis. Furthermore, lack of support for identity achievement could mean that, just as with identity moratorium, personally chosen goals and beliefs can be made, thereby resolving the identity crisis.

As stated in hypothesis two, it was predicted that females living at home would have a more developed identity than females living away from home, while the opposite was predicted for males. This interaction was considered for three reasons. First, with regard to living circumstances, both Beatman (1996) and Lewis (2000) suggested that it would be difficult to fully form one's identity until one lives independently from the person(s) responsible for raising him/her. Second, Cramer (2000) demonstrated that gender sometimes moderates the relationships between other variables and identity, and her findings dealt with the variable of personality, in particular. Third, Samuolis,

Layburn, & Schiaffino (2001) found that only the identity development of females was aided by connectedness to their parents, so connectedness did not impact identity development for males. Therefore, since a female may be more connected to her parents if she lived at home, living at home might facilitate her identity development. Also, since males' identity development is thought to be independent of such connectedness, then living away from home might encourage identity development in males.

Analysis revealed an interaction between gender and living circumstances existed only in the case of identity achievement. Specifically, males not living at home were more likely to have achieved an identity than males living at home. This finding provides some support for the beliefs of Beatman (1996) and Lewis (2000) that living away from home facilitates identity development, as well as for the finding of Samuolis, Layburn, & Schiaffino (2001) that connectedness is not important to males' identity development. A possible reason for the finding that males living away from home are more likely to achieve an identity than males living at home is that the independence associated with living apart from one's parents is what helps males actually to achieve an identity. Living away from home allows them to determine their beliefs and goals separate from what their parents want for them.

Another finding was that males not living at home were also more likely to have achieved an identity than females not living at home. Therefore, while the prediction about females was not supported by the data, the finding of a difference between males and females living away from home still suggests that living away from home encourages identity development more for males than for females. With regard to the difference

between the genders, a possible explanation is that males develop their identity at a faster pace when living away from home than females do when living away from home. This explanation may also be related to independence issues. When a female moves away from home, she might have more contact, as well as social/financial support, from her parents than would a male. Society makes it easier and safer for a male to be on his own than for a female to be on her own. Consequently, her life might not be as separate from her parents as a male's life would be.

Lack of support for the prediction that females living at home would be further along in identity development than females not living at home seems to suggest that connectedness is not important to the identity development of females. However, as noted above, it appears that living away from home encourages identity development more for males than females. The explanation offered above included the argument that females may have more contact/support from their parents after moving away from home than do males. If females are going to be connected to the parents whether they live at home or not, then, as the analysis indicates, there would be no difference in females' identity development related to living circumstances.

Lack of support for an interaction in the statuses of identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, and identity moratorium suggests that a person's living circumstances and gender do not impact every stage of one's identity development. Whether or not a male or female still lives with his/her parents does not have any bearing on whether they accept others' goals for them, enter an identity crisis, etc. Living circumstances and

gender only interact to influence identity development in terms of the actual achievement of an identity resulting from the resolution of the identity crisis.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was that the number of juniors and seniors included in the sample was not as large as that of freshmen and sophomores. Auburn University Montgomery's Psychology department has many nontraditional students. "Nontraditional" in this case means, for example, that a freshman is not necessarily going to be 18 or 19 years old, which is the traditional age of a freshman. Large numbers of students in all class standings at AUM are at least in their late twenties, if not their 30's, 40's, or 50's. Given that this study was assessing identity development in late adolescence, an age restriction was imposed. Most nontraditional students were excluded from this study because of their being outside the age range. As a result, it was difficult to find juniors and seniors who were no older than age 22 (or 23 at the oldest). Consequently, any statistics involving the variable of educational progression as defined by class standing were limited by the small sample size, likely reducing statistical power.

Another limitation involved the representation of gender in the sample. As noted above, 67% of the sample was female and 33% was male. However, it was not possible to have a more balanced sample of the genders because a much larger number of females take the classes that were used in the sample. Consequently, the lack of balance between the genders may have hindered certain assessments being made in this study, as statistical power may have been reduced.

One other possible limitation involves the EOMEIS-2 (Bennion & Adams, 1986).

Although Bennion and Adams tried to eliminate the influence of socially desirable

response patterns when constructing this questionnaire, the possibility still exists that the

participants responded in socially desirable ways that affected the test results. For

example, if participants interpreted "lifestyle" as referring to sexuality, rather than a

general way of living, they may have answered the questions containing this concept in a

socially desirable way. However, a different interpretation of this concept could have led

to different answer patterns with regard to such items.

Direction for Future Research

It is suggested that more data be collected from undergraduate students,

particularly juniors and seniors, who are within the age range of 18 to 23, so that the

variables involved in this study may be reassessed. Thus, it could be determined whether

or not the limitations in the sample size of this study impacted the results. A

recommendation is also made that the EOMEIS-2 (Bennion & Adams, 1986) be revised

to make the test items clearer for respondents, as well as to reassess whether or not

socially desirable answer patterns are affecting test results.

In addition, this study could be extended to graduate students and college

graduates. It was mentioned already that identity formation occurs during late

adolescence, but certain factors may exist that slow down identity development. Further

research could examine if identity development is lengthened by continuation of

schooling, in contrast with completion of schooling. Also, the impact of patterns of work

and school on identity development could be examined. For example, would someone

who works full-time and attends school part-time achieve an identity sooner than a person who attends school full-time and works part-time?

Living circumstances and educational progression can be studied in a different manner than that of the current study. Another study could involve how identity develops by comparing the differences between those who did not go to college and those who did, as related to whether or not they still live with their parents. It would also be beneficial to further examine the role of living circumstances by examining whether the divorce of one's parents, and the subsequent single parent household, has any effect on identity development.

Other variables that were not examined here at all should also be researched to aid our quest for understanding the developmental process of identity. Determining whether racial differences exist in identity development would require a large enough subsection of various races. It would also be important to determine how one's religion contributes to the process.

Conclusion

We expected that a person's progression through college would facilitate his/her identity development. It was also thought that living away from home would result in a more developed identity for males than would continuing to live at home. In addition, it appeared that females living at home would have a more developed identity than females living away from home. While we predicted that these variables would play such roles, the influence of these variables on identity development was only partially supported by the data. Only limited support was provided by the data in the case of educational

progression, suggesting that freshmen and sophomores are more likely to be in identity foreclosure than are juniors and seniors. It was also found that the relationship between living circumstances and identity status was moderated to a certain extent by gender. In terms of the actual achievement of an identity, males living away from home were more likely to do so than males living at home. Males living away from home were also more likely to achieve an identity than females living away from home.

This study has a few implications. First, freshmen and sophomores are less likely to question commitments chosen for them by authority figures than are juniors and seniors. Second, living circumstances and gender only influence identity in terms of its actual achievement, as opposed to playing roles in the various stages of development. Third, males achieve their identity faster when living away from home than females, which is likely the result of males being more independent from their parents than females.

It is interesting to note that the findings of significant effects in this study dealt only with identity foreclosure and identity achievement. These two statuses are the ones involving commitment to goals/values. The two statuses where such commitments were absent were not significantly related to any of the three independent variables based on the way they were examined in this study. Consequently, it is possible that these variables deal more with the commitment aspect of identity development than the exploration aspect.

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Appendix A

Characteristics of Identity Status

Identity Status	Crisis/Exploration	Commitment to Beliefs/Goals
Diffusion	Absent (may have been present at some time)	Absent
Foreclosed	Absent	Present
Moratorium	Present (in crisis)	Absent
Achieved	Present (resolved)	Present

(Cramer, 1997)

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Appendix B
INFORMED CONSENT
FOR "The Roles of Educational Progression, Living Circumstances, and Gender
in Late Adolescent Identity Development"
Auburn University Montgomery
Psychology Department

You are invited to participate in a study of identity development in college students. 'Identity development' involves the growth of a person's distinct, persisting personality. We hope to learn how such development is related to educational progression, living circumstances, and gender. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a college student at AUM.

If you decide to participate, you will be given two questionnaires to complete. No discomforts, inconveniences, or risks are expected to result from completion of these questionnaires. It will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete them. Remember that this study is separate from your class and that there are no right or wrong answers. Through information gathered in this study, it is hoped that we will better understand the roles played by educational progression, living circumstances, and gender in late adolescent identity development. Your contribution to the study is valued, important, and relevant in the discovery of knowledge. Professors and other researchers will benefit from the knowledge gained from this study by using it to better understand identity development in college students. We cannot promise you that you will receive any or all of these benefits.

All precautions will be taken in order to maintain the safety and confidentiality of the participants. Any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. This informed consent form will be filed separately from your completed questionnaires, in order to ensure confidentiality.

You may or may not receive extra credit for participating in this study. Your professor can tell you whether you will receive extra credit for your participation. If applicable, the amount of extra credit that you may receive will be determined by the professor of the class in which you are completing the questionnaires for this study.

Your decision concerning whether to participate will not prejudice your future relations with Auburn University Montgomery. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you decide later to withdraw from the study, you may also withdraw any information that has been collected about you. If you have questions, I expect you to ask me. If you have additional questions later, I will be happy to answer them. You may contact Melody Griffin (AUM graduate student) by calling the AUM Psychology Department at 244-3306, and the supervisor of this study, Dr. Steve DePaola, may be contacted by calling 244-3508. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION ABOUT WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE, HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

_____   _____
Date   Time   Respondent's Signature

_____   _____
Witness   Print Respondent's Name

_____

_____
Investigator's Signature

Appendix C

<u>Background Information Questionnaire</u>
Last four digits of social security number _____
Please answer the following questions about yourself. Place a checkmark next to your answers for the items that have answer choices listed. For the other items requiring a written response, **print** your answers in the blanks provided.

Age: ___18 ___19 ___20 ___21 ___22

Year in school: ___Freshman ___Sophomore ___Junior ___Senior

Gender: ___Male ___Female

Marital Status: ___Single ___Married ___Divorced ___Widowed
Do you have any children? ___Yes ___No
     If so, how many? _____

What is your college major? _____
     How many times have you changed your major? _____
     Do you think you will change to another major? ___Yes ___No

Living Circumstances:
___I still live with my parents or the person(s) who raised me.
     If the person(s) who raised you is/are not your parent(s), please describe your relationship to the person(s).

_____

___I live apart from my parents or the person(s) who raised me.
     If you do live apart from them, how long has it been since you lived with them?

_____

     If the person(s) who raised you is/are not your parent(s), please describe your relationship to the person(s).

_____

Ethnic Background:
___African-American   ___Caucasian/White
___Asian/Pacific Islander   ___Mexican-American, Hispanic, Latino/a
___Native American   ___Other (Please specify): _____

Religious Status:
___Christian   ___Jewish
___Muslim   ___Buddhist
___Atheist   ___Other (Please specify): _____

Appendix D

<u>Extended Version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOMEIS-2)</u>

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 answer sheet by choosing one of the following responses. **Do not write on the questionnaire itself.**

A = strongly agree
B = moderately agree
C = agree
D = disagree
E = moderately disagree
F = strongly disagree

1. I haven't chosen the occupation I really want to get into, and I'm just working at what 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 are 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 work 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's 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 "life style", but haven't really 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 leisure outlets to identify one I can truly enjoy.
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.

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18. A person's faith is unique to each individual. I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.
19. I've never really seriously considered men's and women's roles in marriage. It just doesn't seem to concern me.
20. After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "life style" 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 take 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 not really interested in finding the right job, any job will do. I just seem to flow with what is available.
26. I'm not 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 have come right for 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 decided 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 decided a long time ago what I should go into 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 parents' views on life are good enough for me. I don't need anything else.
45. I've had 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 as 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 hope of finding one or more I can really enjoy for some time to come.
55. I've dated different types of people and 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 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 life style 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.