

## **DIFFUSION STATUS AND IDENTITY ACHIEVED STATUS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

**Karamjit Kaur**

Principal (pm Shree Sen sec school sanour (Patiala)

**Gaurvi Sharma**

English mistress

---

### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the identity achieved and diffusion status among secondary school students with respect to academic achievement and gender. Using a descriptive research design, data was collected from 500 Grade +1 students (250 boys and 250 girls) from five randomly selected secondary schools in Punjab. The Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status–2 (EOMEIS-2) by Bennion and Adams (1986) was employed to assess ego identity. Academic achievement was categorized into high and low based on the first (Q1) and third (Q3) quartiles from school records, with 60 students in each of the four resulting groups (N = 240). A two-way ANOVA revealed a significant gender difference in identity achieved status, with high achievers scoring higher than low achievers—especially among girls. Notably, girls demonstrated greater identity achievement than boys when academic achievement was low. Boys demonstrated significant number in diffusion status of identity in comparison to girls. The findings highlight a nuanced pattern of identity formation among adolescents, moderated by both gender and academic performance.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by profound social and psychological changes. It is a time when individuals reassess their roles, values, and aspirations in the context of broader social expectations. Waterman (1984) defines identity as a clearly articulated self-concept grounded in goals and beliefs, while Erikson (1968) emphasized identity formation as vital to psychological well-being.

Marcia (1966, 1980) operationalized Erikson's theory through a framework of four identity statuses: achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion—based on levels of exploration and commitment. Identity achievement, the most mature status, reflects both deep exploration and strong commitment.

Gender differences in identity development have been a focal point of research. Erikson (1968) suggested that women focus more on interpersonal aspects of identity, while men emphasize occupational roles. Research supports this, indicating that adolescent girls tend to be more advanced in identity achievement than boys (Meeus et al., 2010; Klimstra et al., 2010). Girls typically show greater maturity and optimism regarding their futures and are less likely to reconsider previously made commitments.

Other studies affirm that adolescents with high identity achievement are more independent, creative, and rational (Krettenour, 2005), and girls are generally found to score higher than boys on identity achievement scales (Yunus & Kamal, 2010). These observations suggest a need to explore how academic achievement and gender interact in shaping identity development.

## METHOD

Descriptive method of study was followed.

### Sample

The sample consisted of 500 students (250 girls and 250 boys) of +1 grade was selected from five randomly selected secondary schools.

### Tool

Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status – 2 (EOMEIS – 2 Bennion and Adams, 1986) has been used to assess identity formation. It consisted of 64 items on two domains of an individual. One is ideological which includes areas such as religion, politics, philosophical life style and occupation, whereas the interpersonal domain includes areas that cover friendship, sex roles, dating and recreation. The reliability coefficient of the scale, showed coefficients of correlation ranging from 0.72 to 0.87 specifically in Indian context.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

2x2 factorial design was formed with two levels of achievement i.e. low and high based on  $Q_1$  and  $Q_3$  cut points across gender groups of secondary school students (Boys and girls). The identity achievement scores of secondary school students on EOMEIS- 2 was taken up as dependent variable.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To study diffusion and identity achieved status of identity formation among secondary school students in terms of gender.
2. To study diffusion and identity achieved status of identity formation among secondary school students in terms of academic achievement.

## HYPOTHESES

There will be significant gender difference in identity achieved status and diffusion status of identity formation of secondary school students across the levels of achievement.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The means and SDs of identity achieved status scores of secondary school students in academic achievement x gender (2x2) factorial design are given in table I.

**Table I: Means and SDs of Identity Achieved Status in Academic Achievement x Gender Factorial Design**

Achievement		Gender		Total
		Boys	Girls	
High	Mean	53.15	51.30	52.23
	SD	13.22	12.47	12.85
Low	Mean	44.98	55.26	50.12
	SD	13.74	11.93	13.86
Total	Mean	49.07	53.28	51.17
	SD	13.94	12.58	13.56

The mean identity achieved score of secondary school students vary from 44.98 (low achiever girls) to 55.26 (high achiever girls). In order to find out significance of mean difference in identity achieved status of secondary school students across achievement and gender, analysis of variance was applied and the summary of analysis of variance is provided in table II.

**Table II: Summary of ANOVA (2x2 Factorial Design)**

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F-value
Gender	1101.46	1	1101.46	5.99*
Achievement	257.33	1	257.33	1.40
Gender x Achievement	1471.17	1	1471.17	8.02**
Error	43349.57	236	183.87	
Total		239		

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$

It may be seen from table II that F-value for the main effect of gender on identity achieved status of secondary school students came out to be 5.99, significant at 0.05 level. The F-value for the main effect of academic achievement, 1.40 was not significant at 0.05 level. The F-value for interaction effect of achievement and gender came out to be 8.02 which is significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that significant gender difference in identity formation among secondary students is dependent upon their achievement.

The mean scores revealed that secondary school girls have significantly higher identity achieved than boys at low level of achievement (55.26 vs. 44.98;  $t = 4.37$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) whereas at high level of achievement the difference in identity achieved favours boys though not significantly (53.15 vs 51.30;  $t = 0.79$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, the hypothesis, “*There will be significant gender difference in identity achieved of secondary school students across level of achievement*” was partially accepted. Thus it may be concluded that significant gender difference in identity achieved status is true only for high achiever secondary school students.

It seems that high achiever girl students show better exploration and commitment than high achiever boys, and the difference favours boys when achievement level is low. In other words, better achievement facilitates identity formation more markedly among adolescent girls only. These results seem to be in line with researcher.

## IMPLICATIONS

The school programmes need to focus on such activities - both in classroom and outside in school - that facilitate goal setting in academic and career pursuits along with inclination to explore ways to achieve these goals. The counselling session in personality development need to focus on the skill enhancement to enable the young generation to be best fit in new social order characterized by an ever accelerating rate of socio-economic and technological changes coupled with media across creating a new order in human life.

## REFERENCES

1. Albarello, F., Crocetti, E., & Rubini, M. (2017). I and us: A longitudinal study on the interplay of personal and social identity in adolescence. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, doi: 10.1007/s10964-017-0791-4.
2. Dev, S., & Jyotsana (2016). Identity formation: Role of social support and self esteem among Indian adolescents. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(2), 114-124.
3. Erikson. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Yorton.
4. Grotevart, H. D. (1986). Assessment of identity development: Current issues and future directions. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 1, 175-182.

5. Kessels, U., Heyder, A., Latsch, M., & Hannover, B. (2014). How gender differences in academic engagement relate to students' gender identity. *Educational Research*, 56(2), 220-229.
6. Klimstra, T. A., Hale, W. W., Raaijmakers, Q. A. W., Branje, S. J. T., & Meeus, W. (2010). Identity formation in adolescence: Change or stability?. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 39, 150-162.
7. Klimstra, T. A., Hale, W. W., Raaijmakers, Q. A. W., Branje, S. J. T., & Meeus, W. H. J. (2010). Identity formation in adolescence: Change or stability?. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39, 150-162.
8. Kretienour. (2005). The role of epistemic cognition in adolescent identity formation: Further evidence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 34, 185-198.
9. Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3, 551-558.
10. Marcia, J. E. (1968). Ego-identity status: Relationship to change in self-esteem, general maladjustment and authoritarianism. *Journal of Personality*, 35(1), 119-193.
11. Marcia, J. E. (1980). *Identity in adolescence: Handbook of adolescence*. New York: Psychology.
12. Meeus, W. H. J., Van De Schoot, R., Keijsers, L., Schwarz, S. J., & Branje, S. (2010). On the progression and stability of adolescent identity formation: A five wave longitudinal study in early-to-middle and middle to late adolescence. *Child Development*, 81, 1565-1581.
13. Meeus, W., Schoot, R. V. D., Keijsers, L., & Schwartz, S. J. (2010). On the progression and stability of adolescent identity formation: A five-wave longitudinal study in early-to-middle and middle-to-late adolescence. *Child Development*, 81(5), 1565-1581.
14. Sandhu, D. (2004). Contributions of family environment and identity formation towards adolescents alienation. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 1-20.
15. Streittmatter, J. L. (2000). Effect of gender and family status on ego-identity development among early adolescent. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 7, 179-189.
16. Yunus, F. W., & Kamal, A. A. (2010). Gender differences on the identity status of the Malaysian preparatory students. *Canadian Social Science*, 6(2), 145-151.
17. Zukauskienė, R., Truskauskaitė-Kuneviciene, I., Kaniusonyte, G., & Crocetti, E. (2017). How do Lithuanian adolescents address identity questions?: A four-wave longitudinal study on change and stability in identity styles. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 1-20.