

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

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### Abstract

*The present study is an attempt to look into the identity achieved status of identity formation among secondary school students in terms of gender and academic achievement. Descriptive method of research was followed by collecting data from a sample of 480, grade +1 students (240 male and 240 female) from ten randomly selected secondary schools of Punjab with the help of Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status-2 (Bennion and Adams, 1986). Further the percentage academic achievement was taken from school record to identify high and low achievement groups of students on the basis of  $Q_1$  and  $Q_3$  cut points. Thus 2-way ANOVA with 60 students in each cell ( $N= 240$ ) was applied. The results showed that there was significant mean difference in identity achieved status of secondary school students as high achievers exhibited significantly better than low achievers, through more markedly among girls. In other words, secondary school girls showed higher identity achieved status than boys when achievement was low. The results are discussed in the light of differential pattern of identity achieved status of secondary school students across gender and level of academic achievement.*

**Key Words:** Identity Achieved Status, School Students and Academic Achievement.

### Introduction

Adolescence is a period of extreme turmoil in which the process of reconstructing social relationships for exploring their place in society and opting important choices for their future lives. As Waterman (1984) explained identity as a intelligibly delineated self concept comprising the goals and beliefs, Marcia defined that adequate identity formation is a cornerstone of sound psychological health. According to Ryan

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and Deci (2003) "finding oneself within a social world has become the most difficult and salient of life's challenges." This process is characterized by continuous changes during adolescence period in the amount of exploration and strength of commitments (Marcia, 1966 and Erikson, 1968).

Erikson's construct of identity status paradigm was established empirically with the efforts of Marcia (1966, 1980). Marcia further explained to explore a mature identity one has to have experienced crisis and has to become committed to that ideology. To achieve the mature identity two components; one is courses and other is commitment, are the most salient features in this process. Crisis leads to the adolescents' period of engagement in opting among meaningful alternatives commitment leads to the degree of personal investment the individual exhibits (Ornord, 2000). Under the name of these two components in mind, Marcia established four basic identity statuses based on the amount of exploration and commitment the adolescent is experiencing or has experienced: Identity achieved, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion. Identity and academic achievement in a study on early adolescents found identity status to have a positive relationship with academic achievement foreclosure and diffusion showing negative relationship along with the finding that identity and achievement have shown a positive relationship during adolescence (Streitmatter, 2015). It is assumed about gender differences in identity formation from Erik Erikson theory of identity that interpersonal issues are the domain of female identity whereas occupational choice is the domain of male identity formation (Erikson, 1968). Interpersonal relationship i.e. friendship and dating have been considered as important areas of identity formation (Grotvant et al., 1982). They have an androgynous gender role attitude (Kim, 1992). In line with the same view considerable gender differences in patterns of identity formation, as those females who were more likely to be an achieved status are further ahead of males, when overall identity is measured (Meeus et al., 2010). In a review of studies, examining identity status change in relation to gender, further adds throughout adolescence, girls displayed lower level of reconsideration when compared to boys; whereas girls are more mature with regard to identity formation in early adolescence period (Klimstra et al., 2010). Besides these studies, outcomes of longitudinal studies have also supported the view that girls seem to be ahead of boys in identity achieved status in early to middle adolescence period while the boys catching up in middle to late adolescence period (Meeus et al., 2010). In line with the same light of results Crocetti et al. (2017) exhibited that substantial gender difference in multiple indices of change and stability of identity achieved status during early and late adolescent period. While girls are more certain towards life choices, being fewer scorers on identity achieved status of identity formation (Streitmatter, 2000). While Krettenour, (2005) showed that adolescents who have high scores on identity achieved status possess high trait of independence; apart from this they found to be more creative as well as rational than the other identity statuses. In line with these girls have been found to be high on

identity achieved status in comparison to boys (Yunus and Kamal, 2010). Thus, it seems worthwhile to look into identity achievement status of identity formation among secondary school students across levels of achievement and gender.

### **Objectives**

1. To study identity achieved status of identity formation among secondary school students in terms of gender.
2. To study 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 of secondary school students across the levels of achievement.

### **Method**

Descriptive method of study was followed.

### **Sample**

The sample consisted of 480 students (240 girls and 240 boys) of +1 grade was selected from ten randomly selected secondary schools of Punjab.

### **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 were taken up as dependent variable.

### **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 (2x 2 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. Hence 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.

### **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 low achieving students, especially girl students need to be focus of such programmes in a more rigorous manner. The counselling sessions 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.

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