

Who Am I? Identity Statuses Among High School Students

Aubrill Faye M. Cayat¹, Esther Masielle P. Flores²

¹Associate Professor, School of Teacher Education and Liberal Arts, University of Baguio

²Senior Teacher II, High School, University of Baguio

ABSTRACT

Identity is a fundamental psychological concept, and developing one is one of the leading psychosocial tasks of adolescence. Adolescents frequently grapple with the question, "Who am I?" This brings self-consciousness and the capacity to reflect on one's characteristics and behaviors. This descriptive-comparative research examined Marcia's identity status paradigm among 206 randomly selected University of Baguio High School students in relation to sex and grade level. This study aimed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the identity status of high school students based on sex and grade level. The study revealed no statistically significant difference in identity status among high school students at the University of Baguio, considering the school sex of the respondents. Moreover, the study showed no statistically significant difference in the identity statuses among high school students at the University of Baguio, considering the grade level of the respondents. In both cases, however, the respondents disagree with having diffused and foreclosed statuses, suggesting that they go through the process of exploration and commitment. The study results show that each individual has a unique identity and may fit into one of James Marcia's four Identity Statuses: Diffusion, Foreclosure, Moratorium, and Achievement. As a result, the current study yielded significant results that may reinforce developmental theory about identity formation among high school students and serve as a knowledge platform for subsequent research.

Keywords: *identity statuses, high school students, sex, grade level*

1. INTRODUCTION

Identity and identity status have been studied over the last few decades because of their importance in human development. They are among the most significant discussions in adolescent psychology. Indeed, identity and identity formation are substantial aspects of development. Knowledge of identity and identity status is essential for understanding an individual's growth, development, and well-being. Identity formation begins when an individual can choose from childhood identifications and discard others based on interests and values. Willis (2013), quoting Erickson, stated that scholars have acknowledged identity as an essential part of human development for about 50 years, and researchers have found empirical support for the importance of identity development.

During adolescence, the many biological, cognitive, and social changes stimulate young people to think about themselves, reflect on the kind of people they want to become, and find their place in society (Crocetti, 2017). As cited in Mayo (2015), Hoffman et al. (1988) mentioned that adolescence changes every aspect of a young person's life. This is a great chance to provide students with experiences that can

further attain an achieved identity through educational programs and endeavors. Abundant research exists on the complex process of identity development, mainly originating from the work of Erikson and Marcia several decades ago (Sarouphim & Issa, 2017). However, no research was found on identity statuses among Filipino high school students.

Identity formation constitutes a core developmental task during adolescence and emerging adulthood (Verschuere et al., 2017). As cited by Erikson (1968), Marcia (1966) described two processes at the heart of this identity task: exploration (i.e., actively questioning different alternatives) and commitment (i.e., making life choices). Based on these processes, Marcia derived four statuses: achievement (commitment following exploration), foreclosure (commitment without exploration), moratorium (exploration without commitment), and diffusion (no commitment or exploration). Identity development is a primary task and a lifelong process that begins during adolescence and continues throughout every individual's life. Identity formation is a dynamic process that unfolds as young people assess their competencies and ambitions within a changing social context of expectations, demands, and resources. Various potential resolutions to the psychosocial crisis of personal identity versus identity confusion have been described (Kroger & Marcia, 2011).

Several independent reviews of the literature have concluded that adolescents and young adults generally demonstrate increasingly sophisticated identity activities with increasing age. They have further concluded that research strongly supports Marcia's (1980) hypothesis that identity is mainly formed between 18 and 22. Moreover, few gender differences exist in the process, timing, and pattern or direction of identity development. The domains in which gender differences tend to be found are those of sexuality and family roles, which are likely to hold greater salience for women than for men. Further, concerning developmental patterns, the fundamental developmental hypothesis of the identity status model assumes a decrease in diffusion and foreclosure and an increase in achievement during development (Zhang, 2015).

The study by Verschuere et al. (2017) found that women were overrepresented in the moratorium status (characterized by high exploration). In contrast, men were mainly situated in the foreclosure and carefree diffusion statuses (both illustrated by low exploration, but individuals in foreclosure also had firm identity commitments). Also, individuals in the carefree and troubled diffusion statuses, which represent the least adaptive statuses, were the youngest. Examining gender differences in identity statuses within the context of a patriarchal society is of significance, as gender directly affects developmental outcomes (Sarouphim & Issa, 2017). Therefore, identifying the impact of sex on the identity statuses of students would determine whether males and females follow the same developmental patterns as their peers or whether new patterns and developmental trajectories emerge.

Researchers have reported that individuals without identity exploration and commitment are more vulnerable to maladaptive behaviors. Individuals with different identity statuses have a higher level of maladjustment than individuals of other identity statuses (Rahiminejad, 2020). Also, several studies have reported that identity status is related to academic factors. Achieved and foreclosed statuses are linked to more academic factors (Circatti, 2015). A growing body of literature has investigated identity. Results showed that academic identity status and goal orientation are related to academic achievement (Hejazi, 2012). Identity, therefore, impacts students' academic performance. It is then an excellent chance to assist the students in achieving an identity for their educational advantage.

Berkowitz (2011) described values education as the attempt, within schools, to craft structures to foster the development of positive, ethical, and pro-social inclinations and competencies in youth, including strengthening their academic focus and achievement. With that, identity development competencies and

identity formation can be enhanced by incorporating such into the said learning area as support for the learning and understanding the self. Although many authors have conducted studies, this problem still needs to be explored in the Philippine setting. Moreover, this will increase knowledge of potential strategies to meet the fourth Sustainable Development Goal, which strives for quality education. The research will deal with attaining quality education and will delve into understanding the young as they progress. Learning more about adolescent development, particularly how they strive to create their identity, will allow educators to look at them differently and create academic opportunities to assist them in their development.

To address the identity status among high school students at the University of Baguio, the researchers' ultimate purpose is to contribute to a limited but essential body of research needed to inform students who are faced with the challenging task of forming an identity and to help the students attain an achieved identity to maximize their potential as learners and at the same time to prevent challenging identity formation or identity crises. The findings will serve as a broad framework for helping parents, teachers, and community members understand the objectives and interventions for promoting student identity exploration. The study's findings will help all the school professionals value the importance of building a solid relationship with the families and engage them in the process to encourage commitment (i.e., making life choices) and exploration (i.e., actively questioning different alternatives) among students. Also, the findings will accentuate the importance of a positive school and family relationship to cultivate commitment and exploration of one's identity. In addition, the discoveries will benefit the school personnel by having rigid systems in place and providing particular teaching strategies for students per Marcia's identity status.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to identify the identity formation of high school students. The following objectives directed the study.

1. To determine if there is a significant difference in the identity status of high school students when compared according to sex.
2. To determine if there is a significant difference in the identity status of high school students when compared according to grade level.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researchers used a quantitative descriptive-comparative approach to identify the identity formation of high school students and analyze the significant difference between sex and grade level. The descriptive-comparative design was reinforced as suitable because the study comprised several comparison groups to determine if any statistical differences existed.

Sample Population of the Study

This study was conducted at the University of Baguio (UB), specifically in the High school (HS) and Science High School (SHS) departments. This study involved 206 senior high school students enrolled in STEM, ABM, and HUMSS strands during the first semester of School Year 2022-2023. Junior high school students and other strands were not included in the study. Cochran's formula was used to compute the sample size at a 90 percent confidence level. To ensure a balanced sample of groups, the researchers have taken the data from each stratified group through stratified random sampling.

Data Gathering Tools

The Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status II (EOMEIS-2) developed by Bennion and Adams (1986), which has 64 items, was used in this study to determine identity status. The researchers ensured that the instrument was assessed for the respondents' characteristics. The researchers went through the RIECO tool validation process before the actual administration to confirm the validity and reliability.

Data Gathering Procedures

In the data-gathering procedures, the researchers followed the proper protocol for the study. The research underwent an ethics review and tool validation. With the primary approval of the department head through a communication letter, written parental consent was given to the target respondents. The data was gathered through a survey using Google Forms. Once the respondents have submitted their consent forms, they can immediately answer the Google Form questionnaire. The researchers explained the instructions uploaded in Google Forms to minimize external and internal numerical data threats. They also maximized the Google Forms feature, which required the users to answer all units before submitting their responses. Furthermore, the researchers asked for the respondents' confirmation that all instructions were clear before proceeding to the questions. Should the respondents have any concerns or questions, they can contact the researchers. Through an informed consent form, the researchers ensured that any information about the respondents, such as their emails and dates, would be highly respected for anonymity and confidentiality to protect the data.

Treatment of Data

The data were summarized and analyzed with the help of a statistician. Descriptive statistics is a statistical method for summarizing data in a valid and meaningful way. Based on the statistical treatment, the means were computed to determine the identity status among high school students, and the weighted mean was utilized considering the level of their agreement on each indicated item. Testing for normalcy is crucial for continuous data as it affects the choice of parametric or non-parametric tests as well as measures of central tendency and dispersion. Although there are several ways for normality testing, the Shapiro-Wilk test was selected as it is the most widely accepted and can identify nonnormality. In contrast, A non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the means statistically.

Ethical Consideration

The research has undergone an ethics review by the University of Baguio to ensure that the study does not harm the respondents' well-being. The questionnaires and informed consent forms were presented to the participants. These forms included the objectives and purpose of the study for the participants and the forms for the participants and their guardians' written consent. Within the email sent to the respondents, the researchers highlighted that their participation in the study is not mandatory and that they can withdraw at any time. Additionally, the researchers explained that the respondents' personal information would be protected and not revealed. Moreover, participants who may have experienced emotional triggers in answering the questionnaire were asked and informed to be referred to the appropriate school personnel. In disseminating the results of the study, the researchers planned to create an infographic that provided a copy of the abstract to be given to each participant to inform them about the findings of this study. To enhance the utility of the study's findings, the researchers will consider future publication and attendance at various research colloquia.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the significant difference in James Marcia's identity status among high school students when compared according to sex and grade level. The results showed that neither the diffused nor the foreclosed statuses applied to the respondents. Instead, they were in the moratorium and achieved statuses. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that respondents' sex and grade level did not vary across subscales. The differences between each status are outlined further below.

Objective 1: To determine if there is a significant difference in the identity status of high school students compared to sex.

Table 1.1. Identity Status (Diffused) of high school students when compared according to Sex

| | Descriptive Statistics | | | | Inferential Statistics | | |
|----------------|------------------------|------|------|----------------|------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | Interpretation | Shapiro-Wilk <i>p</i> | df | T-Test <i>p</i> |
| Male | 131 | 2.39 | 0.35 | Disagree | 0.14 | 204 | 0.44 ^{ns} |
| Female | 75 | 2.34 | 0.40 | Disagree | | | |
| Overall | 206 | 2.36 | 0.37 | Disagree | | | |

^{ns} – not significant at $\alpha=0.05$

The diffused identity status' normality was established using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is confirmed by the derived *p*-value that is very high ($p=0.14 > =0.05$). A parametric test was employed for this set of data. Generally, the mean score of 2.36 ($n=206, SD=0.370$) is interpreted as *Disagree*, meaning respondents do not represent a low level of exploration or a low level of commitment. This contradicts Verschueren et al.'s (2017) study, which found an overrepresentation of high school students in the diffused status.

The aggregated male and female scores garnered mean scores of 2.39 ($SD=0.35$) and 2.34 ($SD=0.40$), respectively, interpreted as *Disagree*. This may imply that respondents from both sexes are actively floating through life and dealing with each situation as it arises. To confirm if there is a significant difference between these mean scores, an independent sample t-test was performed. The computed *p*-value is greater than the confidence level ($p=0.44 > =0.05$), indicating that the null hypothesis of no significant difference must be accepted. Hence, when diffused identity status is grouped according to sex, the mean scores are statistically tied. This suggests that respondents have engaged in the critical developmental job of thinking about who they are and who they want to become to avoid the risk of floating aimlessly or having no sense of purpose in life.

Table 1.2. Identity Status (Foreclosed) of high school students when compared according to Sex

| | Descriptive Statistics | | | | Inferential Statistics | | |
|----------------|------------------------|------|------|----------------|------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | Interpretation | Shapiro-Wilk <i>p</i> | df | T-Test <i>p</i> |
| Male | 131 | 2.11 | 0.52 | Disagree | 0.07 | 204 | 0.31 ^{ns} |
| Female | 75 | 2.04 | 0.47 | Disagree | | | |
| Overall | 206 | 2.06 | 0.49 | Disagree | | | |

^{ns} – not significant at $\alpha=0.05$

The Preliminary Shapiro-Wilk test performed on the aggregated data according to Foreclosed Identity Status indicates a normal data distribution ($p=0.07 > =0.05$). The overall mean computed for this specific

data group is 2.06 ($n=206, SD=0.49$), interpreted as *Disagree*. This means the respondents disagree with the representation of the foreclosed status as having a low degree of exploration.

Additionally, when the data is further grouped according to sex, the mean scores for males ($\bar{x}=2.11, SD=0.52$) and females ($\bar{x}=2.04, SD=0.47$) both qualify for the qualitative interpretation of *Disagree*. This means that both sexes do not passively accept the identity assigned to them. Consistent with the same qualitative interpretation, when these means are compared statistically, no significant difference is found. An independent sample t-test was performed since the normality of the data had already been established. The p -value is more significant than the level of confidence ($p=0.31 > =0.05$), which indicates acceptance of the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the tested means. This implies that both sexes do not simply accept the usual or customary path. Parental or adult values constrain people who have their identities foreclosed without having the opportunity to consider them. This result indicates that respondents have not developed identities predominately concerned with imitation, affiliation with parental standards, and compliance without critical introspection.

Table 1.3. Identity Status (Moratorium) of high school students when compared according to Sex

| | Descriptive Statistics | | | | | Inferential Statistics |
|----------------|------------------------|------|------|----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | Interpretation | Shapiro-Wilk p | Mann-Whitney U p |
| Male | 131 | 2.69 | 0.38 | Agree | <0.00 | 0.32 ^{ns} |
| Female | 75 | 2.73 | 0.35 | Agree | | |
| Overall | 206 | 2.72 | 0.36 | Agree | | |

^{ns} – not significant at $\alpha=0.05$

The Shapiro-Wilk p -value ($p<0.001$) is less than the assigned level of confidence ($=0.05$), revealing that this set of data does not follow a normal distribution. The table also shows the computed means for aggregating data according to sex. Male respondents garnered a mean score of 2.69 ($SD=0.38$), while female respondents garnered a mean score of 2.73 ($SD=0.35$). Both means are qualitatively interpreted as *Agree*, indicating their agreement with the questions in the survey. This suggests that the respondents have a high degree of exploration but low commitment. The overall mean score computed is 2.72 ($n=206, SD=0.36$), also interpreted as *Agree*. At this status, the respondents are amid an identity crisis, which has prompted them to explore and experiment with different values, beliefs, and goals.

A non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the means statistically. The computed p -value ($p=0.32$) is more significant than the level of confidence ($=0.05$). This indicates a need to accept the null hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the mean scores compared. Hence, when moratorium identity status is compared according to sex, the mean does not significantly differ. This finding is consistent with earlier research, which found no appreciable gender disparities in identification statuses (Kaddoura & Sarouphim, 2019). The study by Verschueren et al. (2017) claimed that men were overrepresented in carefree diffusion and foreclosure, both of which had low scores on all exploration processes. In contrast, women were overrepresented in the moratorium, a predominantly exploration-based status, which is also refuted.

Table 1.4. Identity Status (Achieved) of high school students when compared according to Sex

| | Descriptive Statistics | | | | | Inferential Statistics |
|--|------------------------|------|----|----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | Interpretation | Shapiro-Wilk p | Mann-Whitney U p |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------|------|-------|-------|--------------------|
| Male | 131 | 2.89 | 0.42 | Agree | <0.00 | 0.14 ^{ns} |
| Female | 75 | 2.84 | 0.32 | Agree | | |
| Overall | 206 | 2.86 | 0.32 | Agree | | |

^{ns} – not significant at $\alpha=0.05$

The preliminary Shapiro-Wilk Test results to determine if the data gathered for this group follows a normal distribution revealed a very low p -value ($p < 0.00 < = 0.05$). This means that the data do not follow a normal distribution and that non-parametric tests will be used in the inferential statistical comparisons. The mean score computed overall is 2.86 ($n=206, SD=0.32$), indicating that the respondents generally *Agree* with the statements classified under *Achieved*. This means that respondents represent both a high degree of exploration and a high degree of commitment.

When the data are further grouped according to sex, the mean score for males is 2.89 ($SD=0.42$) and for females is 2.84 ($SD=0.32$), both qualitatively interpreted as *Agree*. This may be because the respondents are said to have achieved their identity through active exploration and strong commitment to a particular set of values, beliefs, and life goals that emerged from this active exploration and examination.

Note that the difference between these two means is very low. The Mann-Whitney U test is performed to confirm if this difference is significant. The test revealed a p -value that is greater than the confidence level ($p=0.14 > = 0.05$). This means that the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the means compared is accepted. Hence, this data group's mean scores for males and females do not significantly differ. This demonstrates that the respondents have chosen what principles and objectives are most significant to them and the reason or mission that will guide their lives. Respondents who have reached the identity achievement status can prioritize their priorities and have narrowed down the wide range of potential identities.

The current study revealed that the respondents disagree on having diffused and foreclosed statuses, while moratorium and achieved statuses are predominant among high school students. This suggests that respondents experience the processes of exploration and commitment. The study also revealed no statistically significant difference in identity status among high school students at the University of Baguio, considering the school sex of the respondents. In the present study, every person has his own identity and can fall into any of the four statuses.

Objective 2: To determine if there is a significant difference in the identity status of high school students when compared to grade level.

Table 2.1. Identity Status (Diffused) of high school students when compared according to Grade Level

| | Descriptive Statistics | | | | Inferential Statistics | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|------|------|----------------|------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | Interpretation | Shapiro-Wilk p | df | T-Test p |
| Grade 11 | 186 | 2.34 | 0.38 | Disagree | 0.14 | 204 | 0.09 ^{ns} |
| Grade 12 | 20 | 2.49 | 0.30 | Disagree | | | |
| Overall | 206 | 2.36 | 0.37 | Disagree | | | |

^{ns} – not significant at $\alpha=0.05$

The Preliminary Shapiro-Wilk test was performed on the aggregated data according to the diffused identity status to determine if a normal distribution garnered a high value, indicating a normal distribution of data

($p=0.14 > =0.05$). Moreover, when the data is further grouped according to grade level, the mean score for Grade 11 ($\bar{x}=2.34, SD=0.38$) and Grade 12 ($\bar{x}=2.49, SD=0.30$) qualify for the qualitative interpretation of *Disagree*. This means that students from both grade levels disagree that they have neither explored options nor committed to an identity.

Consistent with the same qualitative interpretation, when these means are compared statistically, no significant difference is found. An independent sample t-test was performed since the normality of the data had already been established. The p -value is greater than the level of confidence ($p=0.09 > =0.05$), which indicates acceptance of the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the tested means. This implies that respondents of both grade levels contradict the idea that they do not have firm commitments regarding the issues in question and need to make progress toward them.

Table 2.2. Identity Status (Foreclosed) of high school students when compared according to Grade Level

| | Descriptive Statistics | | | | Inferential Statistics | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|------|------|----------------|------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | Interpretation | Shapiro-Wilk p | df | T-Test p |
| Grade 11 | 186 | 2.07 | 0.49 | Disagree | 0.07 | 204 | 0.57 ^{ns} |
| Grade 12 | 20 | 2.01 | 0.49 | Disagree | | | |
| Overall | 206 | 2.06 | 0.49 | Disagree | | | |

^{ns} – not significant at $\alpha=0.05$

For this data group, its normality was established using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is confirmed by the derived p -value that is very high ($p=0.07 > =0.05$). A parametric test was employed for this set of data. The aggregated Grades 11 and 12 scores garnered mean scores of 2.07 ($SD=0.49$) and 2.01 ($SD=0.49$), respectively, interpreted as *Disagree*. This may imply that both grade levels have differing views that they have committed to an identity without exploring options.

To confirm if there is a significant difference between these mean scores, an independent sample t-test was performed. The computed p -value is greater than the confidence level ($p=0.57 > =0.05$), indicating that the null hypothesis of no significant difference must be accepted. Hence, the mean scores are statistically tied when the identity status (diffused) is grouped according to grade level. This means that both levels have not engaged in any identity experimentation and have not established identities based on the choices or values of others. This contradicts the study of Sarouphim and Issa (2017), which states that young adolescents become committed to their parents' values and accept their preset plans for them with little exploration of other alternatives. As such, the respondents have explored a range of options.

Table 2.3. Identity Status (Moratorium) of high school students when compared according to Grade Level

| | Descriptive Statistics | | | | Inferential Statistics | |
|-----------------|------------------------|------|------|----------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | Interpretation | Shapiro-Wilk p | Mann-Whitney U p |
| Grade 11 | 186 | 2.72 | 0.37 | Agree | <0.00 | 0.41 ^{ns} |
| Grade 12 | 20 | 2.68 | 0.32 | Agree | | |
| Overall | 206 | 2.72 | 0.36 | Agree | | |

^{ns} – not significant at $\alpha=0.05$

The preliminary Shapiro-Wilk Test results to determine if the data gathered for this group follows a normal distribution revealed a very low p -value ($p < 0.00 < = 0.05$). This means that the data do not follow a normal distribution and that non-parametric tests will be used in the inferential statistical comparisons. When data are further grouped according to grade level, the mean score for Grade 11 is 2.72 ($SD=0.37$) and for Grade 12 is 2.68 ($SD=0.32$), both qualitatively interpreted as *Agree*. This means that the students in both grade levels are exploring to establish an identity but have yet to make any commitments.

Note that the difference between these two means is very low. The Mann-Whitney U test was performed to confirm whether this difference is significant. The test revealed a p -value that is greater than the confidence level ($p=0.41 > = 0.05$). This means that the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the means compared is accepted. Hence, the mean scores for Grade 11 and Grade 12 for this data group do not significantly differ. The respondents are exploring various choices but have yet to commit to them.

Table 2.4. Identity Status (Achieved) of high school students when compared according to Grade Level

| | Descriptive Statistics | | | | | Inferential Statistics |
|-----------------|------------------------|------|------|----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | n | Mean | SD | Interpretation | Shapiro-Wilk p | Mann-Whitney U p |
| Grade 11 | 186 | 2.86 | 0.42 | Agree | <0.00 | 0.56 ^{ns} |
| Grade 12 | 20 | 2.91 | 0.32 | Agree | | |
| Overall | 206 | 2.86 | 0.32 | Agree | | |

^{ns} – not significant at $\alpha=0.05$

The Shapiro-Wilk p -value ($p < 0.00$) is less than the assigned level of confidence ($= 0.05$), revealing that this set of data does not follow a normal distribution. The table above also shows the computed means when the data is aggregated according to grade level. Grade 11 respondents garnered a mean score of 2.86 ($SD=0.42$), while Grade 12 respondents garnered a mean score of 2.91 ($SD=0.32$). Both means are qualitatively interpreted as *Agree*, indicating their agreement with the questions in the survey. This indicates that students from both grade levels have explored and made a commitment, contradicting the study of Chanu and Maraichelvi (2021), which stated that the respondent's age significantly influences the Identity Achievement Status alone.

A non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was performed to compare the means statistically. The computed p -value ($p=0.56$) is greater than the level of confidence ($= 0.05$). This indicates a need to accept the null hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the mean scores compared. Hence, when identity status (achieved) is compared according to grade level, the mean does not significantly differ. The students have developed a coherent and committed identity based on personal decisions. This lengthy process refutes the idea that it is only sometimes achieved by the end of adolescence. This may be due to the increased exploration of identity alternatives and commitment-making during high school, which refutes the study of Verschueren et al. (2017), stating that high school students are overrepresented in the diffusion statuses, illustrating the confusion and uncertainty they may experience about their position in early life.

In terms of grade level, this study established that respondents also disagree on having diffused and foreclosed identity statuses. In accordance with identity development, it was argued that there would always be differences in the development of identity from one grade level to another with the difference

in an individual's age, albeit no specific level identified with the distinct identity statuses in this study. Additionally, despite the respondents' grade levels, the study found no statistically significant differences in the identity statuses of high school students at the University of Baguio. The main contention is that one's sense of identity is greatly influenced by the decisions and commitments made with reference to particular personal and societal attributes.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the identity formation of high school students at the University of Baguio. A statistically significant difference in identification status among high school students at the University of Baguio was not found when the respondents' grade level and school sex were considered. Given the prevalence of moratorium and achieved statuses, the study revealed the importance of exploration and commitment as variables in the identification process. These further demonstrated that respondents have experienced an identity crisis, which has driven them to explore and attempt to figure out various values, beliefs, and aspirations.

They have yet to, however, reach any definitive conclusions on which ideas and values are most important to them and which principles should guide their lives. This implies that the respondents have contemplated examining various options and acquired the knowledge and resources required to inquire into these options until a conclusion is reached. Given their motivation, these respondents will eventually reach the identity achievement status. Additionally, these data reveal more about the respondents, who, at their age, are capable of achieving identity attainment status, which is the stage at which one's identity is fully formed. The respondents can set priorities for what is important to them and have narrowed down the wide range of potential identities, regardless of their sex or level.

On this premise, it is concluded that the various identity statuses are in some ways progressive; similar to these findings, respondents may experience one or two identity statuses during adolescence. However, it is not presumed that the respondents' identification status is constant throughout all facets of their development. The broad implication of the present research is that adolescents may have diverse identity statuses depending on their career choices, gender roles, political views, and religious beliefs. As identity development is a process and a journey, working as a team will give adolescents the best chance of getting past the identity moratorium and moving toward identity achievement.

In this regard, given the identity formation of high school students, the researchers put forward the following recommendations:

As moratorium and achieved statuses are prevalent among high school students, it is recommended that teachers facilitate peer support by using learning activities that invite mutual encouragement among students and making adolescents aware of their identities and how identities are more or less keenly felt in different social contexts. Furthermore, teachers can collaborate with stakeholders and community organizations to create school-based programs that promote identity exploration, such as mentorship programs.

It is also recommended that the Identity Status tool be included as an additional assessment tool that teachers can administer to identify students' initial identity status as to their level of commitment and exploration. This will help identify the needs of the students and the needed reinforcement in their academic performances. Moreover, knowledge of the four statuses can assist teachers in identifying students who are avoiding self-exploration.

A possible approach for future research is to use an instrument containing open-ended questions, like Marcia's semi-structured interview, to allow participants to comment on their responses. These tools improve the precision with which the level of exploration and commitment of participants is assessed, enhancing the outcomes' validity and reliability.

Authorship contribution statement

Aubrill Faye M. Cayat and Esther Masielle P. Flores contributed to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors affirm that they have no known financial or interpersonal conflicts that would have appeared to have an impact on the research presented in this study.

Acknowledgment

The researchers are indebted to University of Baguio High School and University of Baguio Science High School administrators for their continuous support throughout the research process. The assistance provided by the RIECO department was greatly appreciated. Lastly, the study participants who generously shared their time and insights.

REFERENCES

1. Bennion, L. D., & Adams, G. R. (1986). A revision of the extended version of the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status: An identity instrument for use with late adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 1*(2), 183–197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/074355488612005>
2. Berkowitz, M. W. (2011). What works in values education? *International Journal of Educational Research, 153*-158.
3. Chanu, L. M., & Maraichelvi, K. A. (2021). Identity status of youth. *Journal of Scientific Research, 65*(04), 50–54. <https://doi.org/10.37398/jsr.2021.650409>
4. Circatti, M. T. (2015). Personal and social aspects of professional identity - An extension of Marcia's identity status model applied to a sample of university students. *Journal of Vocational Behavior.*
5. Crocetti, E. (2017). Identity Formation in Adolescence: The Dynamic of Forming and Consolidating Identity Commitments. *Child Development Perspectives, 11*(2), 145–150.
6. Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.
7. Hejazi, E. L. (2012). Academic Identity status, goal orientation, and academic achievement among high school students. *Journal of Research Education, 291*-320.
8. Kaddoura, N., & Sarouphim, K. M. (2019). Identity development among Lebanese youth: An investigation of Marcia's paradigm. *Heliyon, 5*(11). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e02851>
9. Kroger J., & Marcia J.E. (2011). The identity statuses: origins, meanings, and interpretations. In: Schwartz S.J., Luyckx K., Vignoles V.L., (Eds). *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (pp. 31–53). Springer; New York.
10. Marcia, J. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 3*(5): 551–558, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0023281>
11. Mayo, M. &. (2015). Predictors of Students' Search of Identity: Its Role and Effect on Their Psychosocial Development. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences, pp. 110–119.*

12. Rahiminejad, H. (2020). Investigation of maladjustment based on identity status: Foreclosure, identity diffusion, moratorium, and identity achievement. *Journal of Research and Health* 10(4):225-232. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32598/JRH.10.4.1419.1>
13. Sarouhim, K. M., & Issa, N. (2017). Investigating identity statuses among Lebanese youth. *Youth & Society*, 52(1), 119–138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118x17732355>
14. United Nations. (2022). *Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs*. United Nations. Retrieved July 10, 2022, from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>
15. Verschueren, M., Rassart, J., Claes, L., Moons, P., & Luyckx, K. (2017). Identity statuses throughout adolescence and emerging adulthood: A large-scale study into gender, age, and contextual differences. *Psychologica Belgica*, 57(1), 32–42. <https://doi.org/10.5334/pb.348>
16. Willis, B. T. (2013). *How identity develops: Using attachment, differentiation, mood, communication, and personal narrative to predict identity status among emerging adults*. NC Docks.
17. Zhang, L.-f. (2015). Erikson's theory of Psychosocial Development. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, pp. 938–946. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-097086-8.23200-5>