# IDENTITY-RELATED DECISIONMAKING AMONG XHOSA-SPEAKING ADOLESCENTS

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**Declaration**

I, the undersigned hereby declare that the work contained in this study project is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:

Date        :

# SUMMARY

Identity-related decisionmaking by Xhosa speaking adolescents was investigated in this study.

Adolescence is an exceptionally challenging developmental phase in the human life cycle, and the development of identity is regarded as a central developmental task during this developmental phase. The managing and solving of the identity crisis influences the whole psychosocial development of the individual, and effective personal development is largely dependent on the aquisition of a personal identity.

The process of identity development holds further important implications for education and guidance, because a knowledge and understanding of this process can be regarded as a condition for effective educational and psychological intervention. There is a real need for research in the field of identity development, especially in the multicultural context.

This study focused on the decision-making of Xhosa speaking adolescents in the Cape Metropolitan area concerning matters that can play an important role in their identity development. From the research literature it appeared that in the past certain differences in the patterns of identity development were found among different cultural groups. Possible explanations for these differences are offered.

The empirical investigation, which was conducted by means of interviews, focused firstly on aspects such as the following:

- the most important factors that played a role in the participants' lives

- important decisions that they have made, the factors and considerations that played a role and their commitment to these decisions.

- their plans and goals for the future, important factors that play a role and their commitment to these plans and goals.

Apart from the above mentioned aspects, the Identity Status Interview (Grotevant and Cooper, 1981) was used to investigate identity development in four specific areas, namely, occupation, religion, dating and gender role.

For the purpose of the investigation a sample of convenience was constituted of grade 12 learners who attended a voluntary Enrichment Programme under the auspices of the South

African Institute of Race Relations in Cape Town on Saturdays. The research group consisted of 40 (20 male and 20 female) grade 12 learners.

The following were the most important findings:

- The parents (in particular the mother) constitute the most important factor in the most participants' lives, but it appears that the parents play a progressively less important role when it comes to the making of specific decisions.

- The most important decisions that the participants made in the past are dominated by decisions regarding their future occupations, and almost all the participants are considering tertiary education.

- The traditionally strong collectivist approach is apparently on the decline, and a more individualistic orientation is becoming evident with regard to , among other things, matters such as future marriage.

- With regard to occupational identity, the male participants displayed significantly higher levels of identity development than the female participants. In spite of the fact that about 75% of the male participants were classified in the occupation achievement status, as against 35% of the female participants, a qualitative analysis of the interviews indicated that the breadth of exploration of both groups was fairly limited.

- The religious domain displayed largely the same identity status pattern as the occupational domain, with significant differences between the two sexes.

- Of the four areas of identity development, gender role is the one in which the largest percentage of participants were classified as being in the achievement status.

- Age displays a significant correlation with exploration in the occupational domain and with the level of commitment in the religious domain.

- In the case of female participants, three independent variables (age, family size and the educational level of the mother) displayed a relationship with the participants' decision-making in identity-related areas.

Important implications of the findings, recommendations derived from these, limitations and recommendations for further research are indicated.

# OPSOMMING

Identiteitsverwante besluitneming is in hierdie studie by Xhosasprekende adolessente ondersoek.

Adolessensie is 'n besonder uitdagende ontwikkelingsfase in die menslike lewensiklus, en identiteitsontwikkeling word algemeen beskou as 'n sentrale ontwikkelingstaak tydens dié ontwikkelingsfase. Die hantering en oplossing van die identiteitskrisis beïnvloed die totale psigososiale ontwikkeling van die individu, en effektiewe persoonlike ontwikkeling is grootliks afhanklik van die verwerwing van 'n persoonlike identiteit.

Die proses van identiteitsontwikkeling hou verder belangrike opvoedkundige en voorligtingsimplikasies in, want kennis en begrip van hierdie proses kan as 'n voorwaarde vir effektiewe opvoedkundige en sielkundige intervensie beskou word. Daar bestaan egter 'n behoefte aan navorsing op die terrein van identiteitsontwikkeling, veral in die Suid-Afrikaanse multikulturele konteks.

Hierdie studie het gefokus op Xhosasprekende adolessente in die Kaapse metropolitaanse gebied se besluitneming oor sake wat 'n belangrike rol in hul identiteitsontwikkeling kan speel. Uit die navorsingsliteratuur het dit geblyk dat bepaalde verskille in die patrone van identiteitsontwikkeling tussen verskillende kultuurgroepe in die verlede gevind is, en moontlike verklarings vir sodanige verskille word gebied.

Die empiriese ondersoek, wat by wyse van onderhoude gedoen is, het eerstens gefokus op aspekte soos die volgende:

- die belangrikste faktore wat 'n rol in die deelnemers se lewens speel

- belangrike besluite wat hulle geneem het, die faktore en oorwegings wat 'n rol daarin gespeel het, en hul verbintenis tot dié besluite

- hul planne en doelstellings vir die toekoms, belangrike faktore wat 'n rol daarin speel, en hul verbintenis daartoe.

Benewens bogenoemde aspekte is die Identity Status Interview (Grotevant en Cooper, 1981) gebruik om identiteitsontwikkeling in vier spesifieke areas te ondersoek, naamlik beroep, godsdiens, uitgaan (Engels: dating) en geslagsrol.

Vir die doel van die ondersoek is 'n gerieflikheidsteekproef saamgestel uit graad 12-leerders wat 'n vrywillige Verrykingsprogram onder beskerming van die Suid-Afrikaanse Instituut vir Rasseverhoudinge in Kaapstad op Saterdae bygewoon het. Die ondersoekgroep het bestaan uit 40 (20 manlike en 20 vroulike) graad 12-leerders.

Van die belangrikste bevindinge was die volgende:

- Die ouers (by name die moeder) is die belangrikste faktor in die meeste deelnemers se lewens, maar dit blyk dat die ouers 'n toenemend minder belangrike rol speel wanneer dit kom by die neem van spesifieke besluite.

- Die belangrikste besluite wat die deelnemers in die verlede geneem het, word oorheers deur besluite ten opsigte van hul beroepstoekoms, en feitlik al die deelnemers beplan tersiêre opleiding.

- Die tradisioneel sterk kollektiwistiese benadering is skynbaar besig om af te neem, en 'n meer individualistiese oriëntasie in besluitneming, onder andere oor sake soos 'n toekomstige huwelik, kom na vore.

- Ten opsigte van beroepsidentiteit toon die manlike deelnemers beduidend hoër vlakke van identiteitsontwikkeling as die vroulike deelnemers. Ten spyte van die feit dat sowat 75% van die manlike deelnemers in die beroepsverwerwingstatus geklassifiseer is, teenoor 35% van die vroulike deelnemers, toon 'n kwalitatiewe analise van die onderhoude dat die breedte van eksplorasie by beide geslagte redelik beperk is.

- Die godsdienstige domein het grootliks dieselfde identiteitstatuspatroon as die beroepsdomein getoon, met beduidende verskille tussen die twee geslagte.

- Van die vier areas van identiteitsontwikkeling is geslagsrol die een waarin die grootste persentasie deelnemers in die verwerwingstatus geklassifiseer is.

- Ouderdom toon 'n beduidende korrelasie met eksplorasie in die beroepsdomein en met die vlak van verbintenis in die godsdiensdomein.

- In die geval van die vroulike deelnemers toon drie onafhanklike veranderlikes (ouderdom, gesinsgrootte en die opvoedingsvlak van die moeder) 'n verband met die deelnemers se besluitneming op identiteitsverwante terreine.

Belangrike implikasies van die bevindinge, aanbevelings wat daaruit voortspruit, beperkinge van die ondersoek en aanbevelings vir verdere navorsing word aangedui.

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# DEDICATION

This study project is dedicated to

- My father who passed away in June 1992 after a long illness. He died during the year in which I was completing my first degree. He could not see me graduating. My father was an ambitious man who wanted to see his son becoming an educated person since he never had an opportunity to advance his education. He supported and encouraged me a lot.

  Sadly, he is not here again with me to celebrate the joy of completion of the study project and the dawning of new opportunities.

  May you rest in peace Ntlane, Dingi, Nqabane.

- My mother who has also been very supportive and encouraging throughout the years I have spent away from a home furthering my studies. My mother had to experience the pain of being separated from her son and she from time to time was very worried about my safety away from home.

  Thanks very much mom, for your motherly love and thanks for making me the person I am today and may God keep you so that you can enjoy the fruits of your teachings.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## ACTUALITY, PROBLEM AND AIM OF STUDY

### 1.1    ACTUALITY

#### 1.1.1  The significance of identity development

The period of adolescence is one of the most challenging developmental phases of the human life cycle. Identity development is widely regarded as the central aspect of adolescence. The inability to deal with this aspect generally affects the psychosocial functioning of an individual in society. It must be noted that effective personal development is, amongst other factors, largely dependent on the development of a personal identity.

It must also be recognised that the process of identity development during adolescence has major educational and training as well as counselling implications. This is because knowledge and understanding of this process is a prerequisite for effective education, development and sound psychological intervention.

**1.1.2      Identity development in the South African context**

**1.1.2.1      Socio-political factors**

South Africa is a multi-cultural country, which has just emerged from the dark days of apartheid. South Africa has been divided along racial, ethnic and gender lines and occupational opportunities for blacks have seriously been limited. It must also be kept in mind that the identity development of white adolescents was affected as well, for they were not allowed to relate to, and socialise with, black adolescents. Such a state of affairs has led to identity investigators such as Alberts (1996:142) to assert that 'coming to grips with who you are' in the South African situation is not an easy task.

Black schools in particular were not encouraged to advance career and cultural identity. This manifested itself in the absence of guidance and career counselling in black schools (Botha & Ackermann, 1997:72). The apartheid education system did not encourage positive cultural identity; it instead encouraged negativity towards the black culture. Blacks were not encouraged to appreciate their own culture but were encouraged to appreciate the western culture. This situation could be referred to as a 'psychosocial crisis' (Alberts, 1996:142).

It is important to note that factors and experiences such as the aforementioned may cause the formation of a negative self image and low self esteem, and a negative orientation towards the future, as well

as tendencies toward self restrictions as opposed to assertiveness and proactivity (Hauser, 1972:127). Exploration is restricted by limited opportunities and alternatives, as well as by experiences such as prejudice, ethnocentrism and discriminatory practices.

### 1.2.2.2      Socio-economic factors

Socio-economic factors also affect identity development to a great extent. The majority of the South African population is still living in poverty, even though this is changing gradually.

The implications of poverty for black adolescents are that poverty could compel them to make quick career decisions, which are not informed. This has led identity investigators such as Botha and Ackermann (1997:72) to assert that " an economically disadvantaged position thus encourages the adolescent to choose a career which holds a promise of financial independence". This process is in Marcia's (1986) terms, referred to as career identity foreclosure, which means that an adolescent could commit himself or herself without effective exploration or consideration of alternatives.

Adolescents from the middle and higher socio-economic classes on the other hand, are able to explore opportunities and consider alternatives and to make informed decisions. This may be because there is less pressure exerted on them by socio-economic factors.

The aforementioned is consistent with Marcia's (1986:28) assertion when he states that "Moratorium, the necessary pre-condition for identity achievement, is possible for a large number of individuals only in a society wealthy enough to tolerate a period of non productivity for some of its productive members".

### 1.2.2.3     Socio-cultural factors

It has already been indicated that South Africa is a culturally diversified country, and it is possible that particular psychosocial factors inherent in particular cultures may also influence psychosocial (identity) development. The African cultures in particular traditionally tend not to encourage individual decision-making processes. Decisions are usually taken collectively and the father, as the head of the family, often dictates the direction of the decision-making process. This may force black adolescents to make commitments without proper exploration and consideration of all the alternatives.

This is, however, changing gradually, due to factors such as urbanisation and industrialisation, in which people are adopting new norms and values. The western cultures, on the other hand, encourage individual decision-making processes, which allow for the exploration and consideration of alternatives and opportunities.

### 1.1.3 Relevance of the existing theoretical models

Erikson's theory on adolescent identity development is of western origin, and it has been applied in different cultural settings and societies. There is no doubt that his theoretical work has provided a wealth of insight into the topic of identity development and has stimulated a considerable amount of research over the past decades. Erikson's theoretical framework was operationalised by Marcia (1964), who introduced the concept of *identity statuses*, which stimulated further research.

### 1.1.4 Conclusion

The researcher is of the opinion that this study is significant because it attempts to synthesize knowledge on identity development with the aim of advancing a multicultural perspective that would recognise the diversity of the South African cultures. The research findings may have educational and counselling implications and could stimulate further research in the area of identity development.

### 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The nature of identity development among African adolescents remains a challenge because of the limited empirical research done on black adolescents in an African context, causing limited knowledge in this area. It would therefore be naive to generalise about the nature of identity development among African adolescents.

## 1.3    AIM

The aim of this study is to investigate identity-related decision-making of Xhosa-speaking adolescents.

## 1.4        METHOD

### 1.4.1  Literature study

The literature study will focus on identity development during adolescence from a multicultural perspective and will be an exploration of the past and the present state of research. This will be pursued by looking at South African and international studies. These studies would include those that found both differences and similarities in black and white adolescent identity development.

### 1.4.2  Empirical investigation

The empirical investigation will be conducted by means of semi-structured interviews with a group of Xhosa-speaking male and female adolescents. The main aim of the intended research is to find answers to questions such as the following:

- How does the process of psychosocial development progress among Xhosa-speaking adolescents?

- Do the dynamics of these processes really differ between African and Western cultures?

## 1.5    TERMINOLOGY

### 1.5.1 Identity

*Identity* is one of the most challenging concepts to define, due to its inherent complexity. Most scholars in this field seem to agree that identity is characterised by questions such as "Who am I?" "Where do I fit into the social system? " and " What are my goals? " (Gerdes, Ochse, Stander & Van Ede, 1981:65).

The complexity of this concept is also acknowledged by Erikson (1968:15), when he asserts that " Identity and identity crisis have in popular and scientific usage become terms which alternatively circumscribe something so large and seemingly so self-evident that to demand a definition would seem petty ".

In spite of its complexity, the concept of identity includes the following key components: sameness and continuity, uniqueness and individuality, and group recognition.

### 1.5.1.1     Sameness and continuity

The concepts of sameness and continuity are critical for adolescents because in their search for a sense of continuity and sameness, some adolescents have to come to grips with the challenges of earlier years (Erikson: 1968:168). This therefore implies that there is a sense of (still) being the same person in spite of changes occurring.

Erikson (1950,1968) pointed out that identity formation needs the experiencing of an inner sameness so that some order, which must continue over time, exists in one's actions and decisions. Implicit in the identity construct is an awareness of the sameness (past) and continuity (future) of the self in time and space (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990:297).

### 1.5.1.2 Uniqueness and individuality

The concepts of uniqueness and individuality are closely related to the concepts of sameness and continuity. The following statement seems to give us some sense of such a connection:

"The conscious feeling of having a personal identity is based on two simultaneous observations: the perception of the self-selfness and continuity... the style of individuality, and that this style coincides with the sameness and continuity..." (Erikson, 1968:50).

The above quotation implies that individuality involves self-awareness, which might mean being aware of one's interests, values and skills, and being aware of significant others. Individuality may involve the acknowledgement of one's personal space and time. A person is an individual before he becomes a member of a group.

### 1.5.1.3    Group recognition

Dreyfus (1972:2) asserted that young people's search for meaning involves relationships with other people, and this may involve experiencing others' recognition of one's perceived individuality. An adolescent may try to adopt the norms and values of a particular group. This could be a peer group or family. A family is considered an important agent for the transmission of the norms and values of a society. An accepting community can contribute positively to the identity development of an adolescent. Dreyfus (1972) also asserts that an accepting and open society encourages decision-making and informed choices.

### 1.5.2    Identity crisis

The concept of *identity crisis* has been associated with a great deal of negativity, but for Erikson (1968:16) identity crisis is seen "…as designating a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshalling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation".

*Crisis* in this sense is seen as a normal developmental process that involves exploration, experimentation and decision-making. It must also be noted that different cultures do not necessarily respond in the same way to the crisis (Erikson, 1968:18).

### 1.5.3 Identity statuses

In his attempt at operationalising Erikson's formulations, Marcia (1964,1965) coined the concept of *identity statuses*. For Marcia the concepts of exploration and commitment are fundamental in understanding identity development. For him, exploration is a process of investigation and consideration of alternatives. Commitment refers to taking a firm decision and implementing it realistically. The presence or absence of exploration and commitment are the.two criteria used for categorising adolescents into identity statuses.

Identity diffusion (limited exploration, no commitment)

Identity diffusion depicts adolescents who are neither experiencing an identity crisis (not involved in exploration), nor having established commitments. These adolescents may have very vague or weak commitments (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981:27). These adolescents may be characterized by low exploration and low commitment.

Identity foreclosure (limited exploration, relatively firm commitment)

Identity foreclosure implies that the individual does not make any active attempts at exploration, but has already committed himself or herself to choices in a relatively permanent way. Instead of questioning and exploring other possible choices (going through the crisis period), such an adolescent has accepted other people's plans. According to Grotevant & Cooper (1981:26), such an individual "...probably cannot

offer any explanation of how the choice was made". This individual can easily be mistaken for an identity achiever, but what distinguishes this person from an achiever, is that a person in foreclosure has not done effective exploration.

Identity moratorium (exploration, no firm commitment)

An adolescent who is still in crisis and is exploring alternatives, seems to be moving towards commitment and will probably achieve an identity. This individual is still in the process of making a decision, and may be characterised by high exploration, but very low levels of commitment (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981:28). The moratorium identity status is regarded as a pre-requisite for identity achievement.

Identity achievement (exploration, relatively firm commitment)

Identity achievement implies a process of active exploration and consideration of alternatives, followed by relatively permanent decisions and commitments. According to Grotevant & Cooper (1981:25) "...this person has seriously considered the alternatives available and has chosen a comfortable one".

## 1.5.4 Decision-making

Decision-making is the process that involves information gathering and involving other people in the process and considering various options. Decision-making also involves making confident decisions and

communicating them meaningfully with others (Reynolds and Gutkin, 1999:520).

## 1.6   STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

In chapter one the actuality of the study is discussed. The background of the problem and the aims of the investigation are presented as well. A brief outline of the research design has been given. The key concepts identity, identity crisis and identity status have been explained briefly.

Chapter two will deal with the literature study on adolescent identity development using the existing theory as the theoretical framework for understanding adolescence and identity development during adolescence. A review of South African and international studies is presented. The focus is particularly on identity development from a multicultural perspective.

In chapter three the method of the investigation will be discussed, and the results of the study will be presented. The presentation of the results will be followed by a discussion of the results.

In the final chapter a summary of the most important findings will be given. Conclusions, implications and recommendations will follow. The shortcomings of the study will be identified.

# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE STUDY

### 2.1    INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the literature study is to help to develop a theoretical framework on which to base the empirical research. This chapter is aimed at giving a theoretical background to the research problem by reviewing relevant literature on adolescent identity development from a multicultural perspective. A review of literature based on European, American and South African based research for the investigation of identity formation of adolescents will be given. It must be noted that literature and research on African adolescent identity formation is limited.

Erikson's psychodynamic theory of human development is one of the most comprehensive psychosocial theories to address adolescence as a specific developmental phase within a coherent and integrated life stage framework. This review will begin by outlining his theory, which is based on several psychosocial stages in which psychosocial needs and drives are mediated by various social influences.

South African and international studies are reviewed and hypothetical explanations for the results of these studies are given. It remains to be confirmed whether these studies present valid explanations of the

identity process in African cultures. It should be pointed out that Erikson did refer to the importance of socio-cultural factors and that should be kept in mind and is relevant to the present study (Erikson, 1950).

## 2.2    A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

### 2.2.1  Personal identity as a process

Erikson's psychosocial development theory traces personality development across the lifespan, stressing societal and cultural influences on the ego at each of the eight stages (Erikson, 1950). It is suggested that personal identity is something that changes and develops all the time. However, even though Erikson's (1963) theory provides a fairly straightforward framework for comprehending adolescent identity development within a social context, it is unable to explicitly and adequately address the impact of prolonged structural oppression on black South African adolescents in a situation of transition.

Erikson stresses that personal identity is formed within relationships with other people who have a special significance to a person (Erikson, 1968:298). Spencer and Markstrom-Adams (1990:290) describes the achievement of a personal identity as a major developmental aspect for all adolescents. However, they do not handle this aspect in the same

way. Erikson (1965:11) points out that during adolescence the individual continually tries to come to grips with his inner self by attempting to find answers to questions pertaining to the meaning of life.

### 2.2.2 Erikson's psychosocial stages

As has already been indicated, Erikson's (1963) model is characterised by several psychosocial stages in which internal psychosocial needs and drives are mediated by various social influences. At each stage there is a new developmental challenge or conflict to deal with, with either positive or negative outcomes. Positive outcomes may lead to mental health and negative ones to maladjustment (Erikson, 1963).

The eight stages of the Erikson's model will be briefly discussed below.

### Basic trust versus mistrust (birth to 18 months)

According to Erikson (1950:247), the "...first demonstration of social trust in the baby is the ease of his feeding, the depth of his sleep, and the relaxation of his bowels". The baby develops a sense of whether the world can be trusted, and development during this stage centres on the mouth and the intake of food. The extent to which the infant learns to trust his environment mainly depends on the quality of the mother-child relationship (Erikson, 1963:249).

The role of the mother or the caregiver is very important because it can determine whether the world should be trustworthy to the child. Erikson also maintains that one of the child's greatest achievements is the child's ability to recognize that the mother exists even though she is out of sight. This, for the child, implies that there is continuity and sameness in life and that there is trustworthiness within the trusted framework. Mothers must create a sense of trust in their children by demonstrating quality, care and sensitivity towards the child's needs.

This could result in a situation where the child develops faith in his or her environment, hoping that it will satisfy his or her needs for food, love and attention within his or her cultural environment. The positive outcome of this stage is hope. At a later stage of development adolescents who experienced a sense of trust during infancy experience hope.

Autonomy versus shame and doubt (18months-3 years)

During this period, physical maturation is increasing and Erikson (1950:251) regards this stage as the stage of experimentation. The child's physical development enables him or her to experiment with two psychosocial modalities, namely holding or letting go. Muscle control is a prerequisite for retaining autonomy, and this can be done through toilet training. If the child performs unsuccessfully, shame and doubt would result. The environment is supposed to support the child

as he or she attempts to do things autonomously. This can be pursued through toilet training. If the environment fails by not supporting him or her, she or he faces the danger of shame and doubt.

Necessary support is therefore needed for the child at this stage. Parents should encourage their children to stand on their own two feet while protecting them from unnecessary failure and feelings of inadequacy and doubt about their abilities. The positive outcome of this stage is a sense of <u>will</u>. This indicates the ability to make independent choices and to exercise self-control and self-esteem (Erikson, 1974:110).

Initiative versus guilt (3-6 years)

Children at this stage can act on their own initiative and can therefore feel guilty about their behaviour. The psychological crisis of this stage is therefore that of initiative versus guilt. The child is trying out new things and is not overwhelmed by failure. According to Erikson (1968:255), " ...he appears more himself, more loving, relaxed and brighter in his judgement, activated and activating..." and if he fails, he feels guilty and is afraid to attack a problem or task in future. The positive outcome of this phase is a sense of <u>purpose</u>.

This is the ideal resolution of the crisis and it lies at finding a balance between the childlike enthusiasm for doing and making things and the

tendency to be too strict in self-judgement. A child therefore needs a certain amount of freedom to be able to do this (Erikson, 1974:115), and if this freedom is too restricted the process of decision-making during adolescence could be affected and may lead to limited exploration.

## Industry versus inferiority (6- 12 years)

This stage is leading to puberty. The child now "…wins recognition by producing new things" (Erikson, 1950:259). To maintain his or her industriousness the family and the society should support and encourage the child.

This can also be an opportunity to prepare the child for life, helping the child to understand the meaningful roles that should be played in economy and technology. The virtue of this phase is the acquisition of skill. The child learns to be industrious through learning the skills of the culture, and if the child fails, he/she would face feelings of inferiority. Children who are industrious and feel appreciated tend to resolve the crisis of identity versus identity confusion during adolescence more successfully than those who would have experienced feelings of inferiority. The positive outcome of this stage is competency.

## Identity versus identity confusion (puberty to young adulthood: 12-22 years)

According to Mathunyane (1992:93) "...the child is expected to know himself, to know who he is and his way forward". This stage starts with the onset of puberty at about twelve and stretches to approximately twenty-two years, depending on culture and the training required. Acceptance of maturity is complex. This stage is generally regarded as the most critical stage of human development and can be regarded as a turning point in one's life.

The adolescent wants to find out who he is in relation to other people, and this is generally regarded as the search for identity. The danger of this stage is identity confusion. The areas of confusion are usually around sexuality and occupation (Erikson, 1950:262). The physical changes of puberty, the onset of sexual maturity and the social expectation that adolescents make a career choice, all force the individual to re-examine earlier experiences. It should also be noted that these are essential elements of identity achievement.

The family and society must mediate meaning because confused adolescents can easily become delinquents and can easily experience psychological problems. The successful resolution of this crisis is fidelity. This means to be your true self. It must also be noted that the society has an important role in helping the adolescent to achieve

fidelity, and this can enhance the development of the value system of a particular society.

## Intimacy versus isolation (young adulthood)

This stage is characterised by readiness for intimate relationships. The adolescent starts forming partnerships and is now becoming socially responsible by affiliating with community organisations. This is usually where these intimate relationships are formed. The most intimate form of a relationship in both African and Western cultures seem to be the institution of marriage.

The inability to form relationships results in "...isolation and consequent self-absorption" (Erikson, 1950:263). The positive outcome of this phase is love. The individual is then able to share his or her identity with another person, that is, to have ongoing relationships and to develop ethical strengths to continue with them, despite the sacrifices and demands of relationships (Erikson, 1963:263).

## Generativity versus stagnation (Middle adulthood)

This stage covers the period from approximately 25 to 60 years of age. The matured adult is concerned with maintaining relationships and to guide the next generation. Failure to do so often result in a sense of impoverishment. This means that while adults are involved in

developing themselves, they are also intensively involved in the development of the next generation.

Erikson (1963:266-267) believes that adults have a desire to feel needed and this finds expression in wanting to care for other people, and in wanting to pass on knowledge and traditions. If this need is not met, a feeling of stagnation and an obsession with the self develops (Erikson, 1964:130). The inability to achieve generativity usually results in a lack of progress and loss of credibility in society because "...the concept of generativity is meant to include such more popular synonyms as productivity and creativity" (Erikson, 1950:267).

The positive outcome of this phase is generativity. The inability of the adult to develop a sense of generativity is often the result of unresolved crises in early adulthood, specifically a lack of trust in society and in the future of mankind (Erikson, 1963:267).

Integrity versus despair (old age)

The last developmental stage begins somewhere in the sixties, depending on the person's health and the cultural environment. This stage is characterised by the individual's ability to look back at his life, knowing that the end is near. An elderly person achieves a sense of acceptance of own life and is able to use his accumulated wisdom to advise the younger generation.

According to Erikson (1950:269), "...despair expresses a feeling that the time is now short, too short for the attempt to start another life". Those who have accepted the meaningfulness of life are not scared of death and they see it as a natural process. The individual who has successfully resolved the previous crises of life, is able to be accepting of self and others fully (Erikson, 1963:268). Such an individual has integrity, that is, the feeling that life has been unique, that he/she can look back on it with satisfaction, and has accepted death as a natural process.

Hauser (1972:2) notes that Erikson's phases are conceived of as universal. It must also be mentioned that even though these phases are conceived as universal, different societies have different mechanisms of dealing with these circumstances.

In the preceding section an overview of Erikson's theory has been presented as a theoretical framework for understanding the context of adolescent identity development. In the following section identity development during adolescence will be discussed in more detail.

## 2.3   IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT DURING ADOLESCENCE

Erikson's major focus in human development has been the period of adolescence and young adulthood. It could therefore be argued that Erikson (1963) placed a particular emphasis on the adolescent period

of human development, and that his theory is well suited to enhancing our understanding of adolescent identity development. For Erikson adolescence is the most crucial phase of human development and he refers to it as a 'turning point'. According to his theory of psychosocial development, adolescence is characterised by an identity crisis, which he regards as a period of decision-making in search of an identity (Erikson, 1963, 1968, 1971, and 1980).

According to him the search for an identity can be regarded as the adolescent's major task. During this stage, adolescents engage in self-definition and discover their sexual, occupational and ideological identities, and this developmental task, according to Steven and Lockat (1997:250), essentially incorporates the conflicts related to negotiating between ego identity versus role confusion. Erikson (1968:128) sums up the character of an adolescent as follows:

"They are sometimes morbidly, often curiously, pre-occupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier, with the ideal prototypes of the day".

The choice of an occupation becomes an important one and is said to supercede questions of financial rewards and the status associated with it. According to Erikson (1968:129), adolescents prefer an occupation where there will be job satisfaction.

Dominant ideas of the society are the most appealing for an adolescent. These include ideas that are held by significant others such as teachers and peers. The adolescent is greatly inspired by their affirmation and confirmation, and is looking upon significant others for positive aspects of life (Erikson, 1968:130). Erikson also cautions that if the adolescent is deprived of the desired needs, rebellious behavior could be observed.

It is worth emphasizing that the inability to achieve an identity usually results in identity confusion, and with reference to American youth, Erikson (1968:132) says:

"Youth after youth, bewildered by the incapacity to assume a role forced on him by the inexorable standardization of American adolescence, runs away in one form or another, dropping out of school, leaving jobs, staying out all night, or withdrawing into bizarre and inaccessible moods".

The peer group often acts as a major source for the adolescent in coping with his/her developmental tasks, and usually plays a vital role in the process of identity formation. Two major problems may, however, present themselves in identifying with peers. Should the peer group exercise a negative a negative normative influence, the adolescent may tend to form a negative identity, which may be in conflict with the norms and values of society. The other danger is over-identification with the behaviour, norms and values of the peer group, which may restrict the search for an individual identity. This may cause the formation of a foreclosed identity.

## 2.4 REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL AND SOUTH AFRICAN STUDIES ON IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

### 2.4.1 Cultural differences in identity development processes

In the past, some researchers have investigated the process of identity formation in different cultural and ethnic groups. The majority of these studies found particular differences in terms of identity status development. One general finding has been that identity foreclosure seems to be more common among black than white research groups (Abraham, 1986; Hauser, 1972; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990; Streitmatter, 1988).

Hauser (1972) investigated the process of identity formation among black and white adolescents in the United States of America. This was a longitudinal study. He found that there were consistent and distinct differences between black and white identity development. According to him (1972:124) blacks showed '...unchanging configuration of self-image whereas white adolescents displayed a progressive integration of self-images'. This means that blacks were stuck as far as identity development is concerned and that there was no progressive attempt to improve identity development.

Streitmatter (1988) conducted a study among junior high school students in America. The ethnic breakdown of the school district involved was as follows: 50% Anglo/White; 33% Hispanic; 11% Black; 4% Native America/Indian and 2% Asian and other. The results indicated that ethnic minorities (the minority groups were the economically and socially less privileged groups), such as African-Americans and Hispanics, were found to be significantly more foreclosed than their non-minority counterparts. This means that they had made commitments about life without considering or exploring alternatives.

This state of affairs, according to Streitmatter (1988:338), meant those black adolescents '...accepted values and roles prescribed to them by their parents'. Parents expected their children to make commitments

early in life. This might be due to the pressure that was exerted on the ethnic minorities by the white majority. It is common knowledge that older black Americans in particular tended to turn mainly to God for guidance and assistance against oppression and coercion.

They expected their children to do the same and as a result they tended to socialise their children along Christian or Islamic lines. This could have affected the identity development of these adolescents and perhaps accounts for the foreclosed identities they were experiencing.

A comparison of the findings of three different studies among Afrikaans-, English- and Xhosa-speaking Grade 12 adolescents in the occupational domain (Botha & Ackermann, 1997) revealed significant differences in patterns of identity status. According to the Dellas Identity Status Inventory – Occupation (DISI-O) (Dellas, 1982), relatively more Afrikaans- and English-speaking than Xhosa-speaking adolescents were classified into the achievement status, but more Xhosa-speaking adolescents were classified into foreclosure. It was also found that 50% of the Xhosa-speaking adolescents could not be classified into any particular identity status, as opposed to 17% and 21% of the Afrikaans- and English-speaking adolescents respectively. Unclassifiability on the DISI implies inconsistency in responses, which may point at identity diffusion. It may, however, also indicate phases

of movement between identity statuses, which may imply positive development (Waterman, 1982:343).

In a South African study on career identity among a group of Grade 12 Xhosa-speaking adolescents, Botha and Ackermann (1997:73) found that the majority of the research participants had not achieved a career identity. They were uncertain about their careers and they were experiencing what Marcia (1964,1966,1980) refers to as identity diffusion and foreclosure. This result is not unexpected, because of the marginalisation of support services in the historically black schools and the process of socialisation experienced by black adolescents, which limited the process of exploration.

Ochse & Plug (1986) conducted a study among South African adolescent and adult subjects. The results indicated that white women seem to solve the identity crisis earlier than their black counterparts. Black men also seem to resolve the identity crisis later than their white counterparts. This implies that the identity development of black people in particular is limited as compared to their white counterparts.

Various studies, however, indicate that patterns of identity status development may be related to particular identity domains. Alberts (1990), for example, found high levels of foreclosure and low levels of identity achievement in occupational decision-making among African

university students. In the religious domain an overrepresentation of less sophisticated modes of decision-making (foreclosure and diffusion) was evident, as compared to the more sophisticated decision modes of achievement and moratorium. In the domain of politics, however, 93,6% of the respondents were classified in more sophisticated modes (achievement and moratorium), with 63,6% in identity achievement.

## 2.4.2 Cultural similarities in identity development processes

In a study which included only black adolescents, Watson & Protinsky (1991) found that the majority of the black adolescents were in the identity searching process and only a small percentage of them were experiencing identity foreclosure. In a South African study, Thom (1988:280) found no significant differences in the developmental level of career identity between white and African adolescents. This result does not confirm the expected theoretical expectation. Black adolescents, because of limited opportunities and due to the socialisation processes, were not expected to experience a progressive identity development.

Adams and Adams (1995:397) conducted a revealing study where differences were investigated in psychosocial development among African-American, American Indian, Mexican and White Americans. It

was found that there were more similarities than differences among these four ethnic groups.

Alberts (1996) conducted an investigation among African male and female adolescents. It was found these adolescents used sophisticated decision-making processes in forming occupational identity. It must be noted that males were specifically found to have been foreclosed in the religious domain, and this may be due to the social expectations of the African males. Traditionally boys are expected to make early commitments regarding the issues of religion, because they are regarded as future family heads.

More recently, Alberts (in press) investigated decision-making among African first year university students in the domains of occupation, religion, politics and attitudes towards premarital sex. Gender was used as an independent variable. The main findings were as follows:

Occupation:

Both genders showed significantly higher representation in the more sophisticated modes of decision-making (achievement and moratorium) than in the less sophisticated decision modes (foreclosure and diffusion). In both genders more than 50% of the respondents were classified into identity achievement.

## Religion

The females showed no significant differences between the more and less sophisticated modes of decision-making. About 60% of the respondents were, however, classified into committed statuses (foreclosure and achievement). In the case of the males a markedly different picture emerged, in that significantly more males were represented in the less sophisticated modes (72% in foreclosure and diffusion) than in the sophisticated modes.

## Politics

The females showed no significant differences between the more and less sophisticated modes of decision-making. The identity statuses best represented were diffusion (44,2%) and achievement (31,2%). The males, however, showed a significant overrepresentation in the more sophisticated modes, with 72% in achievement and 16% in moratorium.

## Attitudes towards premarital sex

The females showed a significantly higher representation in the more sophisticated modes, with 75% in achievement and moratorium, as opposed to 25% in foreclosure and diffusion. The males did not show a similar difference, but 80% of them were classified into the commitment statuses (56% in achievement and 24% in foreclosure).

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

The findings of these studies do not confirm the general assumption that African adolescents tend to reveal more unsophisticated modes of decision-making, and are overrepresented in the identity foreclosure and diffusion statuses. The findings rather confirm the importance of taking different domains of identity development as well as the gender variable into consideration. They also seem to reveal the effect of the processes of change and development in society. High levels of occupational foreclosure were, for example, found in the first study of Alberts (1990), but not in the second (Alberts, in press).

In the religious domain an overrepresentation of the less sophisticated modes (foreclosure and diffusion) was evident in both studies. A high occurrence of foreclosure in the religious domain is, however, an international trend among adolescents from environments in which religion is a high priority (Ackermann, 1997:87; Waterman, 1985: 17-19).

The political domain showed significant overrepresentation of the more sophisticated decision modes among males in both studies, but in the second study a drastic increase in diffusion was evident among females. In the interpersonal domain, namely attitudes towards premarital sex, between 50% and 60% of males as well as females were classified into the achievement status.

## 2.6 HYPOTHETICAL EXPLANATIONS FOR RESEARCH FINDINGS

The reviewed literature seem to give conflicting results. There are no clear patterns between black and white identity development. Various factors such as gender, domains and the fact that the respondents come from diverse cultural backgrounds may have contributed to these conflicting results. Within the South African context one could expect differences in identity development because of the following factors, namely, (a) socio-economic factors, (b) socio-political factors, (c) educational factors, (d) socio-cultural factors.

### 2.6.1 Socio-economic factors

Archer (1982:1555-1556) found a positive relationship between identity development and socio-economic status. This may be attributed to more flexible child-rearing styles among higher socio-economic status parents, which provides the adolescent with more opportunities for exploration, consideration of alternatives, and decision-making.

In view of financial and other deficits it may be argued that the younger generation in a low socio-economic status environment probably has fewer opportunities for the exploration of alternatives.

Moratorium, the necessary pre-condition for identity achievement, is possible for a large number of individuals only in a society wealthy enough to tolerate a period of non productivity for some of its potentially productive members.

An economically disadvantaged position thus encourages the adolescent to choose a career, which holds a promise of financial independence (Botha & Ackermann, 1997:72). In this regard Hall (1980:10) found that many blacks regard the choice of a career in terms of considerations such as personal interest or preference as something of a luxury, which prevents the realisation of the important moratorium phase, but rather fosters identity foreclosure. The process of identity development may be even further hampered in the case of adolescents with limited levels of previous education and training.

Regarding the socio-economic status of parents, Archer (1982:155) found some positive correlations between the adolescent's identity development and factors such as parent's level of education and occupational status. In a study among South African Xhosa-speaking Grade 12 students, their occupational identity development also showed significant correlations with: the school qualifications of the mother (but not with those of the father), parental employment, and the occupational level (status) of the parents (Ackermann & Botha, 1998:208-212).

## 2.6.2 Socio-political factors

These factors are partly related to those addressed above. The previous socio-economic dispensation in South Africa, which discriminated against blacks in various spheres of life, might have contributed to tendencies toward identity foreclosure and a negative identity. Restrictions regarding career opportunities, social and recreational opportunities, participation in government decision-making processes, and education and training opportunities influence psychosocial development in a negative way.

Factors and experiences such as theses may cause the formation of a negative orientation towards the future, as well as tendencies toward self restriction, as opposed to assertiveness and initiative. (Hauser, 1972:127). Exploration is restricted by limited opportunities and alternatives, as well as by experiences such as prejudice, ethnocentrism, and discriminatory practices.

Spencer & Markstrom-Adams (1990:298) outlines the implications of limited exploration by indicating that the "... overall effect may be one of discouragement from involvement with those outside of one's own reference group and/or a subsequent diminished level of exploration during childhood and use of academic and apprenticeship opportunities during adolescence, which may have life-course implications".

### 2.6.3 Educational factors

The previous political dispensation in South Africa was, furthermore, accompanied by an education system in which black adolescents had relatively little exposure to the broader professional world and career decision-making. In addition, lower educational standards are, amongst others, associated with limited development of career identity (Hickson & White, 1989:79-80; Mkhabele, in Thom, 1988:164; Reid-Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 1990:3). A factor, which further contributed to this problem, was a lack of effective career guidance in traditionally black schools (Maesela, 1994:2).

### 2.6.4 Socio-cultural factors

In addition to the above-mentioned socio-economic, socio-political and educational variables, particular psychosocial factors inherent in particular cultures may also influence psychosocial (identity) development. The question thus arises whether particular approaches to psychosocial development (identity development in particular) are indeed relevant to all cultures, and whether a theory such as Erikson's does have universal applicability. It is argued that factors such as the following may contribute to explaining the apparent differences between Western and African cultures.

### 2.6.4.1 Collective versus individual orientation

Individualism versus collectivism may be regarded as one of the most relevant bipolar dimensions by means of which the dynamics of cultural differences can be explained and understood.

Regarding psychosocial processes such as identity formation, it may be hypothesised that cultures, in which a more collective orientation is evident, may differ from Western cultures, which are characterised by a more individualistic approach. As opposed to Western cultures, African cultures generally put a stronger emphasis on the interests of the group (family, clan, community) than on those of the individual. This implies that decision-making more often is a more collective issue, rather than an individual one.

### 2.6.4.2 Authoritarian versus democratic orientation

The traditional approach in African cultures is not characterised by a "democratic" style, but by a much more patriarchal style, not only regarding family issues but also broader community issues. In this regard, age plays a vital role, implying that the older person is the authority figure per se. This may result in identity foreclosure.

### 2.6.4.3    Assertiveness and initiative

In view of the preceding discussion, characteristics such as assertiveness and initiative may not be encouraged in African cultures, and in terms of Erikson's theory these are prerequisites for effective psychosocial development.

### 2.6.4.4    Gender roles

In traditional cultures, the female fulfils a subservient role in African society as opposed to the role of the male. This may have profound implications for the process of psychosocial development among females.

Regarding career identity development, Te Groen (1989:41) points out that this can be linked with gender role expectations in society. Females may consequently be influenced to consider traditionally female careers, which means that less or no career exploration is deemed necessary. This could explain high percentages of females in the foreclosure identity status.

It should be kept in mind, however, that factors such as those mentioned above are not static, but in any society are undergoing change over a period of time. At present this applies to the South African society in particular, due to the transitional phase the country finds itself in. The accelerated change occurs in various spheres of

society, and is mainly enhanced by processes such as urbanisation, westernisation, socio-political and socio-economic change. It may, therefore, be hypothesised that traditional gender stereotypes may change in future due to factors such as these.

On an international level, existing theory on identity development is mainly based on Western models, and Erikson's in particular. In view of the perspectives addressed above, the question arises whether existing approaches to psycho-social development (and identity development in particular) are indeed relevant to all cultures, and to the South African context in particular.

Do they present valid explanations of the identity process among adolescents from African cultures in particular? With reference to various developmental theories of Western origin, Laubscher & Klinger (1997:64) state: "...one must question whether we can generalise from the research findings and assume the same developmental sequence and content for people all over the world".

In this regard Alberts (in press), in view of the findings of three studies (Alberts, 1990, 1996, in press), concludes, however, that Marcia's identity status paradigm can be used with positive effects in an African cultural context. In spite of this, Alberts (in press) points out that future research on identity formation should investigate the

nature of the unique interaction between African adolescents and their socio-cultural environment. He continues:

"It seems, for example, that African communities are characterised by greater communality, with less emphasis on individuality and freedom of choice, values that are deeply embedded in Western cultural settings. Adolescents in formely oppressed societies in South Africa are, given their socio-economic circumstances, often formulating a personal identity in situations of limited opportunities and lack of resources. It is recommended that a number of studies using qualitative methodologies be undertaken to further investigate the nature of identity-related decisions made by African adolescents in the contemporary South African circumstances."

## 2.7 METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Spencer and Markstrom-Adams (1990:302-304) pointed out several problems associated with the measurement of identity (as well as other psychological constructs) among American minorities. These problems may, however, be as relevant to research in any multicultural context, and therefore should be considered seriously.

### 2.7.1 Language

Most research instruments are administered in English, which may cause problems for subjects for whom English is a second language.

This may even put the validity of such research under question. In South Africa, English is indeed a second language for most African children and adolescents, in spite of the fact that it is the main medium of instruction for formal education after Grade 4.

## 2.7.2 Psychological relevance of constructs

The constructs selected for measurement do not necessarily represent attributes that are desirable in all cultures. Independence, for instance, may be less important than interdependence for the members of some cultural groups (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990:303). The same may apply to other issues, which are particularly relevant to identity formation such as exploration and experimentation.

## 2.7.3 Conceptualisation of the identity construct

Spencer and Markstrom-Adams (1990:303-304) argue that the identity construct may be inadequately conceptualized. They point out that for many minority youth traditional models of identity development:

-ignore socio-cognitive developmental processes,

-assume homogeneity among group members,

-overlook patterns of coping and adaptation,

-fail to link unique ecosystem or multi-leveled environmental

 experiences with lifecourse models, and as a consequence,

-ignore the opportunity of furthering or broadening knowledge based on resilience and risk, whereas these young people's normative experiences require ongoing adaptive coping strategies as a function of race, ethnicity and/or colour:

"These problems suggest the need for alternative conceptual approaches...A multi-faceted theoretical formulation for understanding developmental processes for minority status youth is required" (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990:304).

The authors suggest an inclusive framework of development, which would account for identity-formation processes by responding to the such as:

i.      delineation of the role of status characteristics (for example race, ethnicity, colour, sex and economic status)

ii      addressing the subjective experience of stress and probable responses

iii.    exploring several intermediate processes that reflect perceptual organisation (role of cognition);

iv      accounting for mediating problem-solving patterns; and

v.      linking the antecedent factors (minority status and stress experience) the perceptually undergirded mediating processes

with specific behavioral outcomes (Spencer & Markstrom, 1990:304).

## 2.8 CONCLUSION

It seems that the recent studies find less clear differences between black and white identity development than the past studies. In terms of the more recent studies there seems to be a tendency towards identity achievement and moratorium among black adolescents. Both the international studies and the South African studies revealed these patterns. This may be due to changing conditions of the historically disadvantaged communities worldwide. The differences in identity developmental processes between black and white seems to be narrowing.

# CHAPTER THREE

# EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

## 3.1    INTRODUCTION

The literature study on adolescent identity development has been explored in chapter 2. This chapter includes the statement of the aim of the empirical investigation, a description of the research group, a description of the research instruments and research procedures. The results of the empirical investigation will be presented, analysed and interpreted.

## 3.2    AIM OF INVESTIGATION

The aim of this investigation was to examine identity-related decision-making among Xhosa-speaking adolescents. This was pursued by means of:

(a)     a general examination of the processes involved in major decision-making and the most important factors which played a role in such decisions, and

(b)     an examination of the processes of decision-making in four specific domains of identity development, namely occupation, religion, dating and sex roles.

## 3.3    METHOD

### 3.3.1 Research group

In view of the fact that interviews were to be conducted, it was decided that the research group would consist of 40 Grade 12 participants, comprising 20 females and 20 males.

A sample of convenience was used, consisting of learners who were attending a voluntary Saturday Enrichment Programme run under the auspices of the South African Institute of Race Relations in Cape Town. About one thousand African adolescents from historically disadvantaged schools in the traditional black townships of Khayelitsha, Guguletu, Nyanga, Philippi, and a few students from Khayamandi in Stellenbosch, attended this programme.

Since these learners were attending a voluntary programme, one can safely say that they were highly motivated and had a sense of purpose and direction in life. It must also be noted that most of the learners attending the Enrichment Programme came from schools where guidance is either non-existent or very limited.

During the Saturday sessions the learners were educationally enriched in English, Mathematics, Biology, Physical Science, Business Economics, Accounting, History, Geography and Life-skills education. The focus of the Life-skills programme included self-awareness, career

development, study skills, job-finding skills, sexuality and citizenship education.

An informed consent to conduct the investigation on the Life-skills group was obtained from the co-ordinator of the Enrichment Programme. The Life-skills group, which consisted of two hundred and fifty learners, was invited during the class sessions to an information session about the research to be undertaken. The information session was held after the last session of the Enrichment Programme. The purpose of the investigation was explained and the learners were informed that they would be taking part in a research project that seeks to understand how young people think about particular issues that may be important to them.

The researcher indicated that the results of the investigation could lead to a better understanding of African adolescents' identity development. The research participants were also informed that the researcher would interview the males and that a female would interview the females. More than forty learners volunteered, and the first twenty learners of each sex were included. The interviews were conducted after the Enrichment Programme sessions on Saturdays, and some were conducted after school hours during the week.

### 3.3.2 Research instrument

The Identity Status Interview of Grotevant and Cooper (1981), which is based on Marcia's Identity Status Interview (1964), was used to investigate identity development in particular content areas. This interview schedule has proved over many years to be a reliable and valid instrument for investigating the levels of exploration and commitment in terms of four modes of decision-making, namely identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion.

The Grotevant and Cooper interview schedule includes six content areas, which represent two domains of identity achievement. These areas are occupation, religion, and politics (ideological domain), as well as friendships, dating, and sex roles (interpersonal domain).

Due to the specific purpose of this study, some additional aspects were included in the interview, in order to examine the decision-making process from a more general perspective. This would, however, result in very lengthy interviews. It was consequently decided to select only four out of the six content areas included in the Identity Status Interview for the purpose of this investigation, two areas in the ideological domain and two in the interpersonal domain. After careful consideration, occupation and religion were selected to represent the ideological domain, and dating and sex roles to represent the interpersonal domain.

Career decision-making is important for all adolescents. The adolescent wants to select a career and prepare himself for a satisfying working environment. The new South Africa is presenting more career opportunities for African adolescents through the policy of affirmative action. There is therefore more pressure for them to make informed career choices. Career identity should therefore be fundamental to them, particularly towards the end of the secondary school years.

Religion is an important aspect of an ideological identity. Traditionally religion has played an important role among Africans. Children in African communities have always been encouraged to unquestioningly adopt their parents' religion. Racial and economic oppression in South Africa encouraged black people to turn to religion for assistance and guidance. This tendency could enhance identity foreclosure among African adolescents.

Dating is an important aspect of the adolescent's interpersonal relationships. Adolescence is characterised by physical maturity, particularly the development of primary and secondary characteristics. Adolescents then tend to become more interested in the opposite gender and they also get more involved in more intimate forms of relationships. Adolescence is a challenging stage since it involves processes of exploration, experimentation and even confusion.

Understanding African adolescents' decision-making processes regarding dating is therefore very important.

Dating exists in both Western and African cultures, but in different forms. Dating in Western cultures is characterised by transparency. The families of both parties are usually aware of the dating couple and they approve most of the time. Dating in African communities, on the other hand, is usually unknown to the families of the dating couple. If it becomes known, the mother is usually one of the first to know about the existence of such a relationship. If a couple date openly, they are usually regarded as being disrespectful.

The nature of men's and women's roles is changing in this new dispensation. Equality between men and women has been entrenched in the new constitution. In African communities in particular, the place of a woman has traditionally been perceived to be at home and has been regarded as being inferior to that of men. It must be realised that not all African women would accept this viewpoint.

The situation seems to be changing, however, and women are now challenged to make a meaningful contribution to the process of reconstruction and development. It should therefore be important to understand the perceptions of African adolescents on men's and

women's roles, especially in the light of transformation developments that are currently taking place in our country.

Minor adaptations were made to the wording of the original Identity Status Interview because the instrument was designed in America. The following are examples of adaptations that were made, and it must be noted that Grotevant and Cooper (1981) make provision for such adjustments.

**Occupation**

The question, "Are you planning to go to college?" was adapted to "Are you planning to go to College, University or Technikon?"

The question, "Do you know what you will major in?" was adapted to "Do you know the main subjects that you are going to do as part of your degree or diploma, the one's that you are going to take from first year to third year."

**Religion**

The word "folks" was adapted to family members. The word "anticipate" in the question, "Do you anticipate that your religious beliefs will stay the same or change over the next few years?" was adapted to "expect."

**Dating**

The question, "What experiences or people have influenced these choices?" was rephrased as "What experiences or people have influenced these ideas or views.?"

Due to the fact that the purpose of this study demanded an examination of the decision-making processes from a general perspective as well, some additional aspects were included in the interview. Apart from some biographical information (personal history regarding urban/rural areas of residence, family situation, education and occupations of parents), these additional aspects included issues such as:

- Major factors influencing the participants' lives
- Major decisions made, factors and considerations involved in such decisions, and the level of commitment to those decisions
- Particular plans and goals for the future, anticipated means of achieving them, major factors involved, and the level of commitment to such plans and goals.

It was argued that this would contribute to a better understanding of the processes of decision-making and identity development among these young people. It may, more particularly, also produce a better understanding of the extent to which their decision-making takes place in a more individual or collective way, and to what extent a personal

identity is in fact, formed. The interviews started with these aspects (Section A of the interview), and were followed by the Grotevant & Cooper schedule (Section B of the interview) (See Addendum).

### 3.3.3 Procedures

### 3.3.3.1 Training of interviewers

The interviewers (the researcher and the research assistant) are both scholars of identity psychology and are familiar with Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. They are also fluent in English and Xhosa. The mother tongue of all the participants is Xhosa, but most of them are also fluent in English.

The researcher and the research assistant were trained by the research supervisor on how to conduct the interviews, which means that trained interviewers conducted the interviews. The researcher and his research assistant first studied the manual (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981).

The training of the researchers involved the following: The researcher and the research assistant, under the guidance of the research supervisor, listened to existing interview tape recordings so that they could acquire the skills and experience of interviewing, and particular aspects from the tape recordings were discussed.

The investigators thereafter practised interviewing skills with one adolescent each. After the practise interviews, the tape recordings were played and the research supervisor was satisfied with the quality of the interviews. After proper training in the administration and coding of the interviews, the interviews were conducted individually over a period of two months.

### 3.3.3.2    Administration of interviews

The participants were asked to make themselves available for interviews with the researcher and the research assistant on a specific day and time. They were made aware that the interviews would take between thirty and sixty minutes. The researchers conducted the interviews after the Enrichment sessions on Saturdays and some interviews were conducted after school hours during the week, either in the counselling office or in classrooms.

The interviews were conducted during October and November 1998. It was clearly indicated to the research participants that the information gathered would be treated with the strictest confidentiality. They would not be required to mention their own names during the course of the interview, and all that was required was their views. All the interviewees were asked for their permission before tape recording. All the interviewees gave permission.

The researcher (male) and the research assistant (female) conducted the interviews. This was done in accordance with Grotevant and Cooper's (1981) administration and coding manual, which recommends that males should preferably be interviewed by a male and females by a female.

The interviews were conducted in English. The quality of English of most of the adolescents was good and most of them preferred to have the interviews conducted in English, even though they were given the option of communicating in their mother tongue. Only in some cases did the researchers shift from English to Xhosa. This was done in order to clarify some questions and when the researcher learnt that the participant could express her/himself better in Xhosa. Some participants mixed English and Xhosa.

### 3.3.3.3    Coding of tape-recorded interviews

Before efficient coding of the forty interviews started, the coders listened to some tape recordings and coded them. The level of agreement was of a high level, and some interrator disagreements were resolved through negotiation and discussion.

Each of the forty tape-recorded interviews were coded by three coders independently, namely the two interviewers and the project supervisor.

On behalf of the supervisor, who is not Xhosa-speaking, Xhosa interviews were translated into English.

Regarding section B (the domain-specific interviews), the prescribed coding procedures (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981) were followed. Coding agreement between two of the three coders was regarded as satisfactory. The percentages of agreement between all three coders in the different domains were: occupation 65%, religion 55% (Ideology total 60%); dating 52,5%, sex roles 55% (Interpersonal total 55%). A two-third interrater agreement occurred in 87,5% of the interviews. Only in five cases was there no initial agreement. These five interview recordings were re-coded and discussed, and at least a two-thirds agreement could be reached in all five cases.

## 3.4    BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF RESEARCH GROUP

### 3.4.1        Age and gender

Table 3.1    Composition of research group per age and gender

| GENDER | AGE | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | Total |
| **Females** | | | | | | | | | |
| Frequency | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Percentage | 30 | 25 | 20 | 15 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Cumulative % | 30 | 55 | 75 | 90 | | 100 | | | |
| **Males** | | | | | | | | | |
| Frequency | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 |
| Percentage | 15 | 20 | 25 | 20 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 100 |
| Cumulative % | 15 | 35 | 60 | 80 | 95 | | | 100 | |
| **Total** | | | | | | | | | |
| Frequency | 9 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 40 |
| Percentage | 22,5 | 22,5 | 22,5 | 17,5 | 7,5 | 5,0 | 0 | 2,5 | 100 |
| Cumulative % | 22,5 | 45,5 | 67,5 | 85,0 | 92,7 | 97,5 | | 100 | |

Table 3.1 shows that 67,5% of the total group was below the age of 20

years. Seventy-five percent of females were below the age of 20 years,

and only 60% of the males were under the age of 20 years. The estimate mean age of the total group was 19,4. The estimate mean age of the females was 19,1 and that of the males was 19,75.

### 3.4.2 Years in rural / urban areas

Sixteen respondents (nine females and seven males) had never lived in a rural area. Of the 24 who had previously lived in a rural area, the average for females is 11,1 years and that of males is 13,8 years.

The average number of years in an urban area for females was 12,4 years, for males 10,25 years, and that of the total research group was 11,33 years. The average number of years in Cape Town for females was 10,0 years, for males 7,8 years, and that of the total research group 8,9 years.

Out of the 20 females, seven had been living in an urban area for less than eight years; the other 13 had been urbanised for more than 14 years. In the case of the males, the corresponding numbers were three and 12 years respectively. These figures clearly indicate a bimodal tendency among the females in particular.

Only nine (22,5%) of the participants, including six females and three males, were born in Cape Town and had resided there all their life. Most of the others were born in the Eastern Cape, either in the urban

area of East London or in some other rural area. The main reasons for moving to Cape Town were (1) better employment opportunities for their parents and/or for themselves, and (2) better secondary school education opportunities.

### 3.4.3 Family size

**Table 3.2    Family size of respondents**

| Family size* | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Frequency | 3 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 11 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Percentage | 7,5 | 7,5 | 15 | 20 | 27,5 | 17,5 | 2,5 | 0 | 2,5 |

*Including two parents in all cases

The mean family size was 6,3 and this translates to 4,3 children per family. Eighty percent of the families consist of five to eight members per family (three to six children).

### 3.4.4  Status of parents in family life

**Table 3.3    Status of parents in family life**

| | Stay with family | | | | Separated from family | | | | Deceased | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mother | | Father | | Mother | | Father | | Mother | | Father | |
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| **Females** | 13 | 65 | 9 | 45 | 6 | 30 | 2 | 45 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 45 |
| **Males** | 16 | 80 | 8 | 40 | 4 | 20 | 6 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 30 |
| **Total** | 29 | 72,5 | 17 | 42,5 | 10 | 22,5 | 8 | 20 | 2 | 5 | 15 | 37,5 |

According to Table 3.3, 72,5% of the mothers of the participants, as opposed to only 42,5% of fathers, were staying with the rest of the family permanently. The main reason for the high percentage of father absence was the fact that 15 of the 40 fathers (37,5%) were deceased, as opposed to only two (5%) of the mothers. Out of the ten mothers who were separated from their children, only two are separated on a permanent basis. Six worked in other provinces, and two are pensioners. Out of the eight fathers who were separated, four were separated permanently while the other four worked elsewhere.

An important fact that is not evident from the table, is that only 16 of the 40 respondents (40%) were staying with both parents, and one stayed with her own father and a stepmother. Another 13 (32,5%) were members of one parent families, with the mother being the only parent. Four of the respondents stayed with brothers and/or sisters, five with other relatives (four with aunts and one with a grandmother), and one stayed with friends.

It would be expected that more of the older respondents would be staying without parents. The age of the participants, however, did not seem to have any effect on whether they stayed with their parents or not. The average age of the ten participants who were not staying with a parent was 18,3 years, as compared to the average age of 19,4 years

for the total group. Two of the four respondents who stayed with siblings were, for example, 17 year olds.

### 3.4.5  Education of parents

**Table 3.4    Education of parents**

| | Grade 1-4 | Grade 5-7 | Grade 8-10 | Grade 11-12 | Tertiary | Unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mother** f | 3 | 3 | 18 | 12 | 2 | 2 |
| % | 7,5 | 7,5 | 45 | 30 | 5 | 5 |
| **Father** f | 5 | 5 | 18 | 12 | 1 | 10 |
| % | 12,5 | 12,5 | 32,5 | 15 | 2,5 | 25 |
| **Total**  f | 8 | 8 | 31 | 18 | 3 | 12 |
| % | 10 | 10 | 38,75 | 22,5 | 3,75 | 15 |

Out of the total group of parents (N=80), about 26% (n=21) had a higher education level than grade 10, and only three (3,57%) had tertiary education. The correlation  co-efficient between mothers' and fathers' level of education was 0,6177 (p<0,05).

These figures should be interpreted with caution, however, because 12 (15%) of the parents' level of education could not be reported by the participants. Ten of those parents were fathers, which was due to the fact that a higher percentage of fathers than mothers had passed away and were not known by the participants.

### 3.4.6 Occupation of parents

Regarding the education of the parents, only a few of the respondents' parents were employed in high levels of skilled work. One of the mothers was engaged in tertiary studies, one was a Member of Parliament, one was a schoolteacher, and one did secretarial work. Twelve of the mothers were not economically active (housewives), 15 were domestic workers, and three were nurses. The others made a living by means of selling goods and other forms of unskilled labour.

Limited information about the occupations of the fathers could be obtained, due to the fact that 15 were deceased, four did not have any contact with the participants, and another two participants indicated that they did not know what their fathers do. Of the remainder, four were unemployed, four were in technical occupations, such as electricity and mechanical work, and eight did unskilled labour. Only four found themselves in higher skilled occupations, including one parliamentary official, two union officials, and a teacher.

## 3.5    RESULTS

### 3.5.1 Decision-making in general

#### 3.5.1.1        Introduction

The more general aspects related to decision-making in the process of identity development (See Addendum, Section A) will be dealt with first, and this will be followed by a presentation of the results of the domain-specific part (Addendum, Section B). In the process of data analysis, a quantitative approach was primarily followed. Quantification of data was, however, applied as far as it seemed to be relevant, and as far as it can support a meaningful and valid interpretation of the data. In this section an indication of the relevant key interview items are given in italics. The presentation and discussion of the results follows.

#### 3.5.1.2        Factors influencing their lives

*The participants were asked about the major factors that influenced their lives. Regarding each factor mentioned, they were further asked whether they anticipated changes regarding the importance of that factor in future.*

The results obtained regarding major factors that influenced the lives of the respondents revealed that 50% of the participants perceived their parents, especially the mother, as the major factor. The second major

influence was friends (15%) and only 5% referred to television, religion and teachers as major influences in their lives. About 2,5% referred to music, riots and a sister.

This result seems to confirm what would be expected from adolescents from African communities. Traditionally, African parents have played an active role in the decision-making processes of their children. This is deeply entrenched in the African culture, although it is changing due to the processes of urbanisation and westernisation. This result also shows that African adolescents have not completely adopted western tendencies of individuality. Identity for young people in African communities is still defined in relation to the role that is played by parents in the lives of young people. Mathunyane (1992:66) also confirms this when he maintains that parents, especially the mother, play a very important role in the choice of a spouse. The essential role that is played by parents is also noted by Myburgh and Smith (1990:157) when they assert that "...black adolescents placed a high premium on their school and parents and less on their friends". This can also explain why only 15% of the respondents referred to friends as important influences in their lives.

Changes foreseen

In terms of any changes foreseen regarding the above factors, 60% of the female respondents did not foresee any changes regarding the

importance of the above mentioned factors, 25% of them foresaw changes and 15% were uncertain about whether the factors would become more or less important. As compared to the female respondents, 45% of the males did not foresee changes, 50% foresaw changes and 5% were unsure. This means that relatively more males than females seemed to expect a decline in the future influence of their mothers and friends in particular.

Out of the total group 60% of the females and 45% of the males indicated that they did not foresee any changes regarding the parent being an important factor. This could be an indication of the confidence and reliance the black adolescents have on their parents. Parents in African communities, and this can also be the case in Western communities, serve as role models for their children. They should be playing an important role in guiding young people towards the future.

According to Mathunyane (1992:64), in guiding and orientating the young people towards the future, and this is particularly relevant for the males, the "...father is expected to give his son the education necessary to make him productive and the proper carrier of the family name". It is also worth mentioning that the "...mother on the other hand sees to it that her daughter maintains the cultural standards set for all decent girls who, as a result, experience little difficulty in

finding an understanding husband and establishing a home" (Mathunyane, 1992:64). It must be noted that gender roles are also enhanced in this way.

### 3.5.1.3 Major decisions

*The participants were also asked about the most important decisions they have taken in their lives. Regarding each decision mentioned, the respondents were further asked why that decision was taken, what major factors played a role, how they went about making the decision (the process), and how committed they were to the decision (whether they foresaw changes).*

An important finding is that a high percentage (70%) of the participants had made the decision to do further studies at tertiary institutions. The participants' career choices were mainly in science, technology and engineering, as well as in the world of commerce. More than ten percent wanted to work and support the biological family or to take care of parents. They also showed a strong community involvement, and indicated that they would like to be involved in community based projects. Further 10% indicated that they had decided to follow Christianity, 5% decided to do the right things, 2,5% to get along with good friends and 2,5% decided not to fall in love.

These results show a clear tendency towards thinking about the future. They want to better their lives and also to improve the quality of the lives of their families and communities. This could be as a result of the career opportunities presented to black adolescents by the transformation that is taking place in South Africa (Ackermann,1997). It must once gain be realised that the participants were attending a voluntary Enrichment Programme, including a strong Lifeskills component, in which there was a strong emphasis on career development. The tendency towards career maturity could be a result of the Enrichment Programme, and it could also be influenced by the fact that the research group is from an urban area.

Why the decisions were taken

The decisions were primarily taken to better the lives of the participants and most importantly, to improve the situation of their families. This can explain why the majority of them were career orientated. These decisions could also be taken as a result of their socio-economic situation, in pursuit of improving their financial situation.

How they went about making the decisions

The methods used by the participants varied. Some of them had been through career counselling either from tertiary institutions or schools. Friends influenced some of the decisions. Television and educational

programs seem to have played a role as well. It should be noted that career guidance in most schools is still limited and is normally based on merely providing information. In general decisions were based on relatively limited exploration.

Commitment to the decisions

A very high percentage of the participants (95% of the females and 90% of the males) indicated that they were strongly committed to the decisions they had taken. This may be perceived as a positive trend, because commitment to a career future may motivate them to work more purposeful towards achieving and attaining their academic and career goals. On the other hand, a strong commitment that is not based on a period of effective exploration, consideration of alternatives, and decision-making, may bring about identity foreclosure. In this regard it may be a matter of concern that most of the careers striven for are on a very high level, and require high levels of academic competence. Some of these young people may, consequently, find it hard to achieve their career goals.

### 3.5.1.4    Plans and goals

*The participants were further asked about their goals and plans for the future. Regarding each plan/goal mentioned, the participants were further asked why that was important to them, how they planned to*

*achieve it, what major factors would play a role, and what the possibility was of them changing that plan was.*

The plans and goals envisaged seemed to overlap to a large extent with the decisions mentioned before: Career related goals leading to employment (50%), self-employment (20%), to have their own family (10%), to do something for the biological family and to be involved in community projects, e.g. street kids project (5%).

The tendency towards self-employment (20%) is an important one since there is a high rate of unemployment in South Africa. Young African people are beginning to be more aware that self-job creation is the key to economic empowerment. It must also be realised that in South Africa in particular, acquiring a qualification is not a guarantee to getting a job. Self-employment can therefore be perceived to lead to lifelong fulfilment and personal independence and development. It should be stressed that what is needed is the injection of funds in young people's empowerment programmes.

Few participants indicated spontaneously that they would like to have their own families. Families are the cornerstones of any society. If there are strong families, the moral fibre of our society can be sustained. In African communities the institution of the family is very

important because it is where African children are educated about life experiences (Mathunyane, 1992:64).

The fact that quite a few of the respondents indicated that they want to do something for their biological families should also be applauded. This reaffirms the way many African people are brought up. The African culture promotes looking after one another, whether it is brothers and sisters, families or communities (Mathunyane, 1992:62). Individualism is not encouraged and this is the essence of the core culture of the African people.

Some of the participants wanted to involve themselves in community based projects. It was clear from the interviews that serving the community was a priority. This desire could also be seen to be consistent with the African way of life. Ubuntu (Humanity) has been an essential component of the African culture. This is a positive tendency, because if people look after and support one another, there could be less crime and violent behaviour. There is therefore a tendency that the new African generation is still embracing the traditional values of the African culture.

(a)    <u>Why those goals were important</u>

According to the participants their goals were important because they would give them a sense of direction in life. They would know where

they are going. Goal setting helps one to have a sense of purpose in life and motivates one to work towards that goal.

(b)    How they plan to achieve it

The ways given by the respondents can be summarised in three words. These three words are diligence, commitment and discipline.

(c)    Commitment to plans and goals

The majority of the participants (females 85% and males 75%) indicated that they did not foresee the possibility of changing their plans. This again indicates commitment and the desire to work towards the realisation of such goals, but may at the same time indicate a lack of flexibility.

3.5.1.5    Future marriage plans

The purpose of this part was to learn what role other people and/or other factors may play in decision-making regarding marriage plans.

Interview formulation

(a)    *Do you foresee that you will get married in future? Why YES or NO?*

(b)    *If YES on (a), Do you already have a marriage partner in mind?*

*If YES on (b): (1) Why did you set your mind on this person?*

*(2) What are your parents' views on your choice?*

*(3) What are other important people's views?*

*If NO on (b): (1) How would you go about the decision regarding the person whom you're going to marry?*

*(2) Which other people would be involved in the decision-making process?*

The male's and female's responses are to be dealt with separately because there are clear differences regarding the way they perceive marriage plans.

(a)     Marriage foreseen

Females

About 60% of the female participants indicated that they would like to get married in future and 40% of them said no to marriage.

The high percentage (40%) of female participants rejecting ideas of marriage needs to be explored. In terms of the African culture women have been encouraged to value the institution of marriage. Getting married for an African woman has been a dream come true, especially when Lobola (the bride price) has to be paid. The family and the immediate community have always celebrated the institution of

marriage. This result is therefore of concern because it shows that there is a gradual move away from the celebration of marriage as the traditional or cultural institution, because marriage in African communities has been regarded as an "...acceptance and adoption of the norms and values of the community" (Mathunyane, 1992:67).

The lack of interest in marriage could be as a result of changing socio-economic conditions, personal experiences and their observations in the community. Some indicated that they would not get married because of abusive relationships and a lack of trust in men. Traditionally women relied heavily on men for livelihood and this is changing. The men owned the means of production. This resulted in men having more control over women. The changing socio-economic, socio-cultural and political conditions present equal opportunities for both men and women and this is deeply entrenched in the South African constitution. There are currently various women empowerment programmes in South Africa.

Only one participant cited the lack of lobola for not wanting to get married. This is also important because paying Lobola is an old African cultural practice. The value of women has always been determined by the bride price. Paying Lobola meant the bridegroom was appreciative of the fact that the in-laws have brought up the bride

well. It had always been perceived as the way of strengthening the relationships between the family of the bride and the bridegroom.

It should be realised that the majority of those who said "no" to marriage, said no because of personal experiences at home and in the broader community. The experiences were the experiences of dysfunctional families leading to divorce, characterised by abuse and infidelities, and this has resulted in one of the participants indicating that "men are liars". This is a strong statement, for it shows hatred borne out of experience. It also shows a lack of confidence in men.

Those who said "yes" to marriage said so for a variety of reasons. They are looking for a marriage that is characterised by good communication, trust and openness, understanding and love. This is encouraging because it means that they will consider marriage after they have explored and thought carefully about marriage. These values are usually learned during the initiation processes.

(b)    Marriage partner in mind?

About 45% of the female participants, who intend to get married, indicated that they have a marriage partner in mind, and 55% indicated that they do not have a marriage partner in mind.

(c)    Parent's views

Only 45% of the participants indicated that they would consider their parent's views when wanting to get married.

Parents are still an important influence in the adolescent's lives in the present study, but when it comes to decision-making the role of parents seems to be diminishing. It would seem from this result that this tendency is changing, especially when it comes to issues relating to marriage. This result indicates that the role of parents in the decision-making of female adolescents is gradually diminishing. This new tendency towards making one's own decisions, could be seen in the light processes of westernisation, the changing socio-economic conditions, and the fact that collectivism may be becoming less important for African adolescents (Stevens and Lockhat, 1997:250).

It should be realised that even today if a young person decides to marry the loved one without the views or the consent of the parents, such a marriage would not be acceptable to the parents of the married couple. The married couple might become alienated and be distanced from the activities of the biological families. This practice is still in full existence in most African communities.

(d)     Other people's views

Only 5% of the participants indicated that they would consider other people's views. The rest indicated that they would decide on their own when considering marriage. This result once again shows a tendency from collectivism to individualism. Extended families are diminishing, and members of the extended families are often separated by long distances. Grandparents, aunts and uncles might still reside in the rural areas and the couple who wants to get married might be in urban areas. It is often difficult to consult the members of the extended family who might be scattered all over South Africa. It must also be considered that the westernised youth might not see it necessary to consult the members of the extended family, as they may now regard themselves as being autonomous individuals who want to make their own decisions.

Males

(a)     Marriage foreseen

As far as the male participants are concerned, 75% of them indicated that they would like to get married, as compared to 15% of them who said "no" to marriage. Ten percent of them were uncertain or undecided.

The high percentage (75%) of males who foresee marriage is not unexpected. Getting married for an African man has been an important

part of his identity. A married man is more respected than an unmarried man or a divorced man. Getting married is the most important decision after initiation or circumcision. For men, marriage, particularly in the African communities, is a source of strength and power, social recognition and advancement. This source of power of men is reflected in the following extract:

"The son is always the favourite of the father and in the early years the child is encouraged to view his father as a role model. It is the responsibility of the father to direct his family activities and the behaviour of his children" (Mathunyane, 1992:65).

It must also be mentioned that the reasons for men wanting to get married in this investigation did not reflect the need to dominate or to control. Some want to marry because they consider it to "be a biblical thing" and to have a "family that has a good life".

(b)     Marriage partner in mind?
Only 20% of the participants indicated that they have a future marriage partner in mind and 80% of them indicated that that they do not have a future marriage partner in mind.

The low percentage (20%) of those who indicated that they have a marriage partner in mind is not unexpected. African male adolescents

are not initially encouraged to think about marriage. The initial expectations that he must help his biological family to develop because at a later stage he would be expected to bring his bride home. Second, he must think about the school of circumcision. Circumcision is a prerequisite for any man who wants to get married. This process requires financial and psychological preparation. This therefore means that the African male adolescent has a lot to think about before starting to think about marriage. This is still practised in many African communities.

(c)     Parents' views

Only 35% of the participants indicated that they would consider their parents' views when considering marriage partners. As in females this result reflects a tendency towards individualism and the reasons mirror those of the females.

(d)     Other people's views

In terms of other people's views, only 5% of the participants indicated that they would consider other people's views, such as friends and relatives. The tendency is the same as for females and the explanations match.

### 3.5.1.6      Conclusion

It is evident that parents continue to play an important role in the lives of young people in the present study, even though this is changing gradually due the processes of westernisation and urbanisation. It has also been apparent that the decisions and goals were more career orientated, meaning that African adolescents are becoming conscious of the opportunities presented to them by the new South Africa. It should also be realised that with regards to parents, there is a changing pattern in the thinking of African adolescents when considering marriage. It has been noted that there is a tendency towards individual decision-making in this sphere. Parents seem to play a lesser role in individual decision-making.

### 3.5.2 IDENTITY DOMAINS

### 3.5.2.1      Introduction

This section deals with the description of the statistical data. This is done by looking at the identity status distribution per domain and gender and by also looking at relationships between independent variables and identity status. The statistical data is not analysed for the total group because of apparent gender differences. A conclusion is then drawn based on identity status distribution per domain and gender and on relationships between independent variables and identity status.

Table   3.5       Identity status distribution per domain and gender

| IDENTITY DOMAIN | GENDER | IDENTITY STATUS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Achievement | | Moratorium | | Subtotal (1)* | | Foreclosure | | Diffusion | | Subtotal (2)* | | Total |
| | | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n |
| Occupation | M | 15 | 75 | 1 | 5 | 16 | 80 | 3 | 15 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 20 | 20 |
| | F | 7 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 35 | 11 | 55 | 2 | 10 | 13 | 65 | 20 |
| | T | 22 | 55 | 1 | 2,5 | 23 | 57,5 | 14 | 35 | 3 | 7,5 | 17 | 42,5 | 40 |
| Religion | M | 10 | 50 | 3 | 15 | 13 | 65 | 3 | 15 | 4 | 20 | 7 | 17,5 | 20 |
| | F | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 10 | 15 | 75 | 3 | 15 | 18 | 45 | 20 |
| | T | 11 | 27,5 | 4 | 10 | 15 | 37,5 | 18 | 45 | 7 | 17,5 | 25 | 62,5 | 40 |
| **Total: Ideological domain** | **M** | **25** | **62,5** | **4** | **10** | **29** | **72,5** | **6** | **15** | **5** | **12,5** | **11** | **27,5** | **40** |
| | **F** | **8** | **20** | **1** | **2,5** | **9** | **22,5** | **26** | **65** | **5** | **12,5** | **31** | **77,5** | **40** |
| | **T** | **33** | **41,3** | **5** | **6,3** | **38** | **47,5** | **32** | **40** | **10** | **12,5** | **42** | **52,5** | **80** |
| Dating | M | 6 | 30 | 7 | 35 | 13 | 65 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 35 | 7 | 35 | 20 |
| | F | 7 | 35 | 3 | 15 | 10 | 50 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 45 | 10 | 50 | 20 |
| | T | 13 | 32,5 | 10 | 25 | 23 | 57,5 | 1 | 2,5 | 16 | 40 | 17 | 42,5 | 40 |
| Gender role | M | 14 | 70 | 3 | 15 | 17 | 85 | 3 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 15 | 20 |
| | F | 10 | 50 | 3 | 15 | 13 | 65 | 3 | 15 | 4 | 20 | 7 | 35 | 20 |
| | T | 24 | 60 | 6 | 15 | 30 | 75 | 6 | 15 | 4 | 10 | 10 | 25 | 40 |
| **Total: Interpersonal domain** | **M** | **20** | **50** | **10** | **25** | **30** | **75** | **3** | **7,5** | **7** | **17,5** | **10** | **25** | **40** |
| | **F** | **17** | **42,5** | **6** | **15** | **23** | **57,5** | **4** | **10** | **13** | **32,5** | **17** | **42,5** | **40** |
| | **T** | **37** | **46,3** | **16** | **20** | **53** | **66,3** | **7** | **8,7** | **20** | **25** | **27** | **33,7** | **80** |

*Subtotal (1) is a combination of the identity achievement and moratorium statuses, which represents the more sophisticated modes of decision-making. Subtotal (2) is a combination of the foreclosure and diffusion statuses, which represents the less sophisticated modes of decision-making.

### 3.5.2.2.1    Occupational identity

Regarding *occupational* identity, marked gender differences are evident from table 3.5. Seventy-five percent of the males were, for example, classified into the achievement status, as opposed to only 35% of the females, and 55% of the females were classified into foreclosure, as opposed to only 15% of the males. As Subtotals (1) and (2) show, the male participants used more sophisticated modes of decision-making (achievement and moratorium) than the females. Relatively more females than males tend to make career decisions without thoroughly exploring career possibilities. This tendency may be related to traditional stereotyping and perceptions regarding family obligations and community expectations, which may limit career options for women.

A relatively large percentage (75%) of the males were classified into the identity achievement status. This means that firm occupational commitment was made after a period of active exploration of alternatives. In contrast, the representation of the other statuses was relatively small. This result confirms what Alberts (1996) found. He also found that black African adolescents were using sophisticated decision-making processes in forming an occupational identity.

The tendency towards identity achievement should be viewed in the light of the socio-economic developments that are currently taking place in South Africa. The new South Africa is presenting more opportunities to black South Africans than ever before. This dispensation seems to be encouraging black adolescents to make informed career decisions.

In the past black schools lacked support services such as guidance and counselling (Ackermann, 1997), but now there is a concerted effort by the state to ensure that each and every school has a guidance teacher. This is clearly reflected in the governments' outcomes based education initiative where life orientation is one of the key learning areas. This tendency could be due to the fact that guidance and counselling services are now taken more seriously by the authorities, teachers and learners alike.

These results should be encouraging for guidance teachers, career counsellors and psychologists. The state and the private sector should also be encouraged, because adolescents who have made informed career decisions could be an asset for any developing or even developed country. This could lead to a productive motivated workforce.

The overrepresentation of males (75%) in the identity achievement status should be viewed in terms of the traditional role they play in society. Decisions regarding careers have traditionally been the prerogative of the male population. The role of women has always been perceived to be in the home. This perhaps explains why females are overrepresented in the identity foreclosure status. This implies that they had passively adopted certain careers without exploring alternatives. This may be related to existing gender role expectations in the community (Botha and Ackermann, 1997:74).

### 3.5.2.2.2     Religious identity

According to Table 3.5, the *religious* domain largely reveals the same identity status pattern as the occupational domain, with a relatively high representation of males (50%) in the achievement status, and the majority (75%) of the females in foreclosure. According to Subtotal (1), the majority (65%) of the male participants show active exploration (i.e. more sophisticated levels of decision-making) in the religious domain, but the females more often tend to commit themselves to the religious views with which they were brought up, without really exploring religious issues (identity foreclosure).

This result seems to be consistent with Alberts' studies (1990,1996), who found that females used less sophisticated decision-making modes (foreclosure and diffusion). Alberts found that the majority of the

adolescents in his study came from religious homes where a lot of pressure was exerted on them to take part in religious activities. It can also be said that similar conditions prevailed for the participants of the present study. In African communities, children are expected to uncritically follow the religion of their parents.

If one looks at males and females separately, the males seem to be more represented in the identity achievement status. This shows that the males have considered alternatives before making firm commitments. This result is encouraging, because young males in African communities are normally not interested in religious affairs. The research participants see the importance of religion in their lives, and they have not passively adopted the religion of their parents.

Females, on the other hand, are more identity foreclosed (75%) than males. Women in African communities have always been the most committed and dedicated entity when it comes to religious affairs. Little exploration seem to have taken place; they normally follow the footsteps of their parents, especially the mother. This can also be explained in relation to the existing gender roles. Females have always been expected to be docile and to uncritically follow instructions.

### 3.5.2.2.3 Dating

As opposed to the ideological domains (occupation and religion), Table 3.5 reveals more similar identity status patterns for males and females in the area of *dating*. Only one participant was classified into the foreclosure status, but more participants (35% of the males and 45% of the females) were classified into the diffusion status than in any of the other three domains.

This may indicate that they do not deal with decision-making in areas of friendships and dating as actively and consciously as they may do in domains such as occupation and religion. This could mean that they could enter into dating and intimate relationships without proper exploration and decision-making.

They may end up with partners whose values, interests and personalities are in conflict with their own. This can manifest itself in dysfunctional relationships, leading to dysfunctional marital relationships, which are likely to be abusive and exploitative, and which do not last. Some may, because of ill-informed decisions, end up marrying without proper exploration and this may lead to unsuccessful relationships. It must also be realised that dating identity diffusion can also be viewed positively in the sense that the adolescent may have decided not to think about dating or to get involved in dating at this stage, but rather to focus their attention on their studies.

If one looks at the males and females separately, one finds that the females are best represented in the identity diffusion status. This could mean that they are either not interested in dating at this stage or they might still not have developed a sense of direction as far as dating is concerned. Males, on the other hand, are better represented in the moratorium identity status. This is a positive indication in the sense that they are in the process of making informed decisions. This result is indeed encouraging because males are generally regarded as people who do not think very much when it comes to dating issues, they seek for instant solutions.

### 3.5.2.2.4    Gender roles

Regarding the other interpersonal domain, gender role, markedly more participants were classified into the identity achievement status than in the dating domain. In fact, as compared to the other three domains of identity development included in this study, most participants showed more sophisticated modes of decision-making in this domain, namely 85% of the males and 65% of the females (See Subgroup (1) ). The interviews clearly proved that the participants from both genders are aware of gender role issues, and that they are deliberately moving away from traditional stereotypical thinking.

### 3.5.2.3. Relationships between independent variables and identity status

#### 3.5.2.3.1 Introduction

Preliminary observations of the data clearly indicated the possibility of significant gender differences, and it may be necessary to regard the data as heterogeneous regarding gender. The effect of gender (as an independent variable) on identity decision-making was consequently further explored in each of the four domains. In view of the fact that identity statuses should probably not be regarded as an ordinal scale, these calculations were performed in terms of levels of exploration and commitment separately, because they do represent true ordinal scales.

#### 3.5.2.3.2 Gender and identity exploration/commitment

These calculations were performed by means of the Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA and a Median test. Eight possible relationships were thus investigated, namely gender and exploration as well as gender and commitment in each of the four domains. Two of these eight relationships showed statistical significance, namely:

**(a)    Gender and occupational exploration** (Kruskal-Wallis = 8,4466; p = 0,0037)

The male participants showed higher levels of exploration in the occupational domain than the females. This result confirms Marcia's

(1964) view, namely that occupation is very important to the identity development of male adolescents. There are no significant gender differences regarding occupational commitment, because of high percentage of females in foreclosure (Table 3.5).

In the more recent study of Alberts (in press), he found that both genders showed significantly higher representation in the more sophisticated modes of decision-making (achievement and moratorium). It must also be realised that, contrary to expectations, Alberts (1996) found that significantly more female (85,71%) and male (76%) adolescents made use of more sophisticated decision-making modes, in that firm occupational commitments were made after a period of active exploration of alternatives. The participants were actively weighing up different occupational alternatives with the aim of making a commitment in the near future.

This result should be encouraging because Erikson (1963) emphasized that an important aspect of identity development revolves around the choosing of an occupation.

Generally, the findings are encouraging for anyone involved in guidance and counselling services for young people and particularly for youth development programmes that focus on career development. It is

concerning to note that females are still struggling in achieving career identity. Females seem to be in dire need of occupational guidance.

**(b)    Gender and religious exploration** (Kruskal-Wallis = 10,2010; p = 0,0014; Median Test = 12, 9067; p = 0,0003; df = 1)

The male respondents showed higher levels of religious exploration than the females. The present study is in conflict with Alberts' study (in press), which found that significantly more males were represented in the less sophisticated modes (72% in foreclosure and diffusion) than in the sophisticated modes. It must also be noted that Alberts (1990) found that there was an overrepresentation of unsophisticated decision-making modes (foreclosure and identity diffusion) and identity mature decisions were underrepresented.

The present study seems to be in conflict in terms of what would be expected from African males. Generally, African males are not interested in religious activities, especially those that are perceived to be from the western cultures. The majority of the participants of the present study belong to the traditionally western-based churches even though some still worship ancestors.

Alberts' (in press) study findings confirm what would be expected among African communities as far as gender differences in religious identity are concerned. The fact that the majority of males were found in the less sophisticated modes is not unexpected. Females in African communities are the ones who play a more dominant role in religious affairs. Alberts' (in press) study seems to replicate what he previously established (1990, 1996). It should be realised that he did his study in a rural setting and the present study was done in an urban setting.

### 3.5.2.3.3 Independent variables and exploration/ commitment per gender

Relationships between identity decision-making and other independent variables (age, family size, and educational level of the mother) were investigated for males and females separately by means of Spearman Rank Order correlations. Because of limited information on the education of the fathers, this variable was not included for statistical analysis. The relationships which showed statistical significance are displayed in table 3.6.

**Table 3.6    Relationship between independent variables and**

**exploration/commitment  per gender**

| RELATIONSHIP | FEMALES | | MALES | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Spearman (R) | p-value | Spearman(R) | p-value |
| Age and occupational exploration | -0,6070 | 0,0045 | 0,5845 | 0,00,68 |
| Age and religious commitment | Not significant | | 0,5775 | 0,0077 |
| Age and dating exploration | -0,4484 | 0,0474 | Not significant | |
| Age and sex-role commitment | -0,4763 | 0,0245 | Not significant | |
| Family size and occupational exploration | -0,5009 | 0,0245 | Not significant | |
| Education of mother and occupational exploration | 0,4833 | 0,0361 | Not significant | |
| Education of mother and religious exploration | 0,4686 | 0,0430 | Not significant | |

Males and females will be discussed separately because the results revealed significant gender differences.

**(i)    Males**

Family size and the educational level of the mother showed no significant relationships with the level of exploration or commitment in any of the four identity domains. The age variable, however, revealed two significant relationships:

## (a)    Age and occupational exploration

The correlation between age and occupational exploration was positive. This implies that the higher the age, the higher the level of occupational exploration. This means that older adolescents can be expected to make more informed career choices. This could be because they had enough time to explore career alternatives and to gather sufficient information regarding career opportunities.

## (b)    Age and religious commitment

The correlation between age and religious commitment was also positive. This means that the higher the age, the higher the level of religious commitment. This result is not unexpected, because adolescents in African communities are encouraged to go to church at an early stage. They are, however, not compelled to make firm commitments at an early stage. These firm commitments are required when they are much older. The African culture recognises the fact that young people need time to think through life decisions such as commitment to the religion. It must, however, be noted that there are still African communities that compel young people to make religious commitments at an early age. Mcfadden et al. (1984:227-229, in Mathunyane, 1992:75) concludes that the "... daily life of an African child is a continuous initiation into the realms of spiritual and social aspects of the community".

### (ii)  Females

In the case of the females all of the independent variables showed some relationship with the decision-making processes of the participants.

### (a)  Age and occupational exploration

As compared to males, the correlation between age and occupational exploration was negative, meaning that the higher the age, the lower the level of occupational exploration, and vice versa. This result is somewhat surprising. The explanation could be that younger females are more concerned about career decision-making than their older female counterpart.

### (b)  Age and dating exploration

The correlation between age and dating exploration was negative. This means the higher the age, the lower the level of dating exploration, and vice versa. African females were not traditionally encouraged to think about dating issues at an early stage of their development. The tendency therefore for younger female adolescents to be involved in dating exploration should therefore be viewed in terms of the processes of westernisation, urbanisation and the forces of gender equality and democracy. Today's young people are freer to think about dating issues than before, and parents are not as strict as they used to be in the past.

(c)    Family size and occupational exploration

The correlation between family size and exploration was negative, implying that the bigger the family, the lower the experience of occupational exploration; the smaller the family, the higher the experience of career exploration. The size of the families of the participants was fairly small in comparison to traditional societies. This may explain why the highest percentage of the participants was identity achieved in terms of career identity. Historically, African families have been very large with little opportunity for career exploration. Parents did not have time to talk about careers to their children since careers. The tendency towards small families should therefore be appreciated and is indicative of the transformation in the indigenous family structure. The size of the family could also be influenced by the socio-economic circumstances of the family and those who belong to the higher socio-economic group would go for smaller families.

(d)    Education of mother and occupation exploration

The correlation between the education of the mother and occupational exploration was positive and this implies that the higher the educational level of the mother, the higher the level of occupational exploration. The lower the education of the mother, the lower the level of career exploration.

Mothers in African communities have played an important role in the lives of African youth. The mothers of the participants seem to be more educated as compared to the mothers of the previous generations. This result indicates that in those cases where the education of parents was higher, occupational exploration was stimulated.

(e)    Education of mother and religious exploration

There was a positive correlation between the education of mother and religious exploration. The higher the education of the mother the higher the level or experience of religious exploration. The lower the level of education, the lower the level of religious exploration.

This result is not unexpected given the role that has traditionally been played by mothers in the religious development of young people in African communities. Mothers have traditionally been the ones that had been in the forefront of religious exploration. The education that the mothers now have, has empowered them more. This result once again shows the positive effect education can have on religious exploration.

Education of father

There was too little information available, because the education of 9 (22,5%) fathers out of 40 was unknown. The reasons for this lack of information ranged from the fact that the father figure was either

absent at home due to the fact that he was either dead or had left the family.

It must be noted that, although the level of education of only 31 out of 40 fathers (77,5%) was reported, their level showed a highly significant correlation with that of the mothers (r=0,6167; p<0,001). It may, therefore, be deduced that the level of father education may have significant correlations with those variables that the level of education of the mothers has significant correlations with.

### 3.5.2.4 Conclusion

There is a positive sign for the new young African adolescents because it seems as if they are thinking more seriously about career issues. The fact that the majority of the respondents are identity achieved in terms of gender roles is encouraging, given the gender stereotypes that are traditionally encouraged. There is hope for a gender sensitive future generation. The high percentage of females in religious foreclosure is an indication of how the female research participants value religion but they tend to commit themselves without exploration. Generally, they need religious exploration.

It is evident from the research findings that African parents, especially the mother, remains an important influence of the African adolescent

and it should be realised that the role of parents in decision-making of the research participants seems to be changing. It is also evident that the majority of the participants do not foresee any changes regarding the factors that influence the decision-making processes. The goals and decisions of the participants were dominantly career orientated. These goals and decisions were primarily taken in order to better their lives and those of their families. It must also be noted that there were gender differences in the decision-making processes.

It terms of the independent variables regarding the male group, the study reveals that family size and the educational level of the mother showed no significant relationships with the level of exploration or commitment in any of the four identity domains. The age variable, however, showed significant relationships with occupational exploration and with religious commitment.

In the case of the females all of the three independent variables showed some relationship with the decision-making processes of the participants.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The literature study was aimed at giving a theoretical background to the research problem by reviewing relevant literature on adolescent identity development from a multicultural perspective. South African and international studies were looked at and hypothetical explanations for the results of these studies were given.

### LITERATURE STUDY

- The studies reviewed do not confirm the general assumption that African adolescents tend to reveal more unsophisticated modes of decision-making.

- The existing literature does not give a clear indication of differences and similarities in the identity formation processes between among adolescents from different cultural contexts.

- The majority of the existing literature tends to locate black adolescents in either identity diffusion or foreclosure status even though this pattern is changing gradually and it seems that the more recent studies find less differences than the past studies as far as identity development among different cultures is concerned.

- Also in terms of the more recent studies, African adolescents reveal a tendency towards identity achievement and moratorium.

## EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

### (i)     Decision-making processes

- The investigation reveals that parents are still an important influence in the adolescents' lives participating in the study, but when it comes to more specific decision-making, the role of parents seems to be diminishing.

- It is evident that collectivism is becoming less important when it comes to decision-making regarding important matters such as marriage, and that a more individualistic orientation seems to be developing.

- In terms of the major decisions taken by both males and females, the empirical investigation indicates that the majority (70%) of them wants to further their studies at tertiary institutions.

- It is important to note that the empirical investigation indicates that these decisions were primarily taken in order to better the lives of the respondents and most importantly to improve the conditions of their families. Their major life goals are also career orientated.

- Sixty percent of the female respondents and 75% of the male respondents indicated that they would get married. Fourty percent of the females said "no" to marriage, and 15% of the males indicated that they would not like to get married in future.

## (ii)    Identity domains

### Occupational identity

- Marked gender differences were evident. Seventy-five percent of the males were, for example, classified into the achievement status, as opposed to only 35% of the females, and 55% of the females were classified into foreclosure, as opposed to only 15% of the males. There are therefore significant gender differences regarding occupational exploration.

- In spite of the fairly common occurrence of occupational identity achievement among males, a qualitative analysis of the interviews reveals that the breadth of exploration is limited.

- Females seem to be in dire need of occupational guidance.

### Religious identity

- The religious domain largely reveals the same identity status pattern as the occupational domain, with a relatively high percentage of males (50%) in the achievement status, and the majority (75%) of the females in foreclosure. There are also significant gender differences regarding religious exploration. More males are in the achievement status  and females in the foreclosure status.

Dating domain

• More participants (35% of the males and 45% of the females) were classified into the diffusion status than into any of the other three domains. No significant gender differences were observed.

Gender roles

• More participants were classified into the identity achievement status than in the dating domain, and this indicates the awareness of gender roles. No significant gender differences were observed.

## RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EXPLORATION/COMMITMENT AND INDEPENDENT VARIABLES (Age, family size, education of mother)

• Regarding the male subgroup, the investigation reveals that the size of the family and the educational level of the mother showed no significant relationships with the level of exploration or commitment in any of the four identity domains.

• The age variable, however, showed significant relationships with occupational exploration and with religious commitment.

• In the case of the females all of the three independent variables showed some relationship with the decision-making process of the participants and various negative correlations were observed.

## 4.2 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

These results certainly have implications for student support services such as guidance and counselling. It can also be said that this research also has implications for churches as well as for the public and private sector. With regard to the findings the following is recommended:

- The South African government should invest in young people by injecting more funds into schools for the establishment of more efficient and effective guidance and counselling programmes.

- Ongoing inservice training for guidance and counselling practitioners so as to keep them up to date with the most recent developments in the guidance and counselling field.

- There should be an attempt to empower the subject teachers with generic (basic) guidance and counselling skills so as to deal with the challenge of the shortage of guidance teachers. Every subject teacher should also be a guidance teacher.

- School managers, governing bodies, teachers, parents and communities should be made aware of the importance of guidance and counselling services in schools.

- Collaboration between the schools and the world of work should be encouraged so as to make what is taught at schools more vocationally relevant to the learners. Industry can donate financial and human resources so as to empower schools. This collaboration

can also be characterised by the provision of work shadowing opportunities by industry.

- More emphasis should be given to career development instead of only giving information on careers.

- Psychologists can make a contribution by conducting workshops for parents, teachers and religious leaders about religion related issues so as to facilitate the process of identity development.

- Effective guidance and counselling to address the issue of dating and career development through sexuality education and career development programmes. Citizen education should also be included to deal more specifically with gender-related issues and decision-making regarding friendships, etc.

## 4.3 SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STUDY

This study concentrated on adolescents in urban areas. The inclusion of adolescents who are currently in rural areas could have made the study more enriching. It could have given us a broader picture of adolescent identity development within the African context. This study could have been more meaningful if it was a longitudinal study. The other restriction is that, this study included only the participants who were attending the Enrichment Programme, these participants are therefore not representative of the of the adolescent population. The findings of this study cannot be generalised to the whole population.

## 4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Research on adolescent identity development within the African communities is limited. There is therefore an urgent need to conduct research in this area. A comparative study of African adolescent identity development from urban and rural settings should be undertaken. This should preferably be a longitudinal study. The aim would be to get a more comprehensive picture of identity development from an African perspective.

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**ADDENDUM**

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW**

**INTRODUCTORY NOTES:**

1. Thank the participant for his/her co-operation and time. This interview may take between 45 minutes and an hour. Should we not get finished today, we may have to make another appointment.

2. Explain to him/her that you are involved in a research project, of which the aim is to build a better understanding of adolescents, and to find out how they think about and deal with issues that may be important to them.
**REMEMBER:** There are no right or wrong answers. The only thing of importance is what you think, feel and experience.

3. Assure him/her of the **confidentiality** of the interview, and of the information they are to give you. "I won't even mention your name during the interview, so that it won't be tape recorded."

4. "I am only tape recording our interview because I won't be able to remember every thing you say. This will enable me to listen to it later on."

5. "Would you like to ask me anything before we start?"

**N.B.** KINDLY REQUEST THE PARTICIPANT TO SPEAK AS LOUDLY AND AS CLEARLY AS POSSIBLE.

PUT ON THE RECORDER AND SAY: "**My interviewee is a male/female**."

ASK QUESTIONS 2 AND 3, AND STOP THE TAPE.
SAY: "I just want to check the tape before we proceed."
REWIND, PLAY BACK, AND STOP THE TAPE.
(This normally gives you the opportunity to point out that the participant should speak loudly and clearly.)

PUT ON THE RECORDER AND PROCEED WITH QUESTION 4.

REMEMBER TO ASK REGULARLY (PARTICULARLY BEFORE PROCEEDING TO A NEXT ISSUE):        "Is there anything else that you would like to add?"

# SECTION A

1. **Gender:** Male or female?
2. **Age:** How old are you?
3. **Current position:** School grade, work, etc.

4. **Personal history** regarding places of residence: places and dates/years
Where were you born? For how long did you stay there? (Urban/rural area)
Where else did you stay? For how long? (Urban/rural area?)
For how long have you now been staying in ………………..?

5. **Family situation:**
-Composition of family (father, mother, brothers, sisters, others)
-Education, training, and occupation of mother?
-Education, training and occupation of father?

6. **Current residence**
Currently staying with parents? (mother and/ or father?)
With other family members or relatives? With other people?

7. In every person's life particular **factors**, whether it be people, experiences, etc.,
play an important role:
What were major factors influencing your life thus far?

**Regarding each factor:**
Do you foresee any changes regarding this factor in future? May it be more less
important in future? When? How/Why?

**Is there anything more you would like to add?**

8. People often make **decisions** during their lives. What were the most important
decisions that you have made thus far in your life?

**Regarding each decision:**

-Why did you take that decision?

-What were the major factors (people; experiences and/ or other) playing a role in this
decision? How did that factor influence your decision?

-Process of decision-making: How did you go about the issue/problem?
 Did you gather any particular information or did you take any particular factors into
 consideration?

-How committed are you to that decision? Have you changed that decision in the
 mean-time? Do you foresee any chance of changing it in future? Why may that
 change?
**Is there anything more you would like to add?**

9. Do you have any particular **plans or goals** for life in future?
-Would you mind telling me about them?

**Regarding each plan/goal mentioned:**
-Why is it important to you?
-How are you going to achieve it?
-Major factors (people, experiences and/or other) playing a role?
-Do you think that you may change this plan/goal of yours in future?

**Is there anything you would like to add?**

Do you foresee that you will get married in future? if NO, why not?

**IF YES:**
Why?
Do you already have a future marriage partner in mind?

**IF YES:**
Why did you set your mind on this person?
What are your parents' views about your choices?
What are other important people's views?

**IF NO:**
How would you go about the decision regading the person whom you are going to marry? Which other people would be involved in the decision-making process?

## SECTION B

**SAY:** "WE HAVE THUS FAR DISCUSSED SOME GENERAL ISSUES. NOW WE MOVE ON TO SOME MORE SPECIFIC AREAS, SUCH AS OCCUPATIONAL, RELIGIOUS, DATING AND GENDER ROLE ISSUES.

### Occupation

What are you going to do after high school?
Are you planning to go to college? Do you know what you will major in?*
*What do you plan to do with it?
*When did you come to decide on (career choice)?
What people or experiences have been major influences on your plans for the future?
(Probe re: teachers, parents, reading, etc.)
*Did you ever consider anything else? What? Anything besides that?
*What seems to be attractive about--------------------- ?
*Most parents have plans for their children, things they'd like them to go into or do—
do yours have any plans like that for you.?
*How do your folks feel about your plans now?
What kinds of difficulties or problems do you see associated with your decision
to--------------------- ?
If these things were to become difficult, what would you do then?

### Religion

*Do you have any particular religious affiliation or preference or philosophy?
*How about your folks?
How did you come to be a -------------------- ?
What people or experiences have influenced your thinking about religion?
*Were you ever very active in church? How about now? Do you get into many
religious discussions?
*How do your parents feel about your beliefs now?
*Are yours any different from theirs?
*Was there ever a time when you came to doubt any of your religious beliefs?
When? How did it happen? How did you resolve your questions? How are things for
you now?
Do you anticipate that your religious beliefs will stay the same or change over the
next few years?

### Dating

Do you date from time to time? How often?
Who decides where you go or what you do on a date?
Who pays for food, tickets, or expenses?
If you play some competitive game like tennis, bowling, or cards on a date, how do
you deal with winning?
What are you looking for in the people you date?
Has that changed since you started dating? How?

How does that compare to what you look for in a friend?

How important is it for your dates to talk about feelings with you?

How important is it for your dates to be ambitious and intelligent?

What qualities do you <u>not</u> like your dates to have?

What experiences or people have influenced these choices?

What other standards or unwritten rules do you follow on a date?

Are there rules or standards that are discussable or that you would be to change in order to maintain a relationship?

How do your rules compare to those of your friends?

Have you changed your rules or standards since you started dating? If yes, what brought about those changes?

Have your parents ever disapproved of someone you dated?

Was this disagreement resolved in some way? How?

**Men's and Women's roles:**

Some people feel that men and women are basically different in the way they think or behave or act with other people. Do you think that men and women are different? How?

Men are often thought of as having strong goals and being forceful and direct. How do you feel about women who act this way? Do you know any women who act this way?

Now I'm interested in finding out how you think married couples should deal with the many tasks involved in the family.

Who should take care of the young children (infants or preschoolers)?

Who should provide financially?

How should major decisions, such as buying a car or house, be made? What if only one person makes the money?

Are there some situations where one member should have more voice than another? When?

Do you anticipate situations where your answers could be different? What situation?

How do your parents handle each of the family responsibilities we have been discussing?

Do you discuss these issues with your parents? With your friends or dates?

What other people or experiences have influenced your thinking about men's and women's roles?

Do you expect that your ideas about men's and women's roles will stay the same or change over the next few years?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP