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A comparison of males and female's identity processing style in relation to academic achievement and self esteem.

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ABSTRACT

The adolescent years are typically marked by the exploration of different roles and lifestyles with experience culminating into a crystallized sense of self (Chae, 2001). According to de Man, Harvey, Ward and Benoit (2008) adolescents who have achieved ego identity generally have higher levels of self-esteem and tend to be more decisive, self-directed, good at problem solving and able to cope with changing environmental demands. Currently there is a lack of identity research in South Africa that encompasses gender, self-esteem and academic achievement. The purpose of this research study sets about to fill such a gap. This study attempted to investigate the differences in males and females' identity processing style in relation to academic achievement and self-esteem. A sample of 428 first year psychology students at a well known South African university participated in this study. A biographical questionnaire, the Identity Style Inventory (ISI-3), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES) and 2009 June examination results were utilized. Findings of the study revealed no significant differences in males and females' identity processing style in relation to academic achievement and self-esteem. There was however significant difference between the three identity processing styles, in favour of the Informational group on academic achievement. A significant difference was found between the gender groups only on the Normative variable in favour of the females. Implications for further theory and practice and recommendations for future research are provided.

Keywords: Adolescence, Identity status, Identity processing styles, Self-esteem, Gender, Academic Achievement.