This research aims at studying identity formation, attachment and adjustment in adolescents. For this, four identity statuses (identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion) were considered in relation to parental and peer attachment variables of trust, communication and alienation as well as adjustment across various dimensions (emotional, family, health, school and social). Identity formation and attachment theory share common beliefs in the importance and influence of relationships. Both paradigms consider the significance of the need for exploration, security, and the construction of the self through one’s environment. While earlier research emphasized the separation of adolescents from their parents, today individuation is seen as a dual process of separation and connectedness. Parents grant more independence and at the same time, they remain an important source of support and advice for their adolescent children. Adolescents explore new ideas, values and life styles, but they can always rely on the secure base of their parents in case of difficulties. Parents thus, play a pivotal role in their child’s identity formation. Identity and attachment are thus, the two developmental concepts which are significant within the adolescent years and even have a significant relationship with the adaptive capacities of adolescents. Also, studies have pointed out the importance of identity statuses in the adaptive capacities of adolescents. Hence, in the present study all these variables have been taken together. Further, considering the significance of early attachments, it would be interesting to study the mediational role of attachment in the relationship between identity and adjustment.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the relationship of identity statuses with attachment to mother and father separately in adolescents.
2. To study the relationship of identity statuses with attachment to peer group members in adolescents.
3. To study the relationship of exploration and commitment as processes of identity formation and identity statuses among adolescents.
4. To study the relationship between identity statuses and adjustments in adolescents.
5. To study the mediational role of maternal and paternal attachments in the relationship between identity statuses and adjustments in adolescents.

6. To study the mediational role of peer attachments in the relationship between identity statuses and adjustments in adolescents.

7. To study the age differences in identity statuses, attachments, and adjustments of adolescents.

8. To study the gender differences in identity statuses, attachments and adjustment of adolescents.

HYPOTHESES

On the basis of theoretical considerations and research studies reviewed, following hypothesis were framed:

1. There will be a significant relationship of identity statuses with attachment to mother and father.
   a) Identity achievement will be positively related to maternal and paternal trust and communication.
   b) Identity achievement will be negatively related to maternal and paternal alienation.
   c) Identity moratorium will be positively related to maternal and paternal trust and communication.
   d) Identity moratorium will be negatively related to maternal and paternal alienation.
   e) Identity diffusion will be negatively related to maternal and paternal trust and communication.
   f) Identity diffusion will be positively related to maternal and paternal alienation.
   g) Identity foreclosure will be negatively related to maternal and paternal trust and communication.
   h) Identity foreclosure will be positively related to maternal and paternal alienation.

2. There will be a significant relationship of identity statuses with attachment to peers.
   a) Identity achievement will be positively related to peer trust and communication.
b) Identity achievement will be negatively related to peer alienation.
c) Identity moratorium will be positively related to peer trust and communication.
d) Identity moratorium will be negatively related to peer alienation.
e) Identity diffusion will be negatively related to peer trust and communication.
f) Identity diffusion will be positively related to peer alienation.
g) Identity foreclosure will be negatively related to peer trust and communication.
h) Identity foreclosure will be positively related to peer alienation.

3. There will be a significant relationship of identity defining processes of exploration and commitment with identity statuses.
4. There will be significant relationship between identity statuses and adjustment.
5. There will be significant mediational role of maternal and paternal attachments in the relationship between identity statuses and adjustment.
6. There will be significant mediational role of peer attachments in the relationship between identity statuses and adjustment.
7. There will be significant age differences in identity statuses, attachments and adjustment of adolescents.
8. There will be significant gender differences in identity statuses, attachments and adjustment of adolescents.

SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 600 adolescents (300 boys and 300 girls) of age ranging between 13 to 18 years from various schools and colleges of Jalandhar city (Punjab, India). The sampling technique was incidental in nature. The sample was divided into following groups:
1) Early Adolescents (13-14 Years), N=200 (100 Boys and 100 Girls)
2) Middle Adolescents (15-16 Years), N=200 (100 Boys and 100 Girls)
3) Late Adolescents (17-18 Years), N=200 (100 Boys and 100 Girls)
4) Girls Sample (13-18 Years), N=300 (100 Early, 100 Middle and 100 Late Adolescent Girls)
5) Boys Sample (13-18 Years), N=300 (100 Early, 100 Middle and 100 Late Adolescent Boys)
In addition to these groups of sample, the total sample (N=600) was also studied as one single group.

PSYCHOLOGICAL MEASURES

Following tests were used in the present research for collecting data to fulfill the objectives:

1) Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status-2 (EOMEIS-2) by Bennion and Adams (1986)
2) Friedman Well Being Scale by Philip H. Friedman (1994)
3) Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment by Armsden and Greenberg (1987)
4) Global Adjustment Scale by Psy-Com Services (1994)

ANALYSES

The following analyses were carried out on the data collected in order to achieve the objectives of the present research:

1) Frequency distribution, mean, standard deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of all the variables included in the study.
2) Reliability coefficients for the scores on measured variables were computed by the test-retest method of estimating reliability.
3) Pearson product moment coefficients were computed to see the correlates of the four identity statuses.
4) Factor analyses were applied in order to structurally locate the relationship of identity formation with other variables in the study.
5) Hierarchical Multiple Regression was applied to study the mediational role of maternal, paternal and peer attachment processes affecting identity formation and adjustment among adolescents.
6) t-test was applied to study age and gender differences across ideological and interpersonal domains of identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure and diffusion statuses.
FINDINGS

1. The correlational pattern of the variables used in the study is quite similar for different samples used in the study. The identity achievement, moratorium and foreclosure have been found to be positively correlated with parental and peer attachment variables of trust and communication and is inversely related with parental and peer alienation. However, identity diffusion has been found to be negatively related to parental and peer trust and communication and is positively correlated with parental and peer alienation. With regard to the adjustment and psychological well being variables, identity achievement and foreclosure have been found to be positively correlated with high well being and adjustment at emotional, family, health, school and social level. The identity moratorium and diffusion have been found significantly related with lower psychological well being and adjustment domains. The correlational pattern of attachment and adjustment variables has revealed that the attachment variables of trust and communication are positively correlated with psychological well being and adjustment. The parental and peer alienation has been found to be significantly negatively related to well-being and adjustment domains. The securely attached adolescents have been found to be in the higher identity statuses of identity achievement and moratorium. Such adolescents also have been found to be high on the tendency to get foreclosed according to their parental values and beliefs. Further, the identity achieved and foreclosed have been found to be possessing adaptive adjustment as compared to the adolescents in the moratorium and diffusion status.

2. The factor analysis was applied on the test scores of adolescents falling in different age categories (early adolescents, middle adolescents, late adolescents). The factor analysis revealed three factors for each sample and significant factor loadings have been found for the variables of identity, attachment and adjustment. The coefficient of congruence ($\phi$) was calculated which suggested a high congruence between the factors of early, middle and late adolescents’ sample ($\phi = r_c = 0.961$ to $\phi = r_c = 0.994$) and they are discussed together to avoid repetition.

3. To find out the structural relationships in girls’ sample and boys’ sample, factor analysis was applied on their scores which has revealed high congruence for the first
factor \( (\phi = r_c = 0.996) \) and some differences have been observed for factor II \( (\phi = r_c = 0.758) \) and factor III \( (\phi = r_c = 0.716) \) for boys’ and girls’ sample. Overall, the factor analysis has suggested an important relationship between identity (achievement, moratorium, diffusion, foreclosure), attachment (parental and peer attachment variables of trust, communication and alienation), psychological well-being and adjustment (emotional, family, health, school and social).

4. The Hierarchical Multiple Regression (HMR) was applied to study attachment (maternal, paternal and peers) as a mediating variable between identity (achievement, moratorium, diffusion and foreclosure) and adjustment of adolescents. This test has been found to be significant for all the conditions when mediator variables of attachment (maternal, paternal and peers) were regressed among identity and adjustment. The results of HMR has suggested that when adjustment was regressed on both the predictor variable (identity achievement, moratorium, diffusion and foreclosure) and mediator variable (parent and peer attachment), attachment has come out to be a significant predictors of adjustment variables.

5. The t-ratios of identity statuses across ideological and interpersonal domains among boys show that middle adolescent boys are significantly higher than early adolescent boys on identity achievement (both domains) and are significantly lower than early adolescent boys on identity diffusion (both domains) and identity foreclosure. Late adolescent boys score significantly higher on identity achievement (both domains) and ideological moratorium, whereas younger boys score significantly higher on interpersonal identity foreclosure. Also, late adolescent boys score significantly higher than early adolescent boys on identity achievement (both domains), ideological moratorium, ideological diffusion, whereas early adolescent boys score significantly higher than late adolescent boys on identity foreclosure. Such comparisons indicate that with increase in age, there is progression in adolescent boys towards higher identity statuses of moratorium and achievement. During early adolescent years, more foreclosure and diffusion is being observed among boys concerning both ideological and interpersonal domains but with increasing age, their identity formation process progresses towards achieving a
sense of stable identity (with or without exploration). The age comparisons of adolescent boys on attachment variables have revealed that with increase in age from early to middle and from middle to late adolescence, the boys are higher on their attachment to peers. Though their attachment to parents stays stable but with increase in age, the peer group becomes more influential. Regarding the process of adjustment, the late adolescent boys have lower psychological well-being and higher adjustment problems as compared to early and middle adolescents.

6. The comparative analysis of results of adolescent girls across ideological and interpersonal domains of identity statuses reveals that middle adolescent girls score significantly higher than early adolescent girls on identity achievement (interpersonal) and identity moratorium (interpersonal) whereas, early adolescent girls score higher on identity diffusion (ideological) and identity foreclosure (both domains). Similarly, late adolescent girls score significantly higher than middle adolescent girls on identity achievement (both domains) and moratorium (ideological), whereas middle adolescent girls score significantly higher than late adolescent girls on identity foreclosure (both domains). Also, late adolescent girls are higher on higher identity statuses (achievement and moratorium) whereas younger girls (early adolescents) score higher on lower identity statuses (identity diffusion and foreclosure). Such results are suggestive of progression towards higher identity statuses with increase in age. The comparative analysis of attachment variables has revealed a similar picture like that of boys whereby, with increase in age, girls are also high on peer attachment, though importance of parental attachments is not overshadowed. With regard to the comparison of adjustment variables, the adolescent girls have also been found to possess lower psychological well-being and lower adaptive adjustment with increase in age. The late adolescent girls facing higher maladjustment as compared to early and middle adolescent girls.

7. The gender differences of adolescent boys and girls on identity statuses reveal that boys are significantly higher than girls on identity diffusion (both ideological and interpersonal), whereas girls score significantly higher than boys on identity achievement, moratorium and foreclosure (interpersonal level). The girls are even significantly higher than boys on interpersonal identity diffusion in early
adolescence whereas late adolescent boys are more foreclosed on ideological dimensions as compared to late adolescent girls. Further, girls have been found to be higher on parental attachments during early adolescence. The comparison of psychological well-being and adjustment of boys and girls reveal that girls are higher on psychological well-being and successful adjustment at emotional, social, school, family and health level as compared to boys.

Overall, the results have revealed that the variables of identity, attachment and adjustment have significant relationships. The relationship pattern has suggested that secure attachments facilitate the process of identity formation and adjustment among adolescents. Such adolescents have been found to be high on identity achievement and moratorium. They are also high on their tendency to make commitments according to their parental beliefs. With regard to the adjustment of adolescents, securely attached adolescents possessing identity achievement and foreclosure have been found to be high on adjustment and psychological well-being. Commitment to identity issues being facilitated by secure attachments has led them to have adaptive adjustments. However, the moratorium adolescents though possess secure attachments but they make efforts to reconstruct their behavior patterns to make identity choices. They also possess secure attachments like identity achieved adolescents, but they doubt their attachments while making identity choices, which increase their exploration process contributing to their maladaptive adjustment.

The results have also revealed that there is a difference in the adolescent boys’ and girls’ patterns of identity formation, attachment and adjustment. With regard to the identity variables, the girls have been found to be higher on identity achievement and moratorium at both ideological and interpersonal levels. This suggests that there is a change in the trend of identity formation of boys and girls. In earlier times, the ideological domains were considered more important for boys but the results of the present study have revealed that the ideological domains are also important for girls. The reason may be attributed to the decrease in the gender discriminations as well as women empowerment which have widened the horizons for the girls to explore identity issues beyond the interpersonal domains. Girls are no more thought to be inclined to just the four walls of the house with family and children being the important issues of
her identity definition, rather, the issues like politics, religion and career are also becoming important for girls. Further, the girls have been found to be higher than boys on identity diffusion and foreclosure at interpersonal levels. Boys have been found to be more identity foreclosed at ideological level meaning thereby that they make commitments without exploration higher than girls but those commitments reveal their parental choices and beliefs. Thus, if identity statues are considered to be on a continuum from identity achievement and moratorium at higher ends to identity diffusion and foreclosure at lower ends, it can be concluded from the results of the present study that girls are on the higher sides of the continuum and boys are more inclined towards the lower side of the identity formation continuum. The attachment level for parents and peers has been found to be similar in the boys and girls with few exceptions. Girls have been found to be higher on parental attachments only during early adolescence. However, regarding the adjustment variables, girls have been found to be high on adjustment as compared to boys.

The age wise progression has been observed with regard to the identity, attachment and adjustment variables. The identity formation process takes place gradually starting from diffusion and foreclosure to heading towards moratorium and achievement with age in both boys and girls. Further, it has been observed that during adolescence, the peer relations become highly during adolescence. Though the parental attachments remain intact, the adjustment has also been seen to be moving from adaptive level to maladaptive adjustment with increase in age among both boys and girls.

This study has also found that maternal, paternal and peer attachments as playing a mediational role in the identity and adjustment of adolescents confirming secure attachments pave way towards successful identity formation and consequently have adaptive adjustments. This conclusion of the study has implication for counselors and psychologists to work in this area to help adolescents to make adaptive adjustments, whereby the link is somewhere in their identity formation and attachment variables.