GENDER AS MODERATOR IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDENTITY FORMATION AND THE EVALUATION OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS DURING ADOLESCENCE

NADIA NAGEL

Research dissertation submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE WITH SPECIALISATION IN PSYCHOLOGY

in the

FACULTY OF THE HUMANITIES

of the

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

January 2018

Supervisor: Prof L Naudé

Declaration

I, Nadia Nagel, declare that the dissertation hereby submitted by me for the Psychology Research Master's degree at the University of the Free State is my own, independent work and that I have not submitted it at another university/faculty previously. I further cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

_____   **2017/08/12**
                                          _____

Nadia Nagel   Date

Supervisor's Permission to Submit

December 2017

PERMISSION TO SUBMIT

Student: Ms N Nagel   **Student number: 2012072076**

Degree: Master's   **Department: Psychology**

Title: Gender as moderator in the relationship between identity formation and the evaluation of romantic relationships during adolescence

I hereby provide permission that this dissertation be submitted for examination - in fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's in Psychology, in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of the Humanities, at the University of the Free State.

Kind regards

Prof L Naudé

Supervisor

Proof of Language Editing

P.O. Box 955
Oudtshoorn
6620
Tel (h): (044) 2725099
Tel (w): (044) 2034111
Cell: 0784693727
E-mail: dsteyl@polka.co.za

07 December 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

STATEMENT WITH REGARD TO LANGUAGE EDITING OF RESEARCH DISSERTATION

Hereby I, Jacob Daniël Theunis De Bruyn STEYL (I.D. 5702225041082), a language practitioner accredited with the South African Translators' Institute (SATI), confirm that I have language edited the following research dissertation:

Title of dissertation: Gender as moderator in the relationship between identity formation and the evaluation of romantic relationships during adolescence

Author: Ms Nadia Nagel

Yours faithfully

J.D.T.D. STEYL
PATran (SATI)
SATI REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1000219

Acknowledgements

It is with sincere appreciation and gratitude that I would like to thank the following persons:

❖ Firstly, I would like to thank my Heavenly Father, for giving me the strength and perseverance to complete this research dissertation.

❖ My supervisor, Professor Luzelle Naudé, for your endless patience and advice, for reading my dissertation countless times and always being ready to help. Without your support and constant assurance, finishing this dissertation would not have been possible.

❖ My Mom and Dad, for always motivating me to do my best and to work hard. Thank you for always being my lighthouse.

❖ Dr. Pravani Naidoo, for all the motivation and support. Thank you for always seeing the best in me.

❖ Ryno, for all your care, love, patience, and support.

❖ My friends, Henry and Jalinke, for always supporting and encouraging me.

❖ Danie Steyl, for the professional manner in which this dissertation was edited.

❖ The University of the Free State and the Department of Psychology, for making it possible to further my academic career.

❖ The Department of Education, and all of the participants who participated in this research study and made this study possible.

"In life, surround yourself with those who light your path."

-Anonymous

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Abstract

Adolescence is a dynamic period during which identity formation occurs and romantic relationships emerge. Research studies often focus on self-evaluation, the development of romantic relationships, and the identity-intimacy link, but rarely focus on the evaluation of romantic relationships during adolescence. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate whether a significant amount of variance in identity formation can be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships, and whether gender plays a moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation.

The present research was conducted using a quantitative, non-experimental approach, with a correlational research design. A sample of 169 participants was selected from a high school in the Mangaung area, Bloemfontein, by means of non-probability, convenience sampling. Self-report questionnaires, including a biographic questionnaire, the *Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ)*, and the *Romantic Evaluation Scale (RES)* were used to collect data for the research. Data were analysed by means of regression analyses.

With regard to the amount of variance in identity formation that can be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships, it was found that 30% of the variance in identity formation could be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships. Individually, the objectively motivated dimension made the only significant contribution and explained 20.1% of the variance in identity formation. It was also concluded that, in the present study, gender did not play a significant moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation. Therefore, it can be concluded that, in the present sample, evaluation of romantic relationships influenced identity formation, but gender had no effect on this relationship.

Keywords: adolescents, adolescence, identity formation, identity exploration, identity commitment, identity status, evaluation of romantic relationships, romantic relationships, gender

Opsomming

Adolessensie word beskou as 'n dinamiese periode waarin identiteit en veral romantiese verhoudings ontwikkel. Navorsingstudies fokus dikwels op selfevaluering, die ontwikkeling van romantiese verhoudings, en die skakel tussen identiteit en intimiteit, maar fokus selde op die evaluasie van romantiese verhoudings gedurende adolessensie. Die doel van die studie was dus om te ondersoek of 'n beduidende hoeveelheid variansie in identiteitsvorming deur die evaluering van romantiese verhoudings verklaar kan word, en of geslag 'n modererende rol in die verhouding tussen die evaluering van romantiese verhoudings en identiteitsvorming speel.

Die huidige navorsing is uitgevoer met behulp van 'n kwantitatiewe, nie-eksperimentele benadering, met 'n korrelasionele navorsingsontwerp. 'n Steekproef van 169 deelnemers is gekies uit 'n hoërskool in die Mangaung-gebied, Bloemfontein, deur middel van nie-waarskynlikheid-, gerieflikheidsteekproeftrekking. 'n Selfevalueringsvraelys, insluitende 'n biografiese vraelys, die "*Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ)*" en die "*Romantic Evaluation Scale (RES)*" is gebruik om data vir die navorsing te versamel. Data is deur middel van regressie-analises ontleed.

Met betrekking tot die hoeveelheid variansie in identiteitsvorming wat deur die evaluering van romantiese verhoudings verklaar kan word, is gevind dat 30% van die variansie in identiteitsvorming deur die evaluering van romantiese verhoudings verklaar kan word. Individueel het die objektief gemotiveerde dimensie die enigste betekenisvolle bydrae gemaak en 20.1% van die variansie in identiteitsvorming verklaar. Die gevolgtrekking is ook gemaak dat geslag in die huidige studie nie 'n modererende rol in die verhouding tussen die evaluering van romantiese verhoudings en identiteitsvorming gespeel het nie. In die huidige steekproef kan dus afgelei word dat evaluering van romantiese verhoudings wel identiteitsvorming beïnvloed het, maar geslag geen impak op hierdie verhouding gehad het nie.

Sleutelwoorde: adolessente, adolessensie, identiteitsvorming, identiteitsverkenning, identiteitsverbintenis, identiteitsstatus, evaluering van romantiese verhoudings, romantiese verhoudings, geslag

Chapter 1 – Introduction to this Research Study

Developing an identity is a process commencing at birth which continues throughout the life span. During adolescence, identity formation becomes the focus, accompanied by the development of romantic relationships. Self-evaluation is an inherent drive experienced by each individual. While forming an identity and developing romantic relationships, adolescents constantly evaluate themselves, their choices, and eventually their romantic partners. Various theorists suggest that during adolescence, the process of identity formation, as well as several aspects of romantic relationships, differ between genders.

In this chapter, an overview of this research study is considered. Firstly, the theoretical grounding, the rationale, and the aim of the present study are discussed. Secondly, an overview of the research design and methods used in the study is given. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief delineation of the chapters that are included in this research study.

1.1 Theoretical Grounding, Rationale, and Aim of the Present Study

Adolescence can be regarded as the bridge between childhood and adulthood (Bayer, Gilman, Tsui, & Hindin, 2010), and is considered a significant developmental period that commences in puberty. This life stage is an important precursor for establishing social independence and a more mature self (Porterfield, Polette, & Baumlin, 2009). A life span developmental perspective was considered in this research study. Consequently, adolescence can be defined in terms of several approaches such as chronological approaches, biological views, and psychological changes. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2017), adolescence comprises the age group between 10 and 19 years, and is generally divided into three stages (Blum, Astone, Decker, & Mouli, 2014; Spano, 2004). These stages include early, middle, and late adolescence. Biologically, adolescence is an age period marked by puberty (Spear, 2000) and is driven by various hormones, as well as the development of secondary sex characteristics (Sigelman & Rider, 2015). Psychologically, the developments of abstract thinking and independence are important aspects occurring during adolescence (Christie & Viner, 2005).

The role and quality of adolescents' romantic relationships is essential in social and personal development (Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009; Hand & Furman, 2009). Romantic relationships can be described as continuing, voluntary interactions acknowledged by both

parties (Booth, Crouter, & Snyder, 2016). Romantic relationships in adolescence are related to the quality of romantic relationships that may occur later in life, as well as the overall development during emerging adulthood (Madsen & Collins, 2011; Meier & Allen, 2009; Seiffge-Krenke & Lang, 2002; Valle & Tillman, 2012). To establish successful, mature romantic relationships, a certain cognitive level needs to be reached. The achievement of a mature, conscious, self-directed, and self-regulating mind is the core of adolescent cognitive development and is attained through a more sophisticated executive suite of capabilities (Steinberg, 2005). This enables the adolescent to self-evaluate, which is an inherent drive individuals possess (Festinger, 1954). The way in which adolescents evaluate themselves has been linked to the way in which adolescents evaluate romantic relationships (Wayment & Campbell, 2000a).

To evaluate romantic relationships, four motives (Festinger, 1954; Major, Testa, & Bylsma, 1991; Strube, 1990; Swann, Wenzlaff, Krull, & Pelham, 1992; Swann, Wenzlaff, & Tafarodi, 1992; Taylor & Lobel, 1989; Trope, 1980; Wills, 1981) and ten types of evaluative information (Festinger, 1954; Taylor, Neter, & Wayment, 1995; Wayment & Campbell, 2000a; Wayment & Taylor, 1995) have been identified. The four motives for evaluating romantic relationships include enhancement, accuracy, improvement, and verification. The ten types of evaluation information include the concepts of Objective Information, Feedback from Others, Personal Standards, Past Negative, Past Positive, Feared Future, Future Ideals, Upward Social Comparison, Lateral Social Comparison, Upward Social Comparison, and Downward Social Comparison

The crisis, namely the conflict between identity confusion and identity formation, is the main priority during adolescence, where identity formation as a core developmental task takes place (Erikson, 1968). Many have studied the concept of identity, and the most prominent theories pertaining to the formation of an identity include theories by Erikson (1968, 1974), Marcia (1966, 1980, 2002), Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986), and the more contemporary narrative identity theories (McAdams, 2011; McAdams & McLean, 2013; McLean & Breen, 2009). These theories formed the basis of this research study.

Erikson (1968) describes identity as an overall sense of who individuals are presently and who individuals will become in the future. Furthermore, identity formation consists of two identity dimensions, namely the exploration and commitment dimensions (Marcia, 1966). The social identity theory (SIT) by Tajfel and Turner (Tajfel, 1972, 1979) places the emphasis

on how group interaction contributes to individuals' identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). SIT is based on the assumption that individuals tend to define themselves in comparison to social groups they belong or not belong to, and these comparisons add to the identity formation process (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006; Howard, 2000). Narrative identity can be defined as the internalised and evolving self-story of individuals, which is constructed by individuals with the purpose of making sense and understanding the meaning of their lives (McAdams, 2011).

Gender is considered a factor in the experience (Perrin et al., 2011; Zimmer-Gembeck, Hughes, Kelly, & Connolly, 2011) and in the formation of an identity (Alessandria & Nelson, 2005; Cramer, 2000; Nesdale & Flesser, 2001; Schwartz & Montgomery, 2002; Singer, 2004).

Therefore, the primary aim of this study was to investigate whether a significant amount of variance in identity formation can be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships, and whether gender plays a moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation.

The following research questions were investigated:

1. Can a significant amount of variance in identity formation be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships?

2. Does gender play a moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation?

1.2 Overview of Research Design and Methods

The research was conducted using a quantitative, non-experimental approach, with a correlational research design. A quantitative research approach can be described as objective and systematic (Fouché, Delport, & De Vos, 2011). Non-experimental research is used when conducting research where there is no intervening or manipulation of the situation or participants (Belli, 2009). Correlational designs are used to investigate the relationship between two or more variables (Stangor, 2015). A correlational research design was utilised in this study to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation, as well as the strength and direction of the aforementioned relationship; in other words, whether the evaluation of romantic relationships

explains a significant amount of the variance in identity formation. The moderating role of gender on the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation was also investigated. In general terms, a moderating variable can be described as a qualitative or quantitative variable affecting the direction or strength of the relationship between an independent and/or predictor variable and a dependant criterion variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Rovai, Baker, & Ponton, 2014).

The population of interest in this research study was adolescents. Black learners in the age range between 14 and 19 years attending school in the Mangaung area in Bloemfontein were included in this study. Participants of both genders were included. Non-probability convenience sampling (Stangor, 2015) was used to recruit the sample. After elimination of incomplete surveys, the final sample consisted of 169 adolescents.

The data were collected using self-report questionnaires that were completed by willing participants during school hours. Biographic information was obtained in the form of selected short questions at the beginning of the questionnaire to gain personal information such as age and gender (see Appendix A). The *Romantic Evaluation Scale (RES)* by Wayment and Campbell (2000b) (see Appendix A) was used to measure the information used by adolescents to evaluate romantic relationships. In addition to the ten subscales of the *RES*, two dimensions (that were determined through factor analysis) namely Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation and Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation, were used in the analyses. The *Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ)* by Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, and Geisinger (1995) (see Appendix A) was used to measure identity. This questionnaire operationalises identity by assessing the dimensions of exploration and commitment that are present during the development of ego identity.

Reliability of the measures used in this study was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Boslaugh & Watters, 2008). Descriptive statistics were determined for both the categorical and the continuous data and included frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations. The Pearson product moment correlation method (Boslaugh & Watters, 2008; Howell, 2014) was used to measure the direction and strength of the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation among adolescents. Multiple regression analyses were performed to determine the amount of variance in identity formation (total score), as well as the subscales of Identity Exploration and Identity Commitment that can be attributed to the evaluation of romantic relationships (Objectively Motivated Forms of

Evaluation and Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation). Moderated regression analysis was used to investigate whether gender had a moderating effect on the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation.

1.3 Delineation of Chapters

Chapter One: In this chapter, the study is introduced, and a brief overview of the research study is presented. Theoretical grounding of the study is provided with emphasis on the life span developmental perspective, adolescence, identity theories contributing to the understanding of identity formation, the role of romantic relationships during adolescence, and gender as a possible moderator in the relationship between these variables. This is followed by the rationale and aim of the present study. This chapter also includes an overview of the research design and methods that were used in this research study to gather and analyse data.

Chapter Two: The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of adolescence and the importance of this developmental phase in relation to the development and evaluation of romantic relationships. Chapter 2 begins with a brief introduction to the concept of adolescence, followed by a few definitions relating to adolescence. The different domains of development during adolescence are discussed, and the developmental tasks that take place during this dynamic period of individuals' life are summarised briefly. Romantic relationships are defined, and the importance of socialisation in the development of romantic relationships is discussed. In conclusion, the cognitive aspect that is needed to evaluate romantic relationships during adolescence is considered, followed by a discussion of the gender differences in adolescent romantic relationships.

Chapter Three: In this chapter, identity is defined, the process of identity formation is discussed, and the focus is placed on a few of the most prominent identity formation theories. These theories include the theories of Erikson, Marcia, Tajfel and Turner, and McAdams and McLean. In conclusion, the possible relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation is discussed.

Chapter Four: The aim of this chapter is to discuss the methodology that was employed in this study. An overview of the research aim and questions is given, followed by an overview of the research design and approach that was utilised. The research participants and sampling procedures are explained, including the composition of the final sample. The

procedures of data collection are also reviewed. The measuring instruments that were employed are explained, and the method of data analysis is described. Ethical considerations relevant to this study are discussed.

Chapter Five: In this chapter, the results are presented and discussed. Descriptive statistics are presented, followed by a presentation of the inferential statistics relating to both of the research questions that are relevant to this study. A discussion of the results is included in this chapter, in which research related to the findings of the current study is reviewed.

Chapter Six: The aim of this chapter is to discuss the contribution and limitations of the present study. This chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2 – Adolescence and Romantic Relationships

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of adolescence and the importance of this developmental phase in relation to the construct of romantic relationships. The chapter begins with a definition of adolescence, followed by a detailed discussion of the domains of development occurring in this life stage. This is followed by a short definition of romantic relationships. Socialisation as an essential aspect in the development of romantic relationships is discussed. Cognition and social comparison as important factors in the evaluation of romantic relationships, as well as the motives and information used to evaluate romantic relationships, are reviewed. Lastly, gender differences in romantic relationships are discussed.

2.1 Defining Adolescence

Defining the term *adolescence* is not an easy task, seeing that it is multifaceted, and several definitions for this phase exist. When attempting to define adolescence, it is important to keep in mind that adolescents should be regarded as individuals rather than a homogenous group, given that the use of stereotypes often leads to the underestimating of adolescents' diversity and an exaggeration of their liabilities (Beckett & Taylor, 2010). Not all individuals experience adolescence the same because of each individuals' unique emotional, physical, and cognitive development (Hardman et al., 2012). Some adolescents may go through change rapidly and graciously, while others may be challenged by demanding transitions (Geldard & Geldard, 2004). Considering that adolescence is perceived as a medley of experiences, efforts to create a worldwide definition of this stage of development have proved to be taxing (Arnett, 2000). Certain definitions focus more on chronological or biological development of individuals. Other definitions emphasise tasks in various domains of development, such as social and interpersonal development. Thus, definitions of adolescence revolve around arguments pertaining to chronological age, a time of dramatic change and certain prominent developmental tasks.

In the broadest terms, adolescence signifies the period that indicates the transition from childhood to adulthood. Adolescence could be understood as a critical development period consisting of the years from the onset of puberty to establishment of social independence and maturity (Porterfield et al., 2009; Steinberg, 2014). Marcia (2002) describes adolescence as a chronological period occurring between puberty and early adulthood and adds that this period could be viewed as a time in the life span when individuals are confronted with the

exploration of important life alternatives, while aiming to commit to certain life aspects. Whether you are 15 or 30 years of age, you can find yourself "adolescing" (Marcia, 2002, p. 199). Authors differ about the specific age range of adolescence (Ayers et al., 2007). According to the WHO (2017), adolescence comprises the age group between 10 and 19 years. Berk (2001) states that adolescence can be defined as a period that takes place from the onset of puberty, which is usually around 11 years of age, and is continued until individuals reach adulthood, which is generally around 21 years of age. Newman and Newman (2017) propose that the adolescent age range is between 12 and 22 years. While most traditional views on adolescence suggest that the period generally extends from 12 to 18 years of age, more recent research suggests that this period can be extended to about 25 years of age (Jaworska & MacQueen, 2015).

From a biological view, adolescence usually occurs with puberty (Spear, 2000), which is a biological occurrence. This period is marked by events driven by changes in several hormones, the progression of secondary sex characteristics (Sigelman & Rider, 2015), and changes in the composition of muscle and fat in the body (Spano, 2004). Adolescence can also be defined in terms of psychological change. Psychological changes include the development of abstract thinking, defined as the ability to use internal symbols or images representing reality (Christie & Viner, 2005). Sociologically, adolescence can be defined as the period in which individuals begin thinking about and training for work and family roles that will be held in the future (Smetana, 2011). Considering the definitions above, adolescence in most societies can then be described as the period that follows the biological and hormonal changes of puberty but occurs before individuals are fully incorporated into society as independent adults (Carter, 2011).

Adolescence is perceived as a stressful, stormy part of individuals' life and can be regarded as a tumultuous and transformational period, during which development ensues and individuals mature on numerous levels (Arain et al., 2013; Erikson, 1968). In recent research, it is indicated that adolescents may have a worse reputation than they deserve. It is argued that adolescence is not more stormy and stressful than previous stages of life, but that adolescents experience the same levels of stress that occurred during childhood and will most likely continue through adulthood (Sigelman & Rider, 2015). Nonetheless, adolescence is a dynamic period that includes self-discovery, excitement, and experimenting with different aspects of identity. Therefore, adolescence can be considered a dynamically evolving, theoretical

construct that is informed by psychosocial, temporal, and cultural lenses (Curtis, 2015). Adolescence should be regarded as a period that is not fixed, although it is temporarily confined. This life stage should not be conceptualised as a temporal snapshot, but rather be regarded as a developmental stage, considering this period is extremely unpredictable in behaviour and development (Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008). Considering the statements above, it becomes clear that adolescence is a period of great change, and that it is highly variable between adolescents.

Adolescence is generally categorised into three main stages, namely early, middle, and late adolescence (Blum et al., 2014; Spano, 2004). Early adolescence consists of the approximate age group from 11 to 13 years (Salmela-Aro, 2011) and encompasses initial identity development (Ozretich & Bowman, 2001). Physical changes, such as tremendous physical growth and the beginning of puberty, are also noticeable (Morgan & Huebner, 2009). During middle and late adolescence (which includes adolescents between the approximate ages of 15 and 16 years, and 17 and 21 years respectively) the main aim of an adolescents' development includes advancements toward independence, future pursuits and cognitive development, sexuality, physical changes, ethics and self-direction (Spano, 2004). During late adolescence, most adolescents' identities have stabilised relatively, physical maturation has been reached, and romantic relationships become more serious than in the previous phases of adolescence (Rauer, Pettit, Lansford, Bates, & Dodge, 2013; Spano, 2004).

For the purpose of this research, the researcher considered the chronological definition of adolescence, which the WHO (2017) considers as adolescents in the age range of 10 to 19 years. In addition to the chronological age of adolescents, the researcher also considered the developmental tasks that adolescents go through.

2.2   Domains of Adolescent Development

Typically, domains of development are considered encompassing three areas, namely physical/biological development, cognitive development and social/emotional development. These three domains are discussed comprehensively in this section. It is imperative to realise that these domains do not exist in isolation, but rather that each domain influences the other; therefore, these domains are in constant interplay with one another (Newman & Newman, 2017).

2.2.1 Biological and physical domain. Adolescence is a development period during which rapid physical maturation takes place. Physical changes that occur during adolescence are set in motion by two major changes, namely puberty and the growth spurt. Puberty should not be viewed as a single event, but rather as a "complex metamorphosis" (Hayward, 2003, p. 1). Thus, the best definition of puberty should be constituted not only by individual pubertal changes occurring, but also by the context in which these changes occur.

Early adolescence begins with the initial pubertal changes such as breasts that begin to bud in young girls, testicular enlargement in young boys, and the onset of genital growth for both genders, as well as various other tasks including the commencement of the growth spurt for girls (Christie & Viner, 2005). Biological events during middle adolescence include the first menstruation, also known as menarche (in females) and the first ejaculation, which is also known as the spermarche (in males) (Christie & Viner, 2005; Geldard & Geldard, 2004). The female body shape develops, with fat deposition taking place and the growth spurt ends (for females). For boys, the voice breaks and the growth spurt begins. Late adolescence represents the end of puberty for both sexes. Boys continue to experience an increase in muscle bulk, and the body hair continues to grow (Christie & Viner, 2005). After this has taken place, adolescents are functionally capable of reproduction (Heffner & Schust, 2010). Therefore, puberty can best be described as a surge of changes that results in adult appearance, physiology, and an altered identity (Hayward, 2003).

Significant changes regarding brain structure and function also occur during adolescence (Arain et al., 2013). These changes include the decrease of grey matter until approximately 25 years of age (Craig & Dunn, 2010) and an increase of white matter, which also increases adolescents' thinking and problem-solving abilities. These biological changes largely lead to improvements in sensory functioning, coordination, and decision making (Craig & Dunn, 2010).

Biological changes occurring during this developmental stage are noteworthy, considering that adolescents may experience feelings of alienation from their bodies, which is usually due to the rapid growth that adolescents experience (Steyn, 2006). Given that self-esteem and body image share such a strong link during adolescence, the part that the biological domain plays during adolescence must be considered important (Davison & McCabe, 2006). Sexual maturation is one of the most vital tasks that adolescents experience (this is linked to physical development) (Steinberg, 2005). This is of importance for the next

life stage, including issues of intimacy and sex, considering that the progression of sexual identity development takes place and adolescents engage in the reassessment of their body image (Christie & Viner, 2005). Although adolescence is a time of great physical maturation, this tremendous growth influences all other domains of development. Therefore, physical and physiological changes are not the only remarkable changes that take place during adolescence, and the physical maturation young people experience facilitates further cognitive, emotional, social, and interpersonal changes (Spano, 2004; Wilson & Wilson, 2015).

2.2.2 Cognitive and moral domain. Physical development of adolescent brain structure results in the ability for improved abstract thinking, making better decisions, more efficient problem-solving, improvement of language use, greater conceptual resources, and an increase in processing speed and skills pertaining to perception (Dunn & Craig, 2013; Newman & Newman, 2017; Sigelman & Rider, 2015). A decrease in egocentricity, a desire to become less dependent, and the need to belong are other important changes occurring in this domain. As individuals enter adolescence, a decrease in egocentricity develops and occurs due to newly learnt skills that enable adolescents to take on different perspectives. These skills are the product of the maturation of brain structures, cognitive and emotional development, and social interactions that are changing (Blakemore, 2008).

Piaget (1966) proposed four stages of cognitive development. These stages include sensorimotor intelligence, preoperational thought, concrete operational thought, and formal operational thought (Newman & Newman, 2017). Adolescents progress from the concrete operational thought stage to the formal operational thought stage and are more mature than before. According to Schwartz, Zamboanga, Luyckx, Meca, and Ritchie (2013), formal operational thought enables the adolescent to consider various alternatives. Formal operational thought persists through adulthood and permits individuals to conceptualise many variables that are in interaction, simultaneously. This enables adolescents to solve problems by creating laws and rules (Newman & Newman, 2017). Perhaps the most significant change in cognition is the ability to have more abstract and scientific thoughts rather than thinking only about concrete and real occurrences (Newman & Newman, 2017, Piaget, 1952). Attention and concentration become more detailed, enabling adolescents to perform tasks that are more difficult. As knowledge increases, strategies that adolescents use also become more efficient (Kroger, 2007).

Cognitive and affective development brings about changes in moral development of adolescents (Berk, 2001). Moral development enables individuals to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. This distinction is vital for functioning as responsible, independent individuals. Concrete thinking is developed during early adolescence, but individuals still tend to have early moral concepts (Christie & Viner, 2005). During the early adolescent years, a marked improvement in reasoning, information processing, and expertise is noticeable. Abstract thinking marks the beginning of middle adolescence, although individuals generally still view themselves as somewhat invincible. Individuals improve in their verbal abilities and begin to understand and identify with the law of morality. Lastly, during late adolescence, complex abstract thinking is developed, and individuals can identify the difference between law and morality (Steinberg, 2005).

Adolescents in the late adolescent stage experience an increase in impulse control and further development of a personal identity (Christie & Viner, 2005). Steinberg (2005) argues that the core of cognitive development during adolescence is the fulfilment of a matured, entirely conscious, self-directed, self-regulating mind, which is achieved through a more advanced executive suite of capabilities. Thus, it becomes clear that adolescents undergo the maturation of important emotional and cognitive abilities, which provides the developing individuals with the capacities that are needed to function as independent adults. Therefore, adolescence can be regarded as a period during which a transition in approach to cognitive tasks, moral issues, reasoning, human values, and psychological concerns occurs (Marcia, 1980).

Gender differences in specific cognitive abilities and visual-spatial memory indicate that males show quicker, more accurate responses in tasks of memory and recognition than females do (Lawton & Hatcher, 2005). Perry and Pauletti (2011) report that females perform better in verbal tasks, whereas males perform better in spatial tasks and math problems.

2.2.3 Psychosocial domain. The domain of social development is an important element in the present research, considering the role of the family context and peer groups in adolescent development (Geldard & Geldard, 2010). Adolescent growth is marked by the increased ability to read and understand social and emotional cues, as well as an increased dependence on and appreciation of interpersonal relationships (Yurgelun-Todd, 2007).

In terms of social development during early adolescence, the onset of emotional separation from parents and strong peer identification occur. Relationships with parents may change during adolescence, considering adolescents' desires to become more independent, as well as the growing importance of the group. Adolescents begin to strive for independence and to show more appreciation and affection for their peers than for family members (Ozretich & Bowman, 2001). Family is still important, seeing that they need to provide a safe space to which individuals can return after experimenting with different roles (Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006). This enables individuals to test the waters of independence, while simultaneously learning to negotiate with society (Craig & Dunn, 2010).

Fitting in and being a part of a group with similar interests plays a role in how adolescents' self-esteem is formed and how their identity is established (Sigelman & Rider, 2015). Adolescents tend to turn to their friends when angry and upset; thus, it is not surprising that supportive peer groups enable the promotion of healthy psychological and social development (Chow, Ruhl, & Buhrmester, 2014). This contributes to the argument that adolescence can be considered a period of taking risks and behavioural problems. This may include issues such as substance abuse, heightened vulnerability to some psychological disorders (Casey et al., 2008; Steinberg, 2011), and increased emotional reactivity that often occurs. Schultz and Schultz (2009) state certain traits that are associated with adolescence, including conflict with authority figures, moodiness, reckless behaviour, rule breaking, and participation in risky behaviour that may result in injury to the self and/or others. Behavioural changes occur in a context where developmental changes are influenced by external environmental factors and internal factors. Internal factors provoke and strengthen these behavioural changes (Jaworska & MacQueen, 2015). These issues continue through middle adolescence, with the addition of increased heterosexual peer interest and early vocational interest that begin to develop. Risky behaviour is due to changes in the social, school, and home environments (seeing that adolescents begin spending less time at home and more time with peers).

During late adolescence, social independence and intimate relationships develop. This includes the development of vocational competence and financial autonomy (Christie & Viner, 2005). Adolescents have to deal with the stress of physical and cognitive changes, experimenting with romantic relationships, changes in family dynamics, assuming adult roles, and the pressure of being more responsible (Sigelman & Rider, 2015).

Considering the arguments above, it becomes clear that adolescents face a number of developmental challenges and experience unique growth and maturation in several domains. In summary, these changes include abrupt changes in the body, cognitive maturation, forming new relationships, and eventually finding their place in society (Perry & Pauletti, 2011).

2.3   Romantic Relationships during Adolescence

For many years, studying adolescent romantic relationships has been neglected, but this field is now receiving substantial attention (Furman & Rose, 2015). The increasing interest in this subject revolves around a series of concerns including risky behaviour and health issues, of which the effect extends into later adult relationships (Letcher & Slesnick, 2014).

Rather than being identified exclusively by only one person, romantic relationships can be described as continuing, chosen interactions that are mutually recognised by both partners in the relationship. These relationships also include a specific intensity prominent in the expression of affection, and the anticipation of sexual relations as the relationship progresses (Booth et al., 2016). For adolescents, romantic relationships entail aspects such as spending time together, sharing personal information with each other, being physically affectionate, and constructing boundaries that define the relationships as different to other types of close relationships (Christopher, Poulsen, & McKenney, 2016).

Adolescents, as do all individuals, have an inherent motivation to form several social relations and have the need to participate in positive interactions, while avoiding displeasure in these relationships (Furrer & Skinner, 2003). Socialisation and the ability to initiate and sustain social roles occur through interaction with parents, the peer group, friends, and romantic partners (Craig & Dunn, 2010).

2.3.1   Socialisation and the role of parents and peers. Children and adolescents move through several stages during which socialisation occurs. Socialisation and early interpersonal experiences in the family form the foundation of all future relationships (Boisvert & Poulin, 2016). Family interactions can promote or inhibit the development of necessary skills to participate in successful romantic relationships during adolescence and adulthood (Bryant & Conger, 2002). The family system and the parent-child relationship are essential aspects during early adolescence (Boisvert & Poulin, 2016). Family cohesion in early adolescence promotes confidence in establishing and maintaining later romantic relationships (Boisvert & Poulin, 2016). While communication with and dependence on

parents are important for children and early adolescents, dependence and attachment to peers increase during middle and late adolescence (Nickerson & Nagle, 2005).

Peer relationships become the focal point of socialisation during adolescence (McCormick & Pressley, 2007). Through observation and imitation, peers act as behavioural models, playing a part in shaping adolescents' behaviour, skills, attitudes, norms, and values (Foshee et al., 2013; Rubin, Bukowski, Parker, & Bowker, 2008). Young people with close, supportive peer relationships are more inclined to have higher levels of social competence and self-worth, be more active, and perform better in school that their more lonely counterparts do. Supportive peer relationships provide an emotional buffer against negative feelings such as emotional distress (Hall-Lande, Eisenberg, Christenson, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2007).

2.3.2 Friendship as a prelude to romantic relationships. During adolescence, friendships move from mainly superficial towards more mature and intimate relationships, building the foundation for the development of romantic relationships.

Cliques of the same gender begin to form during early adolescence. Gender in this research study refers to biological gender. In these cliques, individuals feel comfortable to share their experiences (Arain et al., 2013). In this stage, peer pressure to initiate romantic relationships may be experienced. The initiation of a relationship can increase the social status experienced between friends (Christopher, McKenney, & Poulsen, 2015). Mixed-gender groups and friendships commence in early to middle adolescence and aid the progression from friendships of the same gender toward dyadic romantic relationships (Connolly, Craig, Goldberg, & Pepler, 2004). In these newly formed mixed-gender cliques, adolescents learn what to expect from the opposite gender (Smetana et al., 2006).

Friends act as unique role models and influences by providing information pertaining to romantic relationships and behavioural norms (Miller, Gorman-Smith, Sullivan, Orpinas, & Simon, 2009). Connolly et al. (2004) found that friendship interactions during adolescence could be deemed prototypes for interactions that are similar to romantic relationships. Thus, friendships operate as a testing ground for managing one's emotions in a context comprising voluntary close relationships (such as romantic relationships). Commitment to friends throughout adolescence was found to be correlated positively with commitment to romantic companions in late adolescence (De Goede, Branje, Van Duin, Van der Valk, & Meeus, 2011; Meeus, Branje, Van der Valk, & De Wied, 2007).

Spending extensive time with friends during adolescence may fill identity development needs (especially the exploration dimension), but may interfere with intimacy needs for establishing a romantic relationship (Feldman, Cauffman, Jensen, & Arnett, 2000). Friendships and romantic relationships may differ in function, but these relationships do not exist autonomously and are rooted in a continued social experience (Barry, Madsen, Nelson, Carroll, & Badger, 2009; Lefkowitz, Boone, & Shearer, 2004). Therefore, friendships and dating relationships are two of the main social contexts during adolescence (Viejo, Ortega-Ruiz, & Sanchez, 2015), and it becomes clear how the quality of friendships formed during adolescence can be regarded as a contributor to the quality of romantic relationships later in life.

2.3.3 Development of romantic relationships. Throughout late adolescence and young adulthood, individuals are confronted with several important developmental transitions, including being able to establish a committed relationship (Hutteman, Hennecke, Orth, Reitz, & Specht, 2014; Luciano & Orth, 2017). The development of romantic relationships is a normative developmental task that occurs during adolescence (Kindelberger & Tsao, 2014, Van de Bongardt, Yu, Deković, & Meeus, 2015). A romantic partner will assume the role that the family and peers held in younger years (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008). There is no true separation between one context and a bond. As adolescents' social worlds become more complex, the development of attachment bonds accordingly get more complex. This includes bonds and attachments with peers, friends, and romantic partners (Gorrese & Ruggieri, 2012). As mentioned earlier, adolescents begin to experiment with romantic pairings (Collins et al., 2009). This is marked by adolescents beginning to pursue and develop romantic relationships. In middle and late adolescence, couples begin to form and test out what they have learned in the initial same-gender cliques, no longer feeling the urge to be in a group to feel safe (Arain et al., 2013).

Romantic relationships are characterised as special and different from other close relationships during adolescence (Christopher et al., 2015). These relationships are considered a central component of adolescents' lives (Giordano, Longmore, & Manning, 2006). Romantic relationships, marked by the expression of affection and the expectation of sexual relations at some point, are both normative and salient (Booth et al., 2016). The development of romantic relationships can be observed through crushes, considering that it is difficult to study romantic relationships in early adolescence (Bowker & Etkin, 2016; Bower, Nishina,

Witkow, & Bellmore, 2015). Dating relationships increase in importance and prevalence when adolescents become more mature (Carver, Joyner, & Udry, 2003).

Romantic relationship experiences in early adolescence are linked to relationship quality later in life, as well as overall development in emerging adulthood (Madsen & Collins, 2011; Meier & Allen, 2009; Seiffge-Krenke & Lang, 2002; Valle & Tillman, 2012). Involvement in romantic relationships and the quality of these relationships play an important role in the social and personal development of adolescents (Collins et al., 2009; Hand & Furman, 2009). This can be seen as positive or negative, depending on the quality of the relationship. Romantic relationship quality and involvement also contribute to clarifying changeability in numerous psychosocial adjustment outcomes (Beckmeyer, 2015; Collibee & Furman, 2015; Ha, Dishion, Overbeek, Burk, & Engels, 2014; Wagner, Becker, Lüdtke, & Trautwein, 2015). Thus, romantic relationships can be considered essential in the development of adolescents (Booth et al., 2016).

2.4 Social-cognitive Comparison and the Evaluation of Romantic Relationships

As mentioned in earlier sections, various contextual and individual aspects influence social cognitive development during adolescence. Consequently, cognitive development in adolescents is associated with improvement in judgement, decision making, self-regulation, coordination of affect and cognition, and self-evaluation (Steinberg, 2005). Owing to advances in cognitive maturation in aspects such as a decrease in egocentricity, abstract thinking, perspective-taking, self-evaluation, and coping skills, adolescents can make appraisals that are more differentiated pertaining to social relationships, which may contribute to the more accurate evaluation of themselves and their romantic relationships (Blakemore, 2008; Schwartz et al., 2013).

The need to evaluate certain situations, beliefs, and capabilities stems from Festinger's social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954). Self-evaluation is essential in the process of social comparison (Festinger, 1954). Festinger (1954) hypothesises that individuals possess an inherent drive for evaluating their opinions and abilities. Individuals' cognitions, beliefs, goals, and opinions about situations, and appraisals of their capabilities (evaluation of abilities) influence behaviour. Furthermore, it is hypothesised that these abilities and appraisals are evaluated in comparison with others (Barry et al., 2009; Festinger, 1954; Laursen & Bukowski, 1997). Festinger's theory of social comparison (1954) can be applied to

a wide range of situations, one of which is the evaluation of romantic relationships (Wayment & Campbell, 2000a).Two aspects of Festinger's social comparison theory that relate specifically to the evaluation of romantic relationships are motives and types of information used during evaluation (Wayment & Campbell, 2000a). This is discussed in the following subsections.

2.4.1   Motives used to evaluate romantic relationships. For several reasons, it is important for adolescents to be able to evaluate romantic relationships. Firstly, considering that romantic relationships form an important part of overall self-identity, similarities in the way in which one evaluates oneself may be found in the way one evaluates one's romantic relationships. Secondly, various researchers have identified several motives for self-evaluation constructs in relationship contexts (see the following section), for example maintaining a positive view of the relationship and the need to be able to confirm existing views about the relationship. Lastly, the ability to compare the means in which relationship evaluation processes may be similar or different from processes of self-evaluation may help identifying aspects uniquely dyadic to romantic relationships (Wayment & Campbell, 2000a).

Evaluative motives prompt individuals to evaluate certain aspects of their lives, such as romantic relationships, and include motivation for enhancement (Strube, 1990; Wills, 1981), accuracy (Festinger, 1954; Trope, 1980), improvement (Major et al., 1991; Taylor & Lobel, 1989), and verification (Swann, Wenzlaff, Krull, et al., 1992; Swann, Wenzlaff, & Tafarodi, 1992). Using the modified multidimensional model of self-evaluation, Wayment and Campbell (2000a) applied these motives in the context of romantic relationships.

Enhancement as an evaluative motive can be described as a desire for reassurance or the need to feel better about a certain ability or belief (Kwang & Swann, 2010; Pfeffer & Fong, 2005; Strube, 1990). Individuals have a desire to feel good about their relationships and therefore may tend to view their relationships through rose-coloured glasses (Edwards, 2017; Murray, 2001; Murray & Holmes, 1993). Relationship satisfaction is related to a tendency to idealise one's partner (Edwards, 2017; Murray et al., 2011; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996). In a recent study done on the universal nature of self-evaluation motives, Gaertner, Sedikides, and Cai (2012) found that when participants had to indicate the nature in which they preferred to receive feedback (self-enhancing, self-improving, or self-effacing), all of the participants (Chinese and American) preferred self-enhancing and self-improving feedback to self-effacing feedback.

The motive *accuracy* can be described as evaluating in order to gain a clear idea about the status one holds in a certain domain (Festinger, 1954; Trope 1980). Although accuracy is one of the less common motives used in the evaluation of romantic relationships, Taylor and Gollwitzer (1995) suggest that, before making important decisions, individuals tend to desire an accurate view of themselves (instead of an enhanced view). Important decisions in the context of romantic relationships include the decision to commit. When making this decision, individuals tend to think more realistically and accurately about their relationship (Gagné, Lydon, & Bartz, 2003). Accuracy in the judgement of romantic relationships did not enhance relationship satisfaction over time (Fletcher & Kerr, 2010).

Improvement as a motive for evaluation can be described as wanting to facilitate improvement in a specific domain of one's life (see Breines & Chen, 2012; Major et al., 1991; Taylor & Lobel, 1989). When romantic partners support individuals' motivation for self-improvement, individual self-improvement was found to be more successful. Successful self-improvement also leads to the improvement of relationship quality and greater relationship satisfaction (Overall, Fletcher, & Simpson, 2010).

The motive of *verification* can be described as attempting to confirm a belief about one's status in a particular domain (see Kwang & Swann, 2010; Swann, Wenzlaff, Krull, et al., 1992; Swann, Wenzlaff, & Tafarodi, 1992). When in romantic relationships, individuals prefer having their companions think of them in ways confirming their self-perceptions (De la Ronde & Swann, 1998; Hogg & Cooper, 2007; Swann, De la Ronde, & Hixon, 1994). Benefits of self-verification are demonstrated in marital relationships. For example, individuals who feel understood by their partners have reported higher marital quality. Feeling understood may contribute to increased acceptance, which is an important aspect when verifying one's self-image (Weger, 2005). It was found that in dating relationships, self-verification (of one's self-esteem) was related to commitment and higher levels of intimacy (Katz & Joiner, 2002). Self-verification can also predict relationship quality in married couples, dating, and cohabitating relationships (Letzring & Noftle, 2010).

2.4.2 Information used to evaluate romantic relationships. Researchers (Festinger, 1954; Taylor et al., 1995; Wayment & Taylor, 1995) have investigated information used for self-evaluation (in addition to the described motives). Wayment and Campbell (2000a) identified ten types of information that may be used to evaluate romantic relationships, namely Objective Information, Feedback from Others, Personal Standards, Past Negative,

Past Positive, Feared Future, Future Ideals, Upward Social Comparison, Lateral Social Comparison, Upward Social Comparison, and Downward Social Comparison.

The first type of information used to evaluate romantic relationships is the use of *objective information* (Wayment & Campbell, 2000a). This encompasses comparing a relationship against standards that are relatively objective (Festinger, 1954), for example certain relationship behaviours such as the number of times a couple has arguments, given that this is an observable aspect of romantic relationships. Because there is no universal standard for a happy or successful relationship, there is also no universal definition of objective information in the context of evaluating romantic relationships.

Secondly, *feedback* from others can be considered a source of evaluative information that is obtained from sources outside of the romantic relationship (for example, parents, peers, and friends). Considering that parents and peers influence the quality of romantic relationships (Boisvert & Poulin, 2016; Bryant & Conger, 2002; Meeus et al., 2007), it is natural to assume that feedback from these sources may influence how the romantic relationship is evaluated.

Personal standards are considered the most useful type of evaluative information (Gotwals & Wayment, 2002: Wayment & Campbell, 2000a; Wayment & Taylor, 1995). This type of evaluative information is interrelated with other types of evaluative information such as the use of *feared future*, *future ideals*, as well as *past positive* and *past negative* relationships. These information types pertain to individuals and the romantic experiences that an individual either had in the past (positive or negative) or desires/fears to have in future romantic relationships (Southard & Abel, 2010; Wayment & Campbell, 2000a).

The last three types of evaluative information include information relating to social comparison, namely lateral, upward, and downward social comparison. *Lateral social comparison* entails comparing one's relationship with other individuals whose relationships are more or less of the same quality as one's own, such as friends' relationships (Wayment & Campbell, 2000a). *Upward social comparison* consists of comparing one's relationship to other individuals' relationships that are of higher quality than one's own. In contrast, *downward social comparison* is comparing one's relationship with lower quality relationships than one's own (Wayment & Campbell, 2000a).

According to Wayment and Campbell (2000a), the type of information used to evaluate a romantic relationship will likely depend on an individual's motive for evaluating the relationship (e.g. enhancement, accuracy, improvement, or verification). The use of objective information will most likely be used when the goal is to form an accurate evaluation of one's relationship, such affectionate behaviour by a partner (Festinger, 1954). Feedback from others may be used if the evaluative motive is accuracy (Wayment & Campbell, 2000a). Personal standards are considered as the most useful information type for meeting all four motives for evaluation (i.e., enhancement, accuracy, improvement, and verification), followed by future ideals and past negative experiences (Wayment & Campbell, 2000a). It was found that social comparison information was used with regard to several motives. For example, if the motive for evaluation was enhancement, using downward social comparison and past negative relationships to evaluate the relationship was preferred. Using these information types may lead to a more favourable view of the current relationship (Corcoran, Crusius, & Mussweiler, 2011; Wills, 1981).

Developing individuals gradually begin using strategies that are more adaptive as they get older and have more relationship experience. For instance, rather than discussing relationship problems with parents or peers, relationship problems will be discussed with the romantic partner (Connolly & McIsaac, 2011). This may indicate that individuals begin preferring to use information that is more objective when evaluating their relationships. Relationship quality increases from 13 years of age to 21 years of age (Seiffge-Krenke, 2003), suggesting that individuals come across certain qualities in past relationships that they may or may not want in future romantic relationships (Norona, Roberson, & Welsh, 2017). Individuals who had many past relationships that were of low quality, display greater negative affect towards romantic partners later in life (Madsen & Collins, 2011). Relating to personal standards, emerging adults are cognitively equipped to evaluate their romantic relationships more critically (Clark & Beck, 2010). Therefore, they are now able to decide whether certain qualities and experiences in their relationships satisfy their personal desires for closeness and commitment.

Individuals who make upward comparisons tend to experience lower relationship quality than individuals who make downward comparisons. When individuals make upward comparisons, the risk of the relationship ending may increase (Wesner, 2008). Pinkus, Lockwood, Marshall, and Yoon (2012) contradict this by stating that when individuals are

outperformed by their significant others (upward social comparison) in romantic relationships, this results in more positive affect. This finding is based on the possibility of sharing in their partners' fate; if their partners are successful, they may reap the benefits, and if their partners fail, they may share in the losses (Pinkus, Lockwood, Schimmack, & Fournier, 2008; Pinkus et al., 2012). The view that individuals in romantic relationships respond better to upward comparison than downward comparison is consistent with a number of studies (Pinkus et al., 2008; Pinkus et al., 2012; Scinta & Gable, 2005).

Thus, romantic relationships are considered special (Christopher et al., 2015) and important in the lives of adolescents (Giordano et al., 2006). The quality of these relationships is linked to later relationship quality (Madsen & Collins, 2011; Meier & Allen, 2009; Seiffge-Krenke & Lang, 2002; Valle & Tillman, 2012) and plays a role in the overall development of adolescents (Collins et al., 2009; Hand & Furman, 2009). Adolescents have been found to evaluate themselves in the same way that they evaluate romantic relationships (Wayment & Campbell, 2000a). Several motives and information has been identified for evaluating romantic relationships (discussed in the sections above). The motives and information used to evaluate oneself or one's relationship differ in terms of age, maturity level, and the number of previous relationships.

2.5   Gender Differences in Romantic Relationships

Several authors (Perrin et al., 2011; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011) have debated the role of gender in romantic relationships of adolescents.

During early adolescence, boys tend to report being in a current relationship more than their female counterparts do. Girls who do report being involved in romantic relationships tend to be in longer relationships than boys are, and this pattern continues throughout adolescence (Connolly et al., 2004; Connolly & McIsaac, 2011; Longmore, Manning, & Giordano, 2001). In another study, females in middle and late adolescence tended to be involved in romantic relationships more than their male counterparts did (Branje, Laninga-Wijnen, Yu, & Meeus, 2014). These contradicting findings may be contributed to the fact that romantic relationships become more serious with age and maturity.

Girls have a tendency to be more oriented towards people, whereas boys tend to be more object orientated (Perry & Pauletti, 2011). This is evident in the greater amount of time that girls spend in relationship activities, while boys prefer spending more time engaging in

video games, watching television, playing ball, et cetera. This is also apparent in the different occupations that boys and girls choose to pursue (Perry & Pauletti, 2011). Females prefer part-time jobs that include contact with people (babysitting and waitressing), whereas males prefer manual labour and working with tools.

It was found that females were more invested in romantic engagements (Eder, Evans, & Parker, 1995). This makes sense, considering that males are often teased by their peers when revealing signs of emotionality (Fine, 1987; Giordano et al., 2006). In turn, they learn to devalue relationships that engender positive emotions. This may lead to the objectification and denigration of the females with whom they are in romantic relationships. In another study, which contradicts the aforementioned findings, boys were found to often accord positive meanings to romantic relationships while developing positive emotional feelings for their partners (Korobov & Thorne, 2006: Way & Chu, 2004).

According to Kindelberger and Tsao (2014), girls are more intrinsically motivated in romantic relationships than boys are, which more likely will lead to commitment. When involved in romantic relationships, girls tend to emphasise intimacy and commitment when describing relationships. In contrast, boys tend to emphasise activities and companionship (McDougall & Hymel, 2007). This makes sense when considering that girls tend to be more people-oriented, while boys are perceived to be more things-oriented (Perry & Pauletti, 2011).

Relationship standards may also differ among genders. Standards in romantic relationships can be defined as the goals and aspirations held by individuals for their romantic relationships (Higgins, Strauman, & Klein, 1986). Relationship standards offer individuals a means for evaluating relationships and serve as a foundation for feelings in the relationship (Duck, 1990; Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000). In an early study investigating differences between genders in standards for romantic relationships, it was found that the importance associated with several relationship standards did not differ between males and females (Vangelisti & Daly, 1997).

Boys may be more reliant on romantic relationships, considering that girls possess more opportunities (e.g., friendship with peer groups) to gain social support and have intimate talks (Giordano, Manning, Longmore, & Flanigan, 2012). Therefore, boys engage in a unique form of self-disclosure, which may be missing in conversations with their male friends. They also obtain positive identity and social support from a sensitive female companion (Giordano et

al., 2006). Mixed-gender friendships are more risky than same-gender friendships, especially for girls, considering that girls tend to be influenced by their male friends rather than by their female friends (Arndorfer & Stormshak, 2008; Deutsch, Steinley, & Slutske, 2014).

While both genders experience the beginning of relationships as unfamiliar, males tend to find this transition easier than their female counterparts do, considering their more dominant interaction style (Maccoby, 1990). In contrast with this statement, another perspective is that girls experience this developmental leap with more ease, taking into account that their communication is better developed than that of boys (Giordano et al., 2012). Boys were also found to portray more perceived awkwardness in communication with romantic partners than girls do (Giordano et al., 2006).

2.6   Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the term *adolescence* was defined and discussed, and the complexity of the term was highlighted. The domains of development, which include the physical, cognitive, and social domain, were reviewed. Romantic relationships were defined, followed by a detailed discussion on the different components of the construct of romantic relationships. This includes components such as the importance of socialisation as a prelude to the development of romantic relationships, as well the cognitive component needed to develop romantic relationships. Various gender differences in romantic relationships were also considered.

Chapter 3 –Identity Formation during Adolescence

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of identity and investigate the relation between this construct and romantic relationships during adolescence. Firstly, identity is defined and conceptualised. Secondly, identity development during adolescence is discussed. This is followed by a discussion of the most prominent theories on identity formation. Fourthly, romantic relationships and identity formation are reviewed in relation, and the role of gender as a possible moderator is discussed.

3.1   Identity

Identity is a broad concept referring to more than merely a sense of who one is and one's contribution to society (Sokol, 2009). Identity consists of individuals' internal beliefs, drives and abilities (Marcia, 1980). Developing a personal identity can be a challenging task for adolescents (Luyckx & Robitschek, 2014). In this section, several definitions and conceptualisations of identity are discussed, followed by a description of identity development during adolescence. In conclusion, the most prominent theories on identity development are discussed.

3.1.1   Definitions and conceptualisations of identity. Defining identity is not an easy task, considering that identity consists of several interrelated components. Although definitions of identity vary across literature, theorists share a common view of what this concept entails. The formation of an identity is not a predetermined attribute, but rather a relational phenomenon described best as a continuing process. Identity formation can be considered in terms of the self, self-concept, personality development, personal values, et cetera. The individual interprets the self as a particular kind of person and is then recognised as such in a specific setting (Gee, 2001).

The most critical stage in identity formation is adolescence, considering that it is regarded as a midway between childhood and adulthood. During this time, the fourth element, namely identity, is added to the previous personality structures of ego, the self, and superego (Marcia, 2002).

Identity formation can also be defined as the unconscious and conscious processes through which one defines the self. This definition can be viewed in relation to various domains such as the intra-psychic, social, relational and contextual domains (Dovidio,

Gaertner, Pearson, & Riek, 2005; Josselson, 2012). Therefore, identity can be considered as a personal-level construct, a social-level construct, and a relational-level construct. This comprises not only aspects that distinguish individuals from one another, but also that make individuals similar to one another (Adams, 2014; Erikson, 1968; Munday, 2006; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Personal identity refers to interpersonal characteristics that are important for defining individuals and originates from Erikson's (1968) conceptualisation of ego identity. Erikson (1068) did not believe that identity formation is confined to adolescence, but rather that identity formation is a construct that shifts and grows throughout the life span as individuals are confronted with new challenges and experiences (Erikson, 1970). Although numerous aspects of identity are fixed and unchanging in most cases (e.g., gender and ethnicity) individuals themselves determine many aspects. Individuals are given a choice regarding how they will define themselves (e.g., who and what they are) (Adams, 2014). Erikson (1970) describes identity as a subjective sense and an observable quality of personal continuity and sameness. He suggests this construct can be observed in young people who have found themselves and their communality. Erikson (1968) also describes identity as an overall sense of who one is presently and who one will become in the future. An internal locus of control permits individuals to explore various identities before committing to several consecutive life choices (Marcia, 2002). Identity formation is characterised by inner unity and continuity and relates to the complex manner in which the unique view of the self is established (Herman, 2011). This specific dimension of identity emphasises the individual and the personal characteristics, goals, ideas, emotions, values, and beliefs of the individual (Adams, 2014). Individuals who have mature personal identities already have clear ideas of who they are. These individuals understand their place in the world and have future goals for who they are aiming to become (Hardy, Nadal, & Schwartz, 2017; King, 2006).

There is a connection between social identity and membership of a specific group or groups. This identity dimension derives from Tajfel and Turner's (1986) social identity theory (SIT) and stresses the effect group membership has on intergroup relations. Socially, identity can be regarded as a two-measure construct suggesting that interactions in the social world influence identity, but identity also influences interactions in the social world (Simon, 2008).

Lastly, relational identity refers to the various social roles individuals fulfil daily (e.g., mother, wife, or teacher) and can be regarded as the combination of social roles and personal

aspects of identity. Therefore, relational identity can be considered as accounting for the interpersonal processes that are important in portraying certain roles (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). It is important to remember that these three core dimensions are all interrelated (Adams, 2014; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

3.1.2 Identity development during adolescence. Identity formation is one of the main aspects of development that occur during adolescence and is viewed as a critical task in moving from adolescence to adulthood (Berzonsky, Cieciuch, Duriez, & Soenens, 2011; Cramer, 2000; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980). A strong sense of identity is a necessary prelude for a smooth transition to young adulthood. Consequently, it is crucial to understand identity and the contexts that support healthy identity development (Duerden, Widmer, Taniguchi, & McCoy, 2009). Erikson (1963, 1968) is one of the most influential writers on identity, and places this concept in the context of ego-psychoanalytic theory, viewing it as distinctive (not exclusive) to adolescence (Marcia, 1980).

The majority of identity "work" occurs in late adolescence (Steinberg & Morris, 2001, p. 93). Adolescents tend to develop more abstract depictions of themselves in the transition that takes place from childhood to adolescence. Self-concept starts becoming more differentiated and better organised. Adolescents no longer view themselves in terms of social comparisons, but rather begin to perceive themselves in terms of personal beliefs and standards (Harter, 1998; Steinberg & Morris, 2001).

In a longitudinal study examining the progression of identity formation across adolescence, it was reported that early adolescence is a period consisting of simultaneously exploring newly acquired identities, while actively considering alternate identities (Meeus, Van de Schoot, Keijsers, Schwartz, & Branje, 2010). Identity formation is marked by the amalgamation of childhood skills, beliefs, and identifications into a more coherent whole, and therefore is based on the assumption that adolescents are encouraged to find certain beliefs, values, and goals that are accepted personally and socially (Low, Akande & Hill, 2005). This provides the adolescent with a sense of continuity of past events and of direction for the future (Cicchetti, 2016; Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993).

Self-definition is one of the main concerns pertaining to adolescence and includes self-exploration in relation to others (e.g., peers, parents/guardians, and society) (Kroger, 2007). If adolescents' goals, beliefs, and values are not accepted personally and socially, this can

become problematic, considering cohesion will not be found and adolescents may start doubting who they are and where they belong (Schultz & Schultz, 2009). Identity development can also be regarded as a psychosocial process, considering adolescents perform the process of identity construction in a social context, including the family, extended kin, peers, and others (Bartoszuk & Pittman, 2010; Pe'rez-Sales, 2010).

Thus, identity formation can be viewed as a critical psychosocial task that holds relevance throughout the life span but plays a particularly important role during adolescence and emerging adulthood. Broadly, this construct involves constructing and understanding who one is and how one came to be this way; therefore, it is an understanding of the self that is integrated and coherent across a certain time and context (McLean & Syed, 2016).

3.2   Theories on Identity Development

In this section, some of the most prominent theories on identity development are discussed.

3.2.1   Erikson's psychosocial theory on identity development. Identity development proceeds through eight interdependent developmental stages (Erikson, 1968, 1977). Each of these life stages encompasses a period consisting of heightened potential and increased vulnerability relating to particular components of the personality. These eight stages span from birth to old age and include several psychosocial developmental processes. The stages are basic trust vs. mistrust (birth to 1 year), autonomy vs. shame and doubt (1-3 years), initiative vs. guilt (3-6 years), industry vs. inferiority diffusion (6-11 years), identity vs. identity confusion (adolescence), intimacy vs. isolation (young adulthood), generativity vs. stagnation (middle adulthood), and ego-integrity vs. despair (old age). Near the end of each of these stages, there is a turning point that Erikson (1963) calls an identity crisis. This crisis is brought on by maturational changes stemming from within individuals and societal demands (Thom & Coetzee, 2004). An identity crisis can be perceived as a time in which intensive analysis and exploration of the self occurs (Erikson, 1970). Adolescents are in the fifth developmental phase, namely ego-identity vs. role confusion, in which resolution between the two poles is pursued. According to Adams and Berzonsky (2006), this takes place during the identity-formation process and includes the capability of the ego to synthesise and then incorporate prior identifications into a new, unique identification of oneself. Thus, the

formation of an inner sense of identity takes place in the ego-identity vs. role confusion phase (Erikson, 1968).

The views of Erikson (1963, 1968) have become vital when attempting to comprehend the development of identity. Erikson (1968) states that in psychological terms, identity formation utilises a process of concurrent reflection and observation. Erikson (1968) describes identity formation as a sort of stress between synthesis and confusion. On the one hand, the stronger individuals' sense of identity synthesis is, the more conscious individuals will be of their competences and abilities. On the other hand, identity confusion leaves individuals more vulnerable for ill-being (Kroger & Marcia, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2011).

3.2.2 Marcia's identity status theory. According to Marcia, identity can be categorised into two defining dimensions, namely exploration and commitment (Waterman, 2015). If individuals continue to stay in exploration without the ability to commit, an identity crisis may emerge. As mentioned earlier, an identity crisis can be perceived as a time in which intensive analysis and exploration of the self occurs (Erikson, 1970). Forming an identity is not a process that occurs neatly and involves commitment to more than one aspect of one's life. This includes sexual orientation, an ideological stance, and a vocational direction, and is achieved in "bits and pieces" (Marcia, 1980, p. 161). Identity exploration refers to the investigation of several meaningful alternatives, while identity commitment can be described as a personal investment or choice of specific alternatives (Marcia, 1966).

Exploration during adolescence refers to a period of engagement in selecting several meaningful alternatives (Marcia, 1966). In this period, adolescents attempt to answer questions about who they are and who they wish to become (Waterman, 2015). This definition of exploration refers to *exploration in breadth*. Meeus, Iedema, and Maassen (2002) add another dimension to exploration, which is referred to as *exploration in depth*. Exploration in depth encompasses extensive evaluation of commitments previously made to assess how well such commitments fit one's personal standards. In a new perspective regarding identity exploration, exploration has been extended into three forms, namely exploration in breadth, exploration in depth, and *ruminative exploration* (Luyckx et al., 2008). Ruminative exploration can be defined as brooding or worrying without the ability to make a decision about one's life (Beyers & Luyckx, 2016).

Commitment can be described as "the degree of personal investment" that individuals exhibit (Marcia, 1966, p. 551) and refers to choices made in areas relevant to identity (Marcia, 1980). Identity achievement is reached when one commits to a specific identity after a crisis period has been experienced and various options have been explored (Marcia, 1966). As an extension of Marcia's statuses (1966), the three-dimensional model of Meeus and Crocetti (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, & Meeus, 2008; Meeus et al., 2010) was used to create identity trajectories. The focus of this model is the organisation of commitment. Three dimensions, namely commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment are suggested as the underlying process of identity formation. Commitment refers to strong choices made by adolescents regarding several developmental domains, including the self-confidence that is derived from making these choices. In-depth exploration is represented by the maintenance of the present commitment that adolescents have made. This refers to the extent to which commitments that have already been made are explored actively by reflection of choices, information seeking about these commitments, and conversations about the commitments. Reconsideration of commitment indicates the willingness to seek new commitments and discard present commitments that are no longer satisfactory (Meeus, Van de Schoot, Keijsers, & Branje, 2012).

Exploration and commitment can be differentiated into four identity statuses (Waterman, 2015). Marcia (1966, 1980) identified four identity statuses, namely the achieved, moratorium, foreclosed, and diffused statuses. Identity diffusion can be identified as the absence of identity commitment and no indication of existing exploration (although exploration may or may not have occurred earlier in the individuals' life) (Waterman, 2015). Foreclosure is marked by the existence of commitment and lack of past exploration. Thus, commitment has been formed by identification with significant others. Moratorium relates to the current exploration of alternatives when individuals are still in a crisis, considering that no commitment has yet been made. Moratorium status is often found among college students (Bartoszuk & Pittman, 2010). Identity achievement can be described briefly as a period of development of firm commitment because of a crisis in the past. In the achieved status, individuals have already explored and made several commitments, and are more likely to have assumed identities (McLean & Pasupathi, 2012). Marcia (2002) states that the most typical, and probably the most optimal, path to identity formation is the diffused-foreclosure-moratorium-achievement path to initial identity. He adds that it is important to remember that the initial identity, which is formed during late adolescence, is not necessarily the last identity

that will be formed. One may experience a subsequent crisis throughout the life cycle, and a similar foreclosure-moratorium-achievement cycle may be experienced each time that disequilibrium occurs (Marcia, 2002).

3.2.3   Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory. Tajfel and Turner (Tajfel, 1972; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) developed their social identity theory (SIT) in the late seventies as a reaction to earlier reductionist theories that tended to emphasise the individuals' behaviour in certain groups, or tried to understand group behaviour by using theories that had been developed to understand individuals' behaviour (Baird, 2001). Social identity can be described as consisting of the aspects of individuals' self-image derived from the social category of which individuals perceive themselves as being part (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Theorists of SIT attempt to understand how a group contributes to an individuals' identity; therefore, they focus on the "group in the individual" (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 3). Therefore, SIT can be defined briefly as a classic social psychological theory explaining intergroup conflict as a function of certain group-based self-definitions (Islam, 2014).

SIT is based on the assumption that individuals tend to define themselves in terms of the social groups to which they perceive themselves to belong or not belong. These identifications serve as protection and bolstering for self-identity. The social psychological perspective argues that identity develops from negotiating with other individuals in one's in-group in a certain context (French et al., 2006). In SIT, an external locus of control reigns, with the focus on commitment to or association with a social unit or group. Individuals' personal qualities such as beliefs, goals, and values are now consistent with what they expect from group interactions. The characteristics that groups possess are important, seeing that they influence the choices that individuals will make (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Verkuyten, 2005).

Further, it is assumed that individuals attempt to maintain and/or improve their self-esteem while striving towards a positive self-concept. Considering that certain social groups and categories are related to positive or negative connotations, social identity may be positive or negative in accordance with the evaluation of the groups that contribute to individuals' social identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Finally, the evaluation of one's own group may be regulated with reference to other groups by means of social comparisons. This can be viewed in terms of having certain value-laden qualities. Positively discrepant comparisons between in-group and out-group produce higher status, whereas negatively discrepant comparisons

31

between previously mentioned groups result in lower status (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Theoretically, it can be assumed that individuals generally attempt to attain or uphold a positive social identity. Positive social identity is established largely by favourable comparisons made between the in-group and relevant out-groups. When an individual's social identity is perceived as inadequate, he or she will attempt to either leave his or her existing group and join a more positively distinct group, or make his or her existing group more positively distinct (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Tajfel's definition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) of a group includes three components, namely a cognitive component, an evaluative component, and an emotional component. The cognitive component involves individuals' awareness of the group to which they belong. The evaluative component is based on whether individuals evaluate the group to which they belong as positive or negative. The final component, the emotional component, encompasses the positive or negative emotions that are associated with the group membership. SIT is based on four underlying principles, which include social categorisation, social comparison, social identity, and self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

3.2.4   McAdams and McLean's narrative identity theory. Narrative identity can be defined as the internalised, evolving story of the self that is constructed by individuals with the aim of making sense and meaning of their lives (McAdams, 2011). McAdams (1985) builds on Erikson's theory (1968) and suggests that narrative identity is developed during late adolescence and early adulthood. Societal expectations and the maturation of adolescents' formal operational functioning contribute to the development of narrative identity (McAdams, 1985).

To acquire a narrative identity, individuals must learn the ability to share their stories according to particular cultural parameters and in particular groups (e.g., families, peers, and other social contexts) (McAdams & McLean, 2013). The ability to construct a life story emerges during adolescence (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). This ability depends on individuals' social and cognitive abilities. The life story can be regarded as consisting of highly specific structures composed by associations of global coherence. Life stories make up self-development and are a life span process that commences early in childhood and extends through old age (McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007). They add that this process is located in a cultural milieu, holding expectations of what a healthy narrative and self encompasses.

Thus, identity formation is a central task of adolescence encompassing one of the key processes through which an identity is constructed, namely narrative meaning making (Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McLean et al., 2007). A constructed narrative can be described as a representation of past events and the details thereof. A narrative also provides a venue out of which the past can be evaluated and interpreted (McLean & Breen, 2009). Meaning-making can be defined as the degree to which individuals discover something about themselves from reflecting on past events (McLean & Pratt, 2006; McLean & Thorne, 2003). Therefore, narrative identity can be defined as the internalised and evolving life story through which the reconstructed past is integrated with the imagined future with the purpose of providing life with a certain degree of purpose and unity. Therefore, through synthesising episodic memories with envisioned goals, individuals can create a coherent account of identity in time (McAdams & McLean, 2013). According to McAdams (1998), the life story is used as a theoretical model as well as a research method in various fields of psychology. Life stories enable individuals to organise recollected memories and abstract knowledge of the past into a more coherent view (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). It is also an important way to establish self-continuity and understanding. Engaging in narrative practices is an essential element with the aim of developing life stories and/or a narrative identity. This engagement might also be related to positive well-being (McLean & Breen, 2009). Meaning-making skills (and other kinds of interpretive narration) show age-related increases across adolescence, particularly during middle adolescence. This makes sense, considering that individuals become better at managing inconsistency and contradiction in their personal stories as they mature (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

3.3 Gender Differences in Identity Formation

Research done on gender differences in identity development revealed several inconsistent results. Arnett (2016) suggests that there are differences between genders, and that these differences may be attributed to pubertal development. In another study, no differences between the identity formation of males and females were found, and it was suggested that additional research needed to be done on this topic (Alessandria & Nelson, 2005).

Erikson (1968, 1974) suggests that males and females could differ with regard to identity formation, especially when considering this construct on domain level. Males are considered more committed in the vocational and ideological domains, whereas females are

considered more concerned in the relational domains (including marriage and child upbringing). Coherent with this finding, identity domains pertaining to the choice of activities in social relationships are conducted more effectively by women than by their counterparts. These domains include attitudes relating to sexual activities, family vs. career , and best friends and partners. Although females tend to be more reflective regarding sexual identities, priorities and attitudes relating to interpersonal and romantic relationships, no difference in being capable to form an identity was reported between genders (Magner & Hill, 2017).

Few gender differences were observed in the frequency of identity status concerning what people want to do and/or believe as individuals (Waterman, 1999). Females tend to show higher levels in both identity commitment and exploration than males do (Montgomery, 2005). Females also tend to be further in the identity development process in the categories regarding identity achievement and identity moratorium. Males tend to score higher in the foreclosure and diffused identity categories (Cramer, 2000; Schwartz & Montgomery, 2002). Similar results were found in a study conducted by Sandhu and Tung (2006) in a sample consisting of Northern Indian adolescents and emerging adults.

To date, little research has been done about gender differences and social identity. Early research done by Nesdale and Flesser (2001) indicates that children develop attitudes toward their own group and other groups before starting elementary school. Children also tend to favour the in-group versus the out-group, regardless of their gender. Gender differences may also be attributed to the ways in which young women and men gain a sense of their identities based on how they form social relationships (Eagly, 2013).

Considering that the developmental phase of life represents an influential context for constructing a narrative identity, gender clearly is one of the many sociological factors that are critical elements in shaping an individuals' narrative identity (Singer, 2004). Research done on gender and narrative identity indicates that boys engaging in higher levels of meaning-making concerning autobiographical stories, show lower levels of psychological well-being compared to boys engaging in less meaning-making (Chen, McAnally, Wang, & Reese, 2012; McLean, Breen, & Fournier, 2010). Some boys may be less prepared for the work required by narrative identity, considering they may have had less practice in processing emotions and ruminating the meaning of personal experiences. However, during late adolescence, boys' meaning-making efforts become associated with greater levels of well-being and self-understanding (Chen et al., 2012; McLean et al., 2010). These age-related

changes in both genders may be due to increased cognitive development, which enables adolescents to represent themselves more abstractly. In addition, social pressures to figure out who they (adolescents) are become more prominent and encourage them to define themselves frequently in a wide range of conversational contexts (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

3.4 Romantic Relationships, Identity Formation and Gender as a Possible Moderator

Identity formation and the development and evaluation of romantic relationships have been discussed as essential developmental tasks in adolescent development. Controversy about the identity-intimacy link has been existing for years (Joshi & Deuskar, 2016; Montgomery, 2005; Seginer & Noyman, 2005; Soller, 2014). The influence gender has on this relationship has not yet been revised extensively. In this section, the relation between these constructs is discussed.

As mentioned earlier, adolescents are in the fifth life stage marked by *identity vs. role confusion* (Erikson, 1968). Adolescents begin exploring various possibilities, and based on the outcomes of these explorations, they develop identities. This stage, depending on successful resolution of previous stages, is influenced by several social relationships. It was found that parents, peers, and friends influence several choices made by the individual. Choices include goals of education, dating partners, possible reasons for breaking up, and initiating sexual behaviour; therefore, providing an important context for exploration and commitment (Jones, Vaterlaus, Jackson, & Morrill, 2014). Considering that identity formation, as well as choices pertaining to romantic relationships, is influenced by social relationships, there might also be a possible relationship between how individuals evaluate romantic relationships and form identities in accordance with such social relationships. It was found that romantic attachment has a possible influence on the exploration dimension in identity formation, and in turn, it has implications for identity commitment. Therefore, when adolescents do not make secure attachments while in identity exploration, it can be more difficult to commit to relationships later in life (Kerpelman et al., 2012).

The sixth life stage, known as *intimacy vs. isolation,* which usually emerges during young adulthood, encompasses the need (internally and externally) to amalgamate one's identity with those of others (Erikson, 1968). Erikson (1963, 1968) affirms that the ability to develop intimate relationships is grounded in established identities, while healthy identity formation during adolescence is a necessary prelude to healthy romantic relationships during

emerging adulthood. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that if healthy identity formation is needed to establish healthy romantic relationships, healthy identity formation may also be essential when evaluating one's romantic relationships. The experience of mature intimacy takes place concurrently with the progression toward a mature identity (Seginer & Noyman, 2005). Therefore, the capacity to commit to one's partner without the "fear of ego-loss" (Erikson, 1968, p. 264) is an important task that needs to be accomplished during adolescence.

Marcia (1980) states that identity contributes to intimacy because a secure self is needed to enable individuals to risk the vulnerability to commit oneself to another individual, even temporarily. It is paradoxical that intimacy as a strength can be acquired only through vulnerability, while vulnerability is possible only when an internal assurance of identity is present. Individuals who are further along in the identity achievement process are less focused on themselves and more certain of characteristics wanted in a romantic partner (Nelson & Barry, 2005). Therefore, it can be hypothesised that individuals in the process of identity achievement may also be more equipped to evaluate romantic relationships by using objectively motivated forms of evaluation. Companionship, worth, affection, and emotional support in romantic relationships were also reported as significantly related to identity achievement. Therefore, healthier, more positive romantic relationships are associated with individuals who are more certain of their identities (Barry et al., 2009).

Collins (2003) describes five features relevant to current and long-term significance for individual functioning and identity development. Relevant to the present study are *romantic involvement* and *cognitive and emotional processes in the romantic relationship*. Cognitive and emotional processes include several aspects such as perceptions, representations of oneself, representations of one's partner and the relationship, and the moods that are elicited in romantic experiences. These moods are associated with not only involvement in the relationship, but also with the dissolution of the relationship. Ideas of relationships and the opinions of the social functions of relationships change as adolescents age and develop identities. In a longitudinal research study examining narratives of relationships, the structure and complexity of narratives used increased between middle adolescence to approximately the age of 25 (Waldinger et al. 2002). Adolescents progressively reported that the first feelings of recognisable love arose at a later age than they originally reported. This is likely due to modifications in personal definitions of love stemming from cognitive and emotional maturity

and a varied incidence of relationships (Montgomery & Sorell, 1998; Shulman & Scharf, 2000). Within Collins' (2003) five-feature framework, it becomes clear romantic relationships are complex and multifaceted. Therefore, romantic relationships and the developmental significance of these relationships cannot be described without differentiating between aspects such as the involvement and identity of romantic partners, the content and quality of romantic relationships, as well as thoughts and feelings that are associated with these relationships.

Identity formation during adolescence was found to possess a social construction dimension. Relationships with others, especially romantic relationships, may help adolescents to integrate relational experiences into certain roles. In turn, these roles may become a part of adolescents' identities (Pittman, Keiley, Kerpelman, & Vaughn, 2011). Eder, Evans and Parker (1995) state that females are more invested in romantic relationships, seeing that boys are often teased when showing signs of emotionality (Fine, 1987; Giordano et al., 2006). Therefore, Therefore, it maybe hypothesised that boys who are still in the early stages of identity exploration may use socially motivated forms of evaluating romantic relationships to avoid being teased by their peers.

In their approach to adolescent identity formation, McLean et al. (2010) report that interactions adolescents have in close relationships (including romantic relationships) allow adolescents not only to create meaning for new experiences, but also to create meanings that eventually are integrated in their identity. Therefore, it may be hypothesised that the evaluation of romantic relationships plays a role in identity formation. If adolescents' earlier relationships are filled with arguments and/or violence, the communication skills needed to maintain stable and high-quality relationships might not be developed. In contrast to the aforementioned statement, stable relationships during adolescence may lead to open communication, patience, and healthy coping methods in romantic relationships during adulthood (Valle & Tillman, 2012).

It was found that females are more intrinsically motivated than males are in romantic relationships (Kindelberger & Tsao, 2014) and tend to emphasise intimacy and commitment. This may indicate the use of more objectively motivated forms of evaluating romantic relationships, as well as a more achieved identity. Males and females also tend to consider different aspects as important in romantic relationships (Perry & Pauletti, 2011), which may be indicative of identity status. However, in another study investigating identity development

and romantic relationship qualities, it was hypothesised that gender differences in romantic relationships are lessening (Barry et al., 2009).

Therefore, romantic relationships can be regarded as an important opportunity for adolescents to define the self, their identity, and sexuality (Brown, Feiring, & Furman, 1999). When considering the unique developmental demands of adolescents, as well as the unique functions of romantic relationships, a possible relationship may exist between how individuals develop their identities and the quality of these romantic relationships (Barry et al., 2009). Furthermore, considering that identity formation is a dynamic process developing in romantic relationships (Kunnen, Bosma, Van Halen, & Van der Meulen, 2005), it was hypothesised that the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation may also be closely related. Since gender differences were reported with regard to how males and females evaluate romantic relationships, as well as how their identities are formed, it can be hypothesised that gender moderates the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation.

3.5   Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 has focused on the construct of identity formation and the identity-intimacy link. Identity formation was defined and discussed as a critical task taking place during adolescence. Thereafter, several theories of identity formation were discussed, including the original ideas of Erikson (1968), Marcia's statuses and dimensions (1966, 1980, 2002), the social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner (Tajfel, 1972; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and the more contemporary, narrative identity theory developed by McAdams and McLean (2013). In conclusion, romantic relationships and identity formation in relation to each other were discussed.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology that was employed in this study is discussed. Firstly, an overview of the research aim and questions is given. Secondly a discussion of the research design and approach that was utilised is provided. Thirdly, the research participants and sampling procedures are explained, including the composition of the final sample. Fourthly, the procedures of data collection are discussed. Fifthly, the measuring instruments that were employed are explained, and the processes of data analysis are described. Finally, the ethical considerations relevant to this study are discussed.

4.1 Aim and Questions of the Present Research Study

The aim of this study was to investigate whether a significant amount of variance in identity formation can be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships, and whether gender plays a moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation.

The following questions were investigated:

1. Can a significant amount of variance in identity formation be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships?

2. Does gender play a moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation?

With regard to Question 1, it was hypothesised that a significant amount of variance in identity formation can be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships.

With regard to Question 2, it was hypothesised that gender does play a moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation.

4.2 Research Design and Approach

The research was conducted using a quantitative, non-experimental approach, with a correlational research design. A quantitative research approach can be described as objective and systematic in process (Fouché et al., 2011). The data analysed in this approach are mainly numerical, and were gathered from selected participants answering questions regarding the measured variables. Quantitative research approaches are also empirical and quantifiable

(Belli, 2009). Advantages of quantitative research include that data are more reliable and objective, statistics can be used to generalise findings, cause and effect of the variables in a certain relationship can be established in highly controlled circumstances, and theories and hypotheses can be tested (Taylor & White, 2015). Limitations include that quantitative approaches are less detailed than qualitative research, therefore risking the possibility to miss a desired response from participants. It is also difficult to understand the context of a certain phenomenon, and data gathered may lack the robustness needed to explain complex issues (Taylor & White, 2015). In the current study, a quantitative approach was used to determine the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation.

Belli (2009) states that in non-experimental research, the variables are not manipulated by the researcher and are rather studied as they exist, which is not only a characteristic of this research type, but also an advantage. Non-experimental research is used when conducting research where no intervening or manipulation of the situation or participants is utilised (Belli, 2009). Limitations of this type of study include uncertainty regarding whether the outcome differences are due to specific independent variables. Therefore, the researcher needs to consider alternative explanations to analyse certain variables, and not make causal statements when presenting conclusions (Belli, 2009). Non-experimental research was used in this study because no manipulation of the independent variable took place, and relationships between the variables were investigated, as they existed at a certain time and place, without conducting any experiments on the participants.

Correlational designs are used to investigate the relationship between two or more variables (Stangor, 2015), namely the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation in the present research. The strength and direction of the relationship between specific variables can also be determined by correlational research (Stangor, 2015). Limitations of this design include not describing causality, nor providing reasons to why a certain relationship exists (Stangor, 2015). A correlational research design was used in this study to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation, as well as the strength and direction of the aforementioned relationship (in other words, whether a significant amount of variance in identity formation can be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships).

The moderating role of gender in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation was also investigated. Moderating variables are

introduced in studies where the relationship between the independent variable and the dependant variable possibly may be influenced by a third variable. In general terms, a moderating variable can be described as a qualitative or quantitative variable affecting the direction or strength of the relationship between an independent and/or predictor variable and a dependant criterion variable (Rovai et al., 2014).

4.3 Research Participants and Sampling Procedures

The population of interest in this research study is adolescents. Adolescence is of importance in this study, considering that identity formation is one of the main development tasks of this life stage (Erikson, 1968). According to Newman and Newman (2017), adolescents are between 12-22 years of age. The WHO (2017) considers adolescents to be between the ages of 10 and 19.

Black learners who attended a school in the Mangaung area in Bloemfontein were included in this study. These learners were all considered to be in one of the three adolescent stages, namely early, middle, or late adolescence and were in the age range between 14 and 19 years. Both genders were included. In addition to this, learners who were not willing to participate in the study were excluded.

Non-probability convenience sampling (Stangor, 2015) was used to recruit the participants. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method by which participants are selected in terms of being available at a certain time and place (Springer, 2010). Therefore, the participants were selected because they were easily available, and the sampling was not randomised. Advantages of this method include saving time and being inexpensive. A limitation of this method, however, is the loss of a representative sample and generalisable results. In non-probability sampling, the probability of selecting a member from the specific population is unknown (Springer, 2010).

The researcher used convenience sampling (Stangor, 2015) to recruit adolescents that attended school in the Mangaung-area, Bloemfontein. A total of 199 surveys were completed by the participants. After elimination of incomplete surveys and surveys that included outliers (in terms of age), the final sample consisted of 169 adolescents.

Table 1 represents the distribution with regard to Gender, Age and Grade of the present sample.

Table 1

Distribution with regard to Gender, Age and Grade of the Sample

Biographic characteristic		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	76	45.0
	Female	91	53.8
	Unknown	2	1.2
	Total	169	100
Age	14	25	14.8
	15	29	17.2
	16	27	16.0
	17	29	17.2
	18	35	20.7
	19	24	14.2
	Total	169	100
Grade	8	50	29.6
	9	24	14.2
	10	38	22.5
	11	25	14.8
	12	26	15.4
	Unknown	6	3.6
	Total	169	100

When considering Table 1, it is evident that the 169 participants were represented relatively equally with regard to gender, with 45% of the sample consisting of males and 53.8% of the sample consisting of females. The 169 participants were relatively equally distributed with regard to age and Grade distribution, with the highest percentage of the sample being aged 18 (20.7%).

4.4   Procedures of Data Collection

The data were collected by using self-report questionnaires that were distributed in class and then completed by willing participants. One advantage of using self-report questionnaires

is that it contributes to ensuring the participants' anonymity, which may encourage more participants to be willing to participate in a study. A second advantage includes being able to collect large amounts of data at a relatively low cost and in little time (Eysenck, 2005). A disadvantage of using questionnaires includes doubt surrounding the truthfulness of the participants. Participants interpreting questions subjectively may lead to an inadequate understanding of certain types of information regarding participants' emotions and feelings (Spain, 2008). Another limitation is not being able to reach a richer understanding of the process and/or contextual differences among the variables that are being measured (Paulhus & Vazire, 2009).

In this study, all the participants had to complete the same battery of questionnaires measuring the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation. The questionnaires were distributed in various classes on various occasions. The researcher distributed questionnaires to willing participants and explained the study to the participants. The researcher was available in the classroom for the duration of the time the questionnaires were completed, and the participants were allowed to ask if they struggled with any of the questionnaires. The students spent between 30 and 45 minutes completing the questionnaires.

Biographic information was obtained in the form of selected short questions at the beginning of the questionnaire regarding the age, gender (biological gender, including male and female) and home language of the participants. The participants had to indicate their age, as well as the Grade in which they were at the time by selecting one of the given options on the questionnaire. The home language of the participants was also requested in the form of a short, open-ended question. Considering that English was not the home language of many learners, the researcher asked the participants if any of them were uncomfortable answering the questionnaires in English. The learners stated that they are comfortable with answering the questionnaires in English, since it is also the medium of instruction at school.

4.4.1 **The Romantic Evaluation Scale (RES).** To measure the information that adolescents use to evaluate romantic relationships, the *Romantic Evaluation Scale (RES)* developed by Wayment and Campbell (2000b) was used. The scale consists of 30 items measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with items ranging from "not at all true for me" (1) to "very true for me" (7). The *RES* includes the following ten subscales that are used to evaluate one's relationship: Objective Information, Feedback from Others, Personal Standards, Past Negative, Past Positive, Feared Future, Future Ideals, Upward Social

Comparison, Lateral Social Comparison, Upward Social Comparison, and Downward Social Comparison (see Table 2). Wayment and Campbell (2000a) found high alpha coefficients in all subscales (ranging from .71 to .91) in a sample of college students. Previous studies on adolescents were not available at the time this research was conducted (EBSCOhost, 2017).

Table 2

Explanation of the Subscales of the RES

Subscales	Explanation
Objective Information, Personal Standards, Feared Future, and Future Ideals	A form of information gained from comparing a relationship with relatively more objective standards – contextually, the term "objective" can be used only loosely, considering that standards of a "happy relationship" differ among individuals and are not universal.
Feedback	Evaluative information obtained from external sources, including friends and experts, about the state of individuals' romantic relationships and acquaintances.
Past Negative and Past Positive	Evaluative information that is closely related to individuals and their own personal experiences in past, present, or possible future relationships. These types of information are based on personal goals and ideals and may be positive or negative.
Upward, Lateral, and Downward Social Comparison	These relate to evaluative information based on comparing one's own relationship with those of others, this comparison may be upward, downward or lateral.

In this study, at first, the reliability of the ten subscales was determined. Since each subscale consists of only three items, it was expected that the alpha coefficients would be quite low (see Table 3). Next, a factor analysis of the *RES* items was completed. This analysis yielded two clear dimensions, each measured by 12 items. The first dimension relates to Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation (including the four subscales Objective Information, Personal Standards, Feared Future, and Future Ideals). The second dimension includes Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation (with the four subscales Feedback, Upward, Lateral, and Downward Social Comparison). High scores on each of the two dimensions

relate to either higher objectively or socially motivated forms of evaluating romantic relationships. These two dimensions showed high internal reliability with Cronbach alpha coefficients of .761 and .733 respectively.

Table 3

Reliability of the ten Subscales and two Dimensions of the RES

Subscale	Number of items (N)	Cronbach's Alpha
Objective Information	3	.564
Feedback	3	.499
Personal Standards	3	.437
Past Negative	3	.446
Past Positive	3	.471
Feared Future	3	.486
Future Ideals	3	.479
Upward Social Comparison	3	.465
Lateral Social Comparison	3	.486
Downward Social Comparison	3	.428
Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation dimension	12	.761
Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation dimension	12	.733

4.4.2 The Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ). To measure identity, the *Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ)* developed by Balistreri et al. (1995) was used. This questionnaire operationalises identity by assessing the dimensions of exploration and commitment that are present during ego identity formation. The two subscales include Exploration and Commitment. According to Meeus et al. (2012), identity achievement signifies that active exploration is followed by commitment, both leading to identity achievement. The scale consists of 32 items measured on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). The scores of negatively worded statements are reversed. Total scores for the subscales Exploration and Commitment range from 16 to 96 with a total identity formation score ranging between 32 and 192. Higher scores indicate identity achievement. In a previous study on high school students (Dumas, Ellis, & Wolfe,

2012), reliability scores for Identity Exploration and Identity Commitment were .66 and .68 respectively. These reliability coefficients, although lower than preferred, are consistent with previous studies that used the *EIPQ* on populations of the same age group (Bartoszuk & Pittman, 2010) as well as college students (Balistreri et al., 1995). Furthermore, construct and concurrent validity (with, for example, Marcia's ego status interview) has also been demonstrated (Balistreri et al., 1995).

In this study, initially, the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the full version of the *EIPQ* was much lower than expected (.513 for the 32 items). Using item analyses, problematic items were removed. The *EIPQ* was shortened to 16 items, with eight items measuring Identity Exploration and eight items measuring commitment. In this shortened version, the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the total identity score was .746, with .655 for Identity Exploration and .629 for Identity Commitment.

4.5   Data Analysis

Reliability of the measures used in this study was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which measures internal consistency (Boslaugh & Watters, 2008). Acceptable reliability coefficients differ across the various disciplines, depending on what the measure is intended to be used for. Reliability coefficients that are acceptable in the social sciences range between .6 and .7 (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013). Descriptive statistics were determined for both the categorical and continuous data. Frequency distributions were utilised for the biographic data. Descriptive statistics were completed for the continuous data (which included the measurements related to the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation), in the form of score Range (R), Means (M), and Standard Deviations (SD). As mentioned in the previous section, factor analysis was also conducted for the ten subscales of the *RES*. The two dimensions, namely objectively motivated forms of evaluating romantic relationships and socially motivated forms of evaluating romantic relationships, were used in consecutive analyses.

To answer the first research question, the Pearson product moment correlation method (Boslaugh & Watters, 2008; Howell, 2014) was used to measure the direction and strength of the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation among adolescents. Secondly, various multiple regression analyses were completed to determine the amount of variance in identity formation that can be explained by the

evaluation of romantic relationships. Standard multiple regression analyses were used to explore the amount of variance in identity formation (Identity Exploration, Identity Commitment, and total score) that can be explained by the two dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships (objectively or socially motivated forms of evaluation). In addition to this, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the unique contribution of each of the ten subscales of the *RES* towards Identity Formation (Identity Exploration, Identity Commitment and total score). To answer the second research question, moderated regression analyses were used to determine whether gender has a moderating effect on the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and Identity Formation (Identity Exploration, Identity Commitment and total score). For this analysis, the raw scores of all continuous variables were converted into standard scores and cross products (between gender and each of the two dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships) were used. Statistical levels of significance on the 1% and the 5% levels were considered.

4.6   Ethical Considerations

Authorisation to conduct this study was obtained from the Free State Department of Education (see Appendix B) and the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of the Humanities of the University of the Free State (see Appendix C). The principal of the high school that participated in this research also provided permission (see Appendix D).

The research study and the purpose thereof was explained to the participants before they completed the questionnaires. Informed consent/assent was gathered from the participants, ensuring that they agreed to participate in the study (see Appendix E). The participants were assured that all the information gathered would be managed confidentially and remain completely anonymous, thereby securing the participants' right to privacy. No details that could result in identifying the participants were disclosed in the research study. The completed questionnaires were stored securely. Avoidance of potential harm and/or risk was ensured through diligently explaining the purpose of the study beforehand and discussing any potential harm and risks (though there was a very small risk of any harm). Voluntary participation was encouraged, and the participants were informed that they would be allowed to withdraw from the study if they felt uncomfortable at any time. Counselling services were arranged. The particpants were informed that counselling will be made available to them, should they express the need for psychological assistance.

4.7   Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the research methodology was discussed. The aim of the study was explained, followed by the research questions that were investigated. The aim was achieved by the use of a non-experimental quantitative approach and correlational designs, each of which was reviewed in this chapter. The research participants, which consisted of black adolescents attending high school in the Mangaung area, Bloemfontein, were considered. Self-report questionnaires, which were the sampling procedure that was implemented, were discussed in this chapter. The data collection methods were reviewed, by explaining the scales and subscales that were used in this study. The data analysis procedures that had been utilised to answer the research questions were explained, and the procedures that had been followed were examined. Lastly, this chapter also included the ethical considerations that were important in this research study.

Chapter 5 – Results and Discussion

In this chapter, the results are presented. Thereafter, the results that were obtained are discussed in relation to previous literature and findings in the field.

5.1   Results

In this section, the results that were obtained in the current study are presented. Firstly, descriptive statistics are summarised in the form of minimum and maximum scores, as well as the means and standard deviation scores for the continuous variables. Secondly, the inferential results pertaining to both the research questions are presented.

5.1.1   Descriptive statistics. The Range (R), Means (M), and Standard Deviations (SD) that were obtained by the sample of 169 participants are presented in the following section. These findings relate to the evaluation of romantic relationships (the ten subscales of the *RES*, as well as the two dimensions, objectively and socially motivated forms of evaluation) and identity (the subscales Identity Exploration and Identity Commitment, as well as the Identity Formation total score). This information is summarised in Table 4.

Table 4

Minimum, Maximum, Means and Standard Deviation Scores Relating to the Evaluation of Romantic Relationships and Identity Formation

Variable	Gender group	N*	Min	Max	Mean	SD
RES Subscales						
Objective Information	Total group	169	3	21	14.91	4.057
Feedback	Total group	169	3	21	13.59	4.074
Personal Standards	Total group	169	4	21	15.41	3.519
Past Negative	Total group	169	3	21	11.96	4.261
Past Positive	Total group	169	3	21	13.46	4.090
Feared Future	Total group	169	3	21	15.19	3.809
Future Ideals	Total group	169	5	21	16.07	3.379
Upward Social Comparison	Total group	169	3	21	14.17	3.865
Lateral Social Comparison	Total group	169	3	21	14.21	3.786
Downward Social Comparison	Total group	169	3	21	11.04	4.214
RES (Dimensions)						
Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation	Male	76	22	80	59.83	11.230
(Scale range of 12-84)	Female	91	34	83	62.73	10.594
	Total group	169	22	83	61.57	11.015
Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation	Male	76	14	75	52.70	12.512
(Scale range 12-84)	Female	91	13	75	52.70	10.226
	Total group	169	13	80	53.00	11. 554
Identity (EIPQ)						
Identity Exploration	Male	76	19	48	33.86	6.661
(Scale range 8-48)	Female	91	19	48	34.32	6.688
	Total group	169	19	48	34.13	6.680
Identity Commitment	Male	76	21	47	35.47	6.012
(Scale range 8-48)	Female	91	14	48	37.74	5.754
	Total group	169	14	48	36.73	5.942
Identity Formation (total score)	Male	76	44	93	69.33	11.069
(Scale range 16-96)	Female	91	41	96	72.05	10.422
	Total	169	41	96	70.86	10.787

*Two participants did not provide information regarding their gender.

Considering the individual subscales of the *RES,* each with a possible score range of between 3 and 21, participants obtained mean scores slightly above the scale midpoint of 12. Participants scored highest in the subscales related to the future (Feared Future and Future Ideals) and Personal Standards. Participants scored lowest in subscales related to the past (Past Negative and Past Positive) and Downward Social Comparison. For Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation (with a possible score range of 12 to 84), participants' scores ranged from 22 to 83, with a mean of 61.57 and standard deviation of 11.015. If a possible total score of 84 is considered, the participants in this sample scored in the high ranges of the scale. This was true for the male participants (M = 59.83; SD = 11.23) and female participants (M = 62.73; SD = 10.594). For Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation (with a possible score range of 12 to 84) participants' scores ranged from 13 to 80, with a mean of 53 and a standard deviation of 11.554. If a possible total score of 84 is considered the participants in this sample also scored in the high ranges of the scale, both for males (M = 52.7; SD = 12.512) and females (M = 52.7; SD = 10.226). It is clear that all participants (males and females) make more use of objectively motivated forms of evaluation.

For Identity Exploration (with a possible score range of 8 to 48) participants' scores ranged from 19 to 48, with a mean of 34.13 and a standard deviation of 6.680. If a possible total score of 48 is considered, the scores of participants in this sample are in the high ranges of the scale. This was true for both males (M = 33.86; SD = 6.661) and females (M = 34.32; SD = 6.668). For Identity Commitment (with a possible score range of 8 to 48) participants' scores ranged from 14 to 48, with a mean of 36.73 and a standard deviation of 5.942. If a possible total score of 48 is considered, the scores of participants in this sample are in the high ranges of the scale. This was true for both males (M = 35.47; SD = 6.012) and females (M = 37.74; SD = 5.754). For Identity Total (with a possible score range of 16 to 96) participants' scores ranged from 41 to 96, with a mean of 70.86 and standard deviation of 10.787. If a possible total score of 96 is considered, the scores of participants in this sample are in the high ranges of the scale. This was true for both males (M = 69.33; SD = 11.069) and females (M = 72.05; SD = 10.422). Thus, it is clear that all the participants, both males and females, are in the process of actively exploring and committing towards the formation of an identity. Participants make marginally more use of commitment than of exploration.

5.1.2 Inferential statistics. According to Salkind (2013), inferential statistics can be used to make interpretations from a smaller group of data (the sample) to a possible larger

group (a specific population). The results of the inferential statistics regarding the two research questions are presented in the next section. First, results pertaining to Research Question 1 will be discussed (in sections 5.1.2.1 and 5.1.2.2), followed by a discussion of the results of Research Question 2 (in section 5.1.2.3).

5.1.2.1 Results pertaining to the correlation between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation (Research Question 1). In Research Question 1, it was investigated whether a significant amount of variance in Identity Formation can be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships. At first, correlations between the variables (and subscales) were determined. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Correlations between the Evaluation of Romantic Relationships (Objectively and Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation) and Identity Formation (Identity Exploration, Identity Commitment, and Total Score)

	Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation	Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation	Identity Exploration	Identity commit-ment	Identity Formation (total score)
Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation	1	.546**	.473**	.455**	.544**
Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation		1	.378**	.215**	.352**
Identity Exploration			1	.459**	.872**
Identity Commitment				1	.835**
Identity Formation (total score)					1

** $p <= .01$

Considering Table 5, significant correlations (on the 1% level of significance) were found between all of the variables. Identity Formation (total score) correlated statistically significant with both Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation ($r = .352$) and Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation ($r = .544$). Considering the subscales of Identity Formation,

Identity Commitment correlated significantly with Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation ($r = .215$) and Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation ($r = .455$), and Identity Exploration with Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation ($r = .378$) and Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation ($r = .473$).

This correlation analysis was followed by a standard multiple regression analysis. In combination, the two dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships (Objectively and Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation) yielded an R of .548 and R^2 of .3, indicating that together, the two dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships explain 30% of the variance in Identity Formation (total score). This is significant on the 1% level of significance ($F_{(2,166)} = 35.547; p = .000$).

In Table 6, the individual contribution of each of the two dimensions is presented. The non-standardised (B) and standardised (β) regression coefficients and the squared semi-partial correlations (sr^2) for each of the predictors in the regression model are reported. When considered individually, the objective information dimension made the only significant contribution, explaining 20.1% of the variance in Identity Formation (β = .500; $p = .000$).

Table 6

Standard Regression Results for the Predictors (Objectively and Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation) in the Regression Model Predicting Variance in Identity Formation (Total Score)

Variable	B	β	sr	sr^2	p
Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.490	.500	.448	.201	.000
Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.074	.079	.079	.006	.309

In addition to investigating the explanation of the variance in Identity Formation (total score), two further regression analyses were completed for the identity subscales, Identity Exploration and Identity Commitment. In the standard multiple regression that was employed to investigate how much of the variance in Identity Exploration can be explained by both the dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships, an R of .494 and R^2 of .244 were obtained, indicating that the two dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships

explain 24.4% of the variance in Identity Exploration. This is significant on the 1% level of significance ($F_{(2,166)} = 26.783$; $p = .000$).

In Table 7, the individual contribution of each of the two dimensions is presented. When considered individually, both Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation, as well as Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation, made a significant contribution. Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation explained 11.8% of the variance in Identity Exploration ($\beta = .380$; $p = .000$), while Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation explained 2.6% of the variance in Identity Exploration ($\beta = .171$; $p = .036$).

Table 7

Standard Regression Results for the Predictors (Objectively and Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation) in the Regression Model Predicting Variance in Identity Exploration

Variable	B	β	sr	sr^2	p
Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.230	.380	.343	.118	.000
Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.099	.171	.162	.026	.036

In the standard multiple regression that was employed to investigate how much of the variance in Identity Commitment can be explained by both the dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships, an R of .457 and R^2 of .209 were obtained, indicating that the two dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships explain 20.9% of the variance in Identity Commitment. This is significant on the 1% level of significance ($F_{(2,166)} = 21.918$; $p = .000$).

In Table 8, the individual contribution of each of the two dimensions is presented. When considered individually, only Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation made a significant contribution. The Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation dimension explained 17% of the variance in Identity Commitment ($\beta = .482$; $p = .000$).

Table 8

Standard Regression Results for the Predictors (Objectively and Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation) in the Regression Model Predicting Variance in Identity Commitment

Variable	B	β	sr	sr^2	p
Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.260	.482	.413	.17	.000
Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation	-.025	-.048	-.045	.002	.559

In summary, relating to Research Question 1, Identity Formation (total score) statistically correlated significantly with both the socially motivated forms of evaluation ($r = .352$) and Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation ($r = .546$). When considered individually, the objective information dimension made the only significant contribution, explaining 20% of the variance in Identity Formation ($\beta = .500$; $p = .000$). With regard to Identity Exploration, the Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation dimension explained 11.8% of the variance in Identity Exploration, and the Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation dimension explained 2.62% of the variance in Identity Exploration. With regard to Identity Commitment, only Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation made a significant contribution by explaining 17% of the variance in Identity Commitment.

*5.1.2.2 **Results of the hierarchical regression analyses completed for each of the subscales of the RES and identity formation.*** In addition to the analyses completed above, the effect that each of the ten subscales of the *RES* had on Identity Formation (total score) was also investigated.

The correlation matrix is provided in Table 9.

Table 9

Correlations between the Sub-Scales of the Evaluation of Romantic Relationships and Identity Formation

	Identity Formation (total score)	Objective Information	Feedback	Personal Standards	Past Negative	Past Positive	Feared Future	Future Ideals	Upward Social Comparison	Lateral Social Comparison	Downward Social Comparison
Identity Formation	1	.421**	.327**	.472**	.227**	.291**	.327**	.405**	.264**	.404**	.45
Objective Information		1	.354**	.411**	.391**	.364**	.311**	.398**	.327**	.434**	.135
Feedback			1	.341**	.381**	.516**	.430**	.263**	.369**	.387**	.283**
Personal Standards				1	.250**	.238**	.463**	.517**	.313**	.400**	.172*
Past Negative					1	.421**	.284**	.252**	.350**	.358**	.401**
Past Positive						1	.333**	.209**	.376**	.358**	.290**
Feared Future							1	.372**	.257**	.411**	.275**
Future Ideals								1	.289**	.287**	.047
Upward Social Comparison									1	.587**	.299**
Lateral Social Comparison										1	.303**
Downward Social Comparison											1

Various significant correlations were found on the 1% level of significance between each of the subscales of the *RES* and Identity Formation, except for Downward Social Comparison. Although significant correlations were found between various subscales of the *RES*, multicolinearity is not present. Multicolinearity is usually indicated by $r > .9$ (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

This was followed by a stepwise hierarchical multiple regression analysis to determine the unique percentage of variance in Identity Formation (total score) explained by each of the ten subscales of the *RES*. The same was done for Identity Exploration and Identity Commitment.

In the first step of the regression analysis, all ten of the subscales were used, after which each one of the subscales was omitted from the model, in turn, to determine the resultant reduction in R^2, thus indicating the unique variance that can be explained by each particular subscale of the *RES*. The results pertaining to Identity Formation (total score) are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis Completed for each of the Subscales of RES and Identity Formation (Total Score)

Subscale omitted	R^2	Contribution to R^2	F	*p*
None (all subscales)	.351	.351	8.555	.000
Objective Information	.337	.014	3.470	.064
Feedback	.347	.004	.929	.337
Personal Standards	.317	.034	8.328	.004
Past Negative	.351	.000	.005	.946
Past Positive	.346	.005	1.166	.282
Feared Future	.351	.000	.063	.802
Future Ideals	.339	.013	3.075	.081
Upward Social Comparison	.350	.001	.304	.582
Lateral Social Comparison	.330	.021	5.094	.025
Downward Social Comparison	.340	.011	2.634	.107

In combination, the ten subscales of the *RES* collectively explained 35.1% (R^2 = .351) of the variance in Identity Formation (total score) ($F_{(2, 166)}$ = 8.555; *p* = .000*)*. Individually, two subscales made a unique statistically significant contribution. Personal Standards was statistically significant on the 1% level of significance ($F_{(2, 166)}$ = 8.328; *p* = .004) and explained 3.4% of the variance in Identity Formation (total score). Lateral Social Comparison was statistically significant on the 5% level of significance ($F_{(2, 166)}$ = 5.094; *p* = .025) and explained 2.1% of the variance in Identity Formation (total score).

The results pertaining to Identity Exploration are displayed in Table 11.

Table 11

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis Completed for each of the Subscales of RES and Identity Exploration

Variables omitted	R^2	Contribution to R^2	F	*p*
None (all subscales)	.317	.317	7.346	.000
Objective Information	.283	.034	7.848	.006
Feedback	.303	.014	3.224	.074
Personal Standards	.297	.021	4.772	.030
Past Negative	.313	.005	1.117	.292
Past Positive	.313	.004	.934	.335
Feared Future	.314	.004	.842	.360
Future Ideals	.313	.004	.953	.330
Upward Social Comparison	.310	.007	1.694	.195
Lateral Social Comparison	.284	.034	7.804	.006
Downward Social Comparison	.317	.000	.000	.993

In combination, the ten subscales of the *RES* collectively explained 31.7% (R^2 = .317) of the variance in Identity Exploration ($F_{(2, 166)}$ = 7.346; *p* = .000*)*. Individually, three subscales made a unique statistically significant contribution. Objective Information was statistically significant on the 1% level of significance ($F_{(2, 166)}$ = 7.848; *p* = .006), which explained 3.4% of the variance in Identity Exploration. Personal Standards was statistically significant on the 5% level of significance ($F_{(2, 166)}$ = 4.772; *p* = .030), which explained 2.1% of the variance in Identity Exploration. Lateral Social Comparison was also statistically

significant, on the 1% level of significance ($F_{(2, 166)} = 7.804$; $p = .006$), which explained 3.4% of the variance in Identity Exploration.

Results pertaining to Identity Commitment are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Results of the Hierarchical Regression Analysis Completed for each of the Subscales of RES and Identity Commitment

Variables omitted	R^2	Contribution to R^2	F	p
None (all subscales)	.263	.263	5.629	.000
Objective Information	.263	.000	.020	.888
Feedback	.262	.000	.090	.764
Personal Standards	.232	.030	6.508	.012
Past Negative	.258	.005	1.056	.306
Past Positive	.260	.003	.629	.429
Feared Future	.253	.009	2.020	.157
Future Ideals	.245	.017	3.724	.055
Upward Social Comparison	.262	.001	.220	.640
Lateral Social Comparison	.260	.003	.675	.413
Downward Social Comparison	.227	.036	7.694	.006

In combination, the ten subscales of the *RES* collectively explained 26.3% ($R^2 = .263$) of the variance in Identity Commitment ($F_{(2, 166)} = 5.629$; $p = .000$). Individually, two subscales made a unique statistically significant contribution. Personal Standards was statistically significant on the 5% level of significance ($F_{(2, 166)} = 6.508$; $p = .012$) and explained 3% of the variance in Identity Commitment. Downward Social Comparison was statistically significant on the 1% level of significance ($F_{(2, 166)} = 7.694$; $p = .006$) and explained 3.6% of the variance in Identity Commitment.

In summary, significant correlations were found between each of the subscales of the *RES* and Identity Formation, except between Identity Formation and Downward Social Comparison. In combination, the ten subscales of the *RES* collectively explained 35.1% of the variance in Identity Formation (total score). Personal Standards uniquely explained 3.4% and

Lateral Social Comparison 2.1% of the variance in Identity Formation (total score). For Identity Exploration, the ten subscales of the *RES* combined explained 31.7% of the variance. Objective Information uniquely explained 3.4%, Personal Standards explained 2.1% and Lateral Social Comparison explained 3.4% of the variance in Identity Exploration. For Identity Commitment, the ten subscales of the *RES* combined explained 26.3% of the variance. Personal Standards unique explained 3% and Downward Social Comparison explained 3.6% of the variance in Identity Commitment.

5.1.2.3 Results pertaining to the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between romantic evaluation style and identity formation (Research Question 2). To determine whether gender significantly moderated the relationship between the two dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation, three moderated multiple regression analyses (for Identity Formation, Identity Exploration, and Identity Commitment), using product terms (for the interaction between gender and each of the two dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships) were conducted.

Firstly, the moderated regression results for the effect of gender on the relationship between the two dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships and Identity Formation (total score) are summarised in Table 13.

Table 13

Moderated Regression Analysis for Identity Formation (Total Score)

Model	Variables entered	R	R^2	R^2 change	F change	p
1	Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation dimension	.544	.295	.295	70.035	.000
2	Gender	.547	.299	.004	.926	.337
3	Gender x Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.548	.300	.001	.257	.613
1	Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.352	.124	.124	23.677	.000
2	Gender	.376	.142	.018	3.395	.067
3	Gender x Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.378	.143	.001	.200	.655

From Table 13, it is evident that gender did not have a statistically significant moderator effect on the relationship between either of the two dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships and Identity Formation. This is evidenced by the insignificant increase in variance explained when product terms are added to the analyses: for Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation (R^2 change = .001; p = .613) and for Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation (R^2 change = .001; p = .655).

Secondly, the moderated regression analyses completed for Identity Exploration yielded no statistically significant results. The results obtained are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Moderated Regression Results for Identity Exploration

Model	Variables entered	R	R^2	R^2 change	F change	p
1	Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.473	.224	.224	48.072	.000
2	Gender	.473	.224	.000	.046	.830
3	Gender x Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.474	.224	.001	.123	.727
1	Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.378	.143	.143	27.835	.000
2	Gender	.381	.146	.003	.517	.473
3	Gender x Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.383	.147	.001	.220	.640

From Table 14, it is clear that gender had no statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between either the objectively (R^2 change = .001; p = .727) or socially (R^2 change = .001; p = .640) motivated forms of evaluating romantic relationships and Identity Exploration.

Thirdly, in the moderated regression analysis completed for Identity Commitment, gender was significant as main effect, but had no statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between either the objectively (R^2 change = .001; p = .631) or socially (R^2

change = .000; p = .783) motivated forms of evaluating romantic relationships and Identity Commitment. The results obtained are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Moderated Regression Results for Identity Commitment

Model	Variables entered	R	R^2	R^2 change	F change	p
1	Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.455	.207	.207	43.666	.000
2	Gender	.473	.224	.017	3.619	.059
3	Gender x Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.475	.225	.001	.232	.631
1	Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.215	.046	.046	8.076	.005
2	Gender	.282	.079	.033	6.008	.015
3	Gender x Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation	.283	.080	.000	.076	.783

For interest's sake, moderated multiple regression analyses were also completed to investigate the possible moderating role of age group and family structure. Also with these variables, no statistically significant results were obtained, indicating that the age group and family structure of participants did not moderate the relationship between romantic evaluative style and Identity Formation.

In summary, the three moderated multiple regression analyses conducted to determine whether gender significantly moderated the relationship between the two dimensions of the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation yielded no significant results.

5.2   Discussion

In this section, the results of the present study are discussed in relation to the appropriate theoretical framework and previous research that was done in this field. Firstly, descriptive results are reviewed and discussed in relation to existing literature. Secondly, results pertaining to the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and

identity formation are discussed. Thirdly, the results pertaining to gender as a moderator in the aforementioned relationship are discussed.

5.2.1   Findings regarding descriptive characteristics of the present sample. In this section, tendencies in the present sample in relation to the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation are discussed.

When considering the individual subscales of the *RES*, participants scored highest in the future-related (Feared Future and Future Ideals) and Personal Standards subscales. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that personal standards and the use of future-related information are the most useful information types for meeting all four motives (enhancement, accuracy, improvement, and verification) for evaluating romantic relationships (Gotwals & Wayment, 2002: Wayment & Campbell, 2000a; Wayment & Taylor, 1995). Participants scored lowest in subscales related to the past (Past Negative and Past Positive) and the Downward Social Comparison subscale. This finding is in contrast with findings by Wayment and Campbell (2000a), who reported that using past negative experiences to evaluate relationships is one of the three most used information types. Downward social comparison and past negative relationships are used mostly when the motive for evaluation is enhancement, considering this may lead to a more favourable view of one's own relationship (Corcoran et al., 2011; Wills, 1981). Thus, the findings of this study suggest that the participants in the present sample did not evaluate their relationships with the goal of enhancing the views of their current romantic relationships.

In the present study, participants of both genders made more use of the objectively motivated forms of evaluating romantic relationships than the socially motivated forms of evaluating romantic relationships. In an earlier study, Wayment and Campbell (2000a) also found that social comparison was one of the least used types of evaluating information. The use of information that is more objective to evaluate romantic relationships indicates the need to evaluate one's relationship more accurately (Festinger, 1954), suggesting that accuracy frequently was the motive for evaluating romantic relationships in the present sample. Improved reasoning, abstract thinking, and a more mature way of thinking enable adolescents to make healthier choices pertaining to romantic relationships. This is evident in the conscious effort made by adolescents to make their own decisions (for example, in the regulation of emotions) rather than rely on attachment figures such as peers and family (Allen & Miga, 2010). The present study confirms this developmental perspective. The more frequent use of

objectively motivated forms of evaluation is inconsistent with the view that peer approval is one of the most important aspects in romantic relationships (Cavanagh, 2007).

Considering that participants of both genders scored high in the use of objectively motivated forms of evaluating relationships, and obtained similar scores on the use of socially motivated forms of evaluating romantic relationships, the findings support an early study reporting that there are no gender differences in the standards used for evaluating relationships (Vangelisti & Daly, 1997).

As expected for an adolescent sample, both male and female participants in the present sample obtained high scores for identity formation. These findings suggest that the participants are exploring actively and committing towards an achieved identity. This is in alignment with the view of Marcia (2002), suggesting adolescence is a period of being faced with exploring important life alternatives, and intending to commit to certain aspects of life. Participants scored marginally higher on the Identity Commitment subscale than on the Identity Exploration subscale, indicating that most participants already may have assumed identities (McLean & Pasupathi, 2012). Females scored slightly higher than males did on both the Identity Exploration and Identity Commitment subscales. This is consistent with findings of previous studies (Montgomery, 2005).

5.2.2 Findings pertaining to the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation. In this study, the evaluation of romantic relationships explained a significant amount of variance in Identity Formation (total score, Identity Exploration, and Identity Commitment).

5.2.2.1 Explaining the variance in identity formation. Together, the two dimensions of evaluating romantic relationships explained 30% of the variance in Identity Formation, with only Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation making a significant unique individual contribution, explaining 20.1% of the variance in Identity Formation. When the subscales of the *RES* were considered, the ten subscales collectively explained 35.1% of the variance in Identity Formation, with significant individual contributions from Personal Standards (3.4%) and Lateral Social Comparison (2.1%).

These findings, indicating a significant relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation, are consistent with Erikson's work (1963, 1968) regarding the link between identity and intimacy. Healthy identity formation and the

establishment of healthy romantic relationships are interrelated. The findings also confirm an argument by Kunnen et al. (2005) stating that identity formation is a dynamic process that develops in romantic relationships. Thus, this study supports Pe'rez-Sales' (2010) views that identity is shaped by what is happening around us, as well as Dovidio et al.'s (2005) views that identity formation can be viewed in relation to social, relational, and contextual domains.

These findings can be explained by Tajfel and Turner's (1986) social identity theory, which focuses on the effect group membership and interaction have on individuals. Group characteristics and interaction are deemed important, seeing that they influence the choices made by individuals (Ashmore et al. 2004; Verkuyten, 2005). Another explanation for the findings in this study can be found in the work of McLean et al. (2010), who suggest that the interactions adolescents have in close relationships allow them to create meanings that will eventually be integrated in their identities. The findings of this study also correspond with the hypothesis that identity formation and the choices that pertain to romantic relationships are influenced by social relationships. This is in line with the research of Jones et al. (2014) and Marcia (1980), who argue that parents, peers, and partners influence several choices made by individuals while in the process of exploring and committing, two elements essential in identity formation.

Thus, the findings in this study support Wayment and Campbell's (2000a) hypothesis that romantic relationships are an important aspect of identity, and that there are similarities in the way one evaluates oneself and the way one evaluates one's relationships.

5.2.2.2 Explaining the variance in identity exploration. The two dimensions of evaluating romantic relationships explained 24.4% of the variance in Identity Exploration, with both dimensions making a significant individual contribution, Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation explaining 11.8%, and Socially Motivated Forms of Evaluation explaining 2.62% of the variance in Identity Exploration. Individually, Objective Information (3.4%), Personal Standards (2.1%), and Lateral Social Comparison (3.4%) explained a significant amount of variance in Identity Exploration.

Kroger (2007) argues that self-definition is one of the main concerns pertaining to adolescence and includes self-exploration in relation to others (e.g., peers, parents/guardians, and society). Considering that both objectively and socially motivated forms of evaluation

explained a significant amount of variance in identity exploration, the findings of the present study support this view.

5.2.2.3 Explaining the variance in identity commitment. Regarding the variance in Identity Commitment, the two evaluative dimensions combined explained 20.9% of the variance in Identity Commitment, with only Objectively Motivated Forms of Evaluation explaining a significant 17%. Individually, Personal Standards (3%) and Downward Social Comparison (3.6%) provided significant explanations for the variance in Identity Commitment.

Conclusions suggesting that the evaluation of romantic relationships contributes to Identity Commitment support the view of Marcia (1980) that a secure self is needed to risk the vulnerability to commit oneself to another individual. Findings that objectively motivated forms of evaluation contributed significantly to explaining the variance in identity commitment corresponds with findings of previous studies that reported that individuals in identity commitment usually have a more mature personal identity and a clearer sense of who they are, where they fit into the world, and the future goals they have for who they wish to become (Hardy et al., 2017; King, 2006). Nelson and Barry (2005) state that individuals who have advanced further in the identity formation process (i.e. identity commitment) are more certain of characteristics that they want in romantic relationships. The findings may suggest that, because these individuals are more mature, measures that are more objective tend to influence their choices when evaluating romantic relationships.

5.2.3 Findings pertaining to gender as a moderator in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation. With regard to Research Question 2, the moderating role of gender, it was concluded that gender did not play a significant moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and Identity Formation (for the total score, Identity Exploration, or Identity Commitment). Gender does not affect the direction or the strength of the relationship between these variables.

Thus, this study supports an early review of empirical studies by Kroger (1997), who discards the idea of clear gender differences in both identity structure and in the manner relationships are connected to the identity formation process. Considering that males and females consider different aspects as important in romantic relationships (Perry & Pauletti,

2011), which may be indicative of an identity formation process, it was hypothesised that gender moderates the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation. The conclusions of this study do not support this hypothesis.

5.3   Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the statistical results for the present study were presented. First, the descriptive results were discussed, followed by the inferential results pertaining to the two research questions. Lastly, the interpretations of these findings were discussed, and previous research findings were compared and discussed in relation to the conclusions of the current research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

In this chapter, the key findings of the research study are presented, followed by a discussion on the contribution value of the present study. Next, the limitations of the present study are documented. Lastly, recommendations for future research are presented.

6.1   Key Findings

The primary aim of this study was to investigate whether a significant amount of variance in identity formation can be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships, and whether gender plays a moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation.

The first research question was: Can a significant amount of variance in identity formation be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships?

 It was found that a significant amount of the variance in identity formation could be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships. The findings are consistent with previous literature and research suggesting that similarities exist in the way one evaluates oneself and in the way one evaluates one's relationships (Wayment & Campbell, 2000a).

The second research question was: Does gender play a moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation?

It was concluded that gender does not play a moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation in the present sample.

This study contributes to literature in support of a link between identity and intimacy and contributes to the scarce literature and studies done on the evaluation of romantic relationships, especially in the South African context.

6.2   Limitations of the Present Study

Certain limitations were encountered during the course of this study. The following limitations should be considered in interpreting the results.

The present research was conducted using a quantitative, non-experimental approach with a correlational research design. Quantitative approaches, being less detailed than

qualitative research is, may miss in-depth responses from participants. It is also difficult to understand the context of a certain phenomenon, and data gathered may not explain complex issues (Taylor & White, 2015). Limitations of a non-experimental approach include uncertainty regarding whether the outcome differences are due to specific independent variables. Therefore, the researcher needs to consider alternative explanations to analyse certain variables and not make causal statements when presenting conclusions (Belli, 2009). Stangor (2015) argues that limitations of a correlational design include not being able to describe causality or provide reasons why a certain relationship exists.

The sample size, as well as the use of non-probability, convenience sampling should be considered. The use of this method can be regarded as biased, seeing that not everyone in the population has the same chance of being selected. Therefore, the findings of this study are not generalisable to the general population.

Data were collected using self-report questionnaires with the limitation that answers obtained could be deceptive. Participants may portray themselves in a socially desirable manner, may not know themselves well, or may misinterpret the questions asked. The age and maturity of the participants also may have led to misinterpreting or misunderstanding some of the questions regarding identity and romantic relationships. In addition to this, most participants did not complete the questionnaires in their home language, and some of the terminology may have been difficult to understand. This might explain the low reliability of the *EIPQ*.

Regardless of the limitations that are mentioned above, the findings of this study could still provide insight into the importance of the evaluation of romantic relationships and how this affects identity formation.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Further research regarding the evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation needs to be done globally and in the South African context.

Using a mixed-methods approach and including qualitative research in future studies may contribute to a better understanding of participants' evaluation of romantic relationships and identity formation. Structured interviews can be conducted to obtain more accurate descriptions of the variables to support self-report questionnaires. Longitudinal research can

also be considered, resulting in not only observing the aforementioned variables in a specific period, but also considering the long-term development of these variables.

The self-report questionnaires could also be translated into the participants' home languages, or trained interpreters can be used when administering the questionnaires. Social factors that may influence the aforementioned variables in black adolescents can also be explored by including socio-economic status in the biographic questionnaire.

Making use of stratified sampling methods and criterion group studies may provide a clearer perspective on the effect of different moderators, e.g. gender, cultures, context, and age. Exploring this relationship in emerging adulthood or young adults may also result in interesting findings. Comparisons between different cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic groups can also yield valuable information.

Future research studies in this field can explore how individuals develop certain evaluation standards and ideals and what these standards and ideals entail. Furthermore, the role of other social relationships, such as parents and peers, on identity formation can be examined. Research can be done on whether different motives and information are used for evaluating different relationships. Exploring other motives and information that may be used for evaluating the self or one's social relationships may add interesting knowledge in this field. Components relating to identity, such as personality dispositions, self-esteem, and attachment styles, can also be explored to investigate whether these components affect individuals' preferences for using specific types of evaluative information.

To conclude, research studies on the evaluation of romantic relationships, identity formation, and possible moderators in the relationship between these variables can make a positive contribution to existing theory. It can also add to insight into how romantic relationships are evaluated, and into the understanding of the formation of adolescents' identity.

6.4   Chapter Summary

The aim of this study was to investigate whether a significant amount of variance in identity formation can be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships, and whether gender plays a moderating role in the relationship between the evaluation of romantic

relationships and identity formation. In this chapter, the key conclusions that could be derived from the present study were reviewed.

In this study, it was found that a significant amount of variance in identity formation (30%) could be explained by the evaluation of romantic relationships. It was also found that gender does not play a moderating role in this relationship.

Reference List

Adams, B. (2014). *I think therefore I am ... I think? On the diversity and complexity of identity* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://pure.uvt.nl/portal/en/publications/i-think-therefore-i-am--i-think(116edc2c-22d1-457c-ac96-5114e5c5be28).html

Adams, G., & Berzonsky, M. (2006). *Blackwell handbook of adolescence* (1st ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Alessandria, K., & Nelson, E. (2005). Identity development and self-esteem of first-generation American college students: An exploratory study. *Journal of College Student Development*, *46*(1), 3-12. doi:10.1353/csd.2005.0001

Allen, J. P., & Miga, E. M. (2010). Attachment in adolescence: A move to the level of emotion regulation. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *27*(2), 181-190. doi:10.1177/0265407509360898

Arain, M., Haque, M., Johal, L., Mathur, P., Nel, W., Rais, A., ... Sharma, S. (2013). Maturation of the adolescent brain. *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment, 9*(1), 449-461. doi:10.2147/NDT.S39776

Arndorfer, C., & Stormshak, E. (2008). Same-sex versus other-sex best friendship in early adolescence: Longitudinal predictors of antisocial behaviour throughout adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *37*(9), 1059-1070. doi:10.1007/s10964-008-9311-x

Arnett, J. (2016). *The Oxford handbook of emerging adulthood*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Arnett, J. J. (1998). Learning to stand alone: The contemporary American transition to adulthood in cultural and historical context. *Human Development, 41*, 295-315. doi:10.1159/000022591

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, *55*(5), 469-480. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469

Ashmore, R. D., Deaux, K., & McLaughlin-Volpe, T. (2004). An organizing framework for collective identity: Articulation and significance of multidimensionality. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*, 80-114. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.130.1.80

Ayers, S., Baum, A., McManus, C., Newman, S., Wallston, K., Weinman, J., & West, R. (2007). *Cambridge handbook of psychology, health and medicine* (1st ed.). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Baird, C. (2001). *Social identity theory and intergroup relations in gender dominated occupations* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10179/2113

Balistreri, E., Busch-Rossnagel, N., & Geisinger, K. (1995). Ego Identity Process Questionnaire. *PsycTESTS Dataset*. doi:10.1037/t07699-000

Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51*(6), 1173-1182. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.51.6.1173

Barry, C., Madsen, S., Nelson, L., Carroll, J., & Badger, S. (2009). Friendship and romantic relationship qualities in emerging adulthood: Differential associations with identity development and achieved adulthood criteria. *Journal of Adult Development*, *16*(4), 209-222. doi:10.1007/s10804-009-9067-x

Bartoszuk, K., & Pittman, J. F. (2010). Profiles of identity exploration and commitment across domains. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *19*, 444-450. doi:10.1007/s10826-009-9315-5.

Bayer, A. M., Gilman, R. H., Tsui, A. O., & Hindin, M. J. (2010). What is adolescence? Adolescents narrate their lives in Lima, Peru. *Journal of Adolescence, 33*(1), 509-520. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2010.02.002

Beckett, C., & Taylor, H. (2010). *Human growth and development*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Beckmeyer, J. J. (2015). Comparing the associations between three forms of adolescents' romantic involvement and their engagement in substance use. *Journal of Adolescence, 42,* 140-147. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2015.04.008

Belli, G. (2009). Non-experimental quantitative research. In S. Lapan & M. Quartaroli (Eds.), *Research essentials: An introduction to designs and practices* (1st ed., pp. 59-77). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Berk, L. E. (2001). *Development through the lifespan.* Boston, MA: Allan & Bacon.

Berzonsky, M. D., Cieciuch, J., Duriez, B., & Soenens, B. (2011). The how and what of identity formation: Associations between identity styles and value orientations. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *50*(2), 295-299. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2010.10.007

Beyers, W., & Luyckx, K. (2016). Ruminative exploration and reconsideration of commitment as risk factors for suboptimal identity development in adolescence and emerging adulthood. *Journal of Adolescence*, *47*, 169-178. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2015.10.018

Blakemore, S. J. (2008). The social brain in adolescence. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 9*(4), 267-277. doi:10.1038/nrn2353

Blum, R., Astone, N., Decker, M., & Mouli, V. (2014). A conceptual framework for early adolescence: A platform for research. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, *26*(3), 321-331. doi:10.1515/ijamh-2013-0327

Boisvert, S., & Poulin, F. (2016). Romantic relationship patterns from adolescence to emerging adulthood: Associations with family and peer experiences in early adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *45*(5), 945-958. doi:10.1007/s10964-016-0435-0

Booth, A., Crouter, A., & Snyder, A. (2016). *Romance and sex in adolescence and emerging adulthood* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Boslaugh, S., & Watters, P. (2008). *Statistics in a nutshell*. Farnham, United Kingdom: O'Reilly Media.

Bower, A., Nishina, A., Witkow, M., & Bellmore, A. (2015). Nice guys and gals finish last? Not in early adolescence when empathic, accepted, and popular peers are desirable. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *44*(12), 2275-2288. doi:10.1007/s10964-015-0346-5

Bowker, J., & Etkin, R. (2016). Evaluating the psychological concomitants of other-sex crush experiences during early adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *45*(5), 846-857. doi:10.1007/s10964-016-0470-x

Branje, S., Laninga-Wijnen, L., Yu, R., & Meeus, W. (2014). Associations among school and friendship identity in adolescence and romantic relationships and work in emerging adulthood. *Emerging Adulthood*, *2*(1), 6-16. doi.org/10.1177/2167696813515851

Breines, J., & Chen, S. (2012). Self-compassion increases self-improvement motivation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *38*(9), 1133-1143. doi:10.1177/0146167212445599

Brown, B. B., Feiring, C., & Furman, W. (1999). Missing the love boat: Why researchers have stayed away from adolescence romance. In W. Furman, B. B. Brown, & C. Feiring (Eds.), *The development of romantic relationships in adolescence* (pp. 1–18). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University.

Bryant, C., & Conger, R. (2002). An intergenerational model of romantic relationship development. In A. Vangelisti, H. Reis, & M. Fitzpatrick (Eds.), *Stability and change in relationships* (pp. 57-79). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University.

Carter, I. (2011). *Human behaviour in the social environment: A social systems approach* (6th ed.). Piscataway, NJ: Transaction.

Carver, K., Joyner, K., & Udry, J. R. (2003). National estimates of romantic relationships. In P. Florsheim (Ed.), *Adolescent romantic relations and sexual behaviour: Theory, research, and practical implications* (pp. 23-56). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Casey, B. J., Jones, R. M., & Hare, T. A. (2008). The adolescent brain. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *1124*(1), 111-126. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2475802/pdf/nihms56148.pdf.

Cassidy, J., & Shaver, P. (2008). *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford.

Cavanagh, S. (2007). The social construction of romantic relationships in adolescence: Examining the role of peer networks, gender, and race. *Sociological Inquiry, 77*, 572-600. doi:10.1111/j.1475-682X.2007.00207.x

Chen, Y., McAnally, H., Wang, Q., & Reese, E. (2012). The coherence of critical event narratives and adolescents' psychological functioning. *Memory*, *20*(7), 667-681. doi:10.1080/09658211.2012.693934

Chow, C., Ruhl, H., & Buhrmester, D. (2014). Reciprocal associations between friendship attachment and relational experiences in adolescence. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *33*(1), 122-146. doi:10.1177/0265407514562987

Christie, D., & Viner, R. (2005). Adolescent development. *British Medical Journal*, *330*(7486), 301-304. doi:10.1136/bmj.330.7486.301

Christopher, F., McKenney, S., & Poulsen, F. (2015). Early adolescents' "crushing". *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *33*(4), 515-533. doi:10.1177/0265407515583169

Christopher, F., Poulsen, F., & McKenney, S. (2016). Early adolescents and "going out". *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *33*(6), 814-834. doi:10.1177/0265407515599676

Cicchetti, D. (2016). *Developmental psychopathology: Theory and method*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Clark, M. S., & Beck, L. A. (2010). Initiating and evaluating close relationships: A task central to emerging adults. In F. D. Fincham & M. Cui (Eds.), *Romantic relationships in emerging adulthood* (pp. 190-212). New York, NY: Cambridge.

Collibee, C., & Furman, W. (2015). Quality counts: Developmental shifts in associations between romantic relationship qualities and psychosocial adjustment. *Child Development*, *86*(5), 1639-1652. doi:10.1111/cdev.12403

Collins, W. A. (2003). More than myth: The developmental significance of romantic relationships during adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 13*, 1-24. doi:10.1111/1532-7795.1301001

Collins, W. A., Welsh, D. P., & Furman, W. (2009). Adolescent romantic relationships. *Annual Review of Psychology, 60,* 631-652.

Connolly, J., Craig, W., Goldberg, A., & Pepler, D. (2004). Mixed-gender groups, dating, and romantic relationships in early adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *14*(2), 185-207. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2004.01402003.x

Connolly, J., & McIsaac, C. (2011). Romantic relationships in adolescence. In M. Underwood & L. Rosen (Eds.), *Social development: Relationships in infancy, childhood, and adolescence* (pp. 182-183). New York, NY: The Guilford Press. Retrieved from https://books.google.co.za/books/about/Social_Development.html?id=s6aLf5Ig_K8C& printsec=frontcover&source=kp_read_button&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

Corcoran, K., Crusius, J., & Mussweiler, T. (2011). Social comparison: Motives, standards, and mechanisms. In D. Chadee (Ed.), *Theories in social psychology* (pp. 119-139). Oxford, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell.

Craig, G. J., & Dunn, W. L. (2010). *Understanding human development* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Cramer, P. (2000). Development of identity: Gender makes a difference. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *34*(1), 42-72. doi:10.1006/jrpe.1999.2270

Crocetti, E., Rubini, M., Luyckx, K., & Meeus, W. (2008). Identity formation in early and middle adolescents from various ethnic groups: From three dimensions to five statuses. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *37*(8), 983-996. doi:10.1007/s10964-007-9222-2

Curtis A. C. (2015). Defining adolescence. *Journal of Adolescent and Family Health, 7*(2), Article 2. Retrieved from http://scholar.utc.edu/jafh/vol7/iss2/2

Davison, T. E., & McCabe, M. P. (2006). Adolescent body image and psychosocial functioning. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *146*(1), 15-30. doi:10.3200/SOCP.146.1.15-30

De Goede, I., Branje, S., Van Duin, J., Van der Valk, I., & Meeus, W. (2011). Romantic relationship commitment and its linkages with commitment to parents and friends during adolescence. *Social Development*, *21*(3), 425-442. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2011.00633.x

De La Ronde, C., & Swann, W. B. (1998). Partner verification: Restoring shattered images of our intimates. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75,* 374-382. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.75.2.374

Deutsch, A., Steinley, D., & Slutske, W. (2014). The role of gender and friends' gender on peer socialization of adolescent drinking: A prospective multilevel social network analysis. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *43*(9), 1421-1435. doi:10.1007/s10964-013-0048-9

Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., Pearson, A. R., & Riek, B. M. (2005). Social identities and social context: Attitudes and personal well-being. In S. R. Thye & E. J. Lawler (Eds.), *Advances in group processes: Social identification processes in groups* (pp. 231-260). Oxford, United Kingdom: Elsevier.

Duck, S. (1990). Relationships as unfinished business: Out of the frying pan and into the 1990s. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *7*(1), 5-28. doi:10.1177/0265407590071001

Duerden, M., Widmer, M., Taniguchi, S., & McCoy, J. (2009). Adventures in identity development: The impact of adventure recreation on adolescent identity development. *Identity*, *9*(4), 341-359. doi:10.1080/15283480903422806

Dumas, T., Ellis, W., & Wolfe, D. (2012). Identity development as a buffer of adolescent risk behaviours in the context of peer group pressure and control. *Journal of Adolescence*, *35*(4), 917-927. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.12.012

Dunn, W. L., & Craig, G. J. (2013). *Understanding human development* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Eagly, A. H. (2013). Sex differences in social behaviour: A social-role interpretation. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Eder, D., Evans, C., & Parker, S. (1995). *School talk: Gender and adolescent culture.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Edwards, J. (2017). Identifying positives within a negative self-image: What might low self-esteem individuals bring to romantic relationships? *Western Undergraduate Psychology Journal*, *5*(1), Article 2. Retrieved from http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1069&context=wupj

Erikson, E. (1963). *Childhood and society.* New York, NY: Norton.

Erikson, E. (1968). *Identity, youth, and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.

Erikson, E. (1970). Reflections on the dissent of contemporary youth. *Daedalus, 99*(1), 154-176. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/20023939

Erikson, E. (1974). *Identity and the life cycle*. New York, NY: Norton.

Erikson, E. (1977). *Childhood and society.* New York, NY: Norton.

Eysenck, M. (2005). *Psychology for advanced subsidiary level* (3rd ed.). Hove, East Sussex: Psychology Press.

Feldman, S. S., Cauffman, E., Jensen, L. A., & Arnett, J. J. (2000). The (un)acceptability of betrayal: A study of college students' evaluations of sexual betrayal by a romantic partner and betrayal of a friend's confidence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *29*(4), 499-523. doi:10.1023/A:1005166627678

Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, *7*(2), 117-140. doi:10.1177/001872675400700202

Fine, G. A. (1987). With the boys: Little league baseball and preadolescent culture. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Fletcher, G., Simpson, J., & Thomas, G. (2000). Ideals, perceptions, and evaluations in early relationship development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *79*(6), 933-940. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.79.6.933

Fletcher, G. J., & Kerr, P. S. (2010). Through the eyes of love: Reality and illusion in intimate relationships. *Psychological Bulletin*, *136*(4), 627. doi:10.1037/a0019792

Foshee, V., Benefield, T., Reyes, H., Ennett, S., Faris, R., & Chang, L., …Suchindran, C. (2013). The peer context and the development of the perpetration of adolescent dating violence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *42*(4), 471-486. doi:10.1007/s10964-013-9915-7

Fouché, C. B., Delport, C. S. L., & De Vos, A. S. (2011). Quantitative research design. In A. S. De Vos, H. Strydom, C. B. Fouché, & C. S. L. Delport (Eds.), *Research at grass roots: For the social science and human services professions* (4th ed.) (pp. 142-157). Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaik.

Foxcroft, C., & Roodt, G. (2013). *Introduction to psychological assessment in the South African context*. Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press.

French, S., Seidman, E., Allen, L., & Aber, J. (2006). The development of ethnic identity during adolescence. *Developmental Psychology*, *42*(1), 1-10. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.42.1.1

Furman, W., & Rose, A. J. (2015). Friendships, romantic relationships, and peer relationships. In R. M. Lerner & M. E. Lamb (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology and developmental science* (pp. 932-975). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.

Furrer, C., & Skinner, E. (2003). Sense of relatedness as a factor in children's academic engagement and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *95*(1), 148-162. doi:10.1037//0022-0663.95.1.148

Gaertner, L., Sedikides, C., & Cai, H. (2012). Wanting to be great and better but not average. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *43*(4), 521-526. doi:10.1177/0022022112438399

Gagné, F., Lydon, J., & Bartz, J. (2003). Effects of mindset on the predictive validity of relationship constructs. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science / Revue Canadienne Des Sciences Du Comportement*, *35*(4), 292-304. doi:10.1037/h0087209

Gee, J. P. (2001). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. In W. G. Secada (Ed.), *Review of research in education*, Vol. 25 (pp. 99-125). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Geldard, K., & Geldard, D. (2004). *Counselling adolescents: The proactive approach.* London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Geldard, K., & Geldard, D. (2010). *Counselling adolescents: The proactive approach for young people* (3rd ed.). London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Giordano, P., Longmore, M., & Manning, W. (2006). Gender and the meanings of adolescent romantic relationships: A focus on boys. *American Sociological Review*, *71*(2), 260-287. doi:10.1177/000312240607100205

Giordano P. C., Manning W. D., Longmore M. A., & Flanigan C. M. (2012). Developmental shifts in the character of romantic and sexual relationships from adolescence to young adulthood. In A., Booth, S., Brown, N., Landale, W., Manning, & S. McHale (Eds.), *Early adulthood in a family context* (pp. 133-164). New York, NY: Springer.

Gorrese, A., & Ruggieri, R. (2012). Peer attachment: A meta-analytic review of gender and age differences and associations with parent attachment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 41*(5), 650-672. doi:10.1007/s10964-012-9759-6.

Gotwals, J., & Wayment, H. A. (2002). Evaluation strategies, self-esteem, and athletic performance. *Current Research in Social Psychology*, *8*(6), 84-101. Retrieved from https://nau.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/evaluation-strategies-self-esteem-and-athletic-performance-2

Ha, T., Dishion, T., Overbeek, G., Burk, W., & Engels, R. (2014). The blues of adolescent romance: Observed affective interactions in adolescent romantic relationships associated with depressive symptoms. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *42*(4), 551-562. doi:10.1007/s10802-013-9808-y

Habermas, T., & Bluck, S. (2000). Getting a life: The development of the life story in adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin, 126,* 748-769. doi:10.1037/a0015207

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Hall-Lande, J. A., Eisenberg, M. E., Christenson, S. L., & Neumark-Sztainer, D. (2007). Social isolation, psychological health, and protective factors in adolescence. *Adolescence*, *42*(166), 265-286. Retrieved from https://search.proquest.com/openview/09bda0db9c2788e61bfcceaf2d4c26fd/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=41539

Hand, L., & Furman, W. (2009). Rewards and costs in adolescent other-sex friendships: Comparisons to same-sex friendships and romantic relationships. *Social Development*, *18*(2), 270-287. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2008.00499.x

Hardman, J., Jansen, J., Moletsane, M., Neves, D., Soudien, C., Stroud, L, … Wild, L. (2012). *Child and adolescent development: A South African socio-cultural perspective*. Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press.

Hardy, S., Nadal, A., & Schwartz, S. (2017). The integration of personal identity, religious identity, and moral identity in emerging adulthood. *Identity*, *17*(2), 96-107. doi:10.1080/15283488.2017.1305905

Harter, S. (1998). The development of self-representations. In W. Damon (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 3. Social, emotional, and personality development* (5th ed., pp. 553-618). New York, NY: John Wiley.

Hayward, C. (2003). *Gender differences at puberty* (1st ed.). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Heffner, L. J., & Schust, D. J. (2010). *The reproductive system at a glance*. Chichester, United Kingdom: Blackwell.

Herman, W. (2011). Identity formation. In S. Goldstein & J. Naglieri (Eds.), *Encyclopaedia of child behaviour and development* (1st ed., pp. 779-781). New York, NY: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-0-387-79061-9_1443

Higgins, E. T., Strauman, T., & Klein, R. (1986). Standards and the process of self-evaluation: Multiple affects from multiple stages. In R. M. Sorrentino & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook* of *motivation and cognition* (pp. 23-63). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hogg, M. A., & Abrams, D. (1988). Social identifications: A social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Hogg, M., & Cooper, J. (2007). *The Sage handbook of social psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Howard, J. A. (2000). Social psychology of identities. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *26*(1), 367-393. Retrieved from http://www.uvm.edu/pdodds/files/papers/others/2000/howard2000a.pdf

Howell, D. (2014). *Fundamental statistics for the behavioural sciences*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Hutteman, R., Hennecke, M., Orth, U., Reitz, A., & Specht, J. (2014). Developmental tasks as a framework to study personality development in adulthood and old age. *European Journal of Personality*, *28*(3), 267-278. doi:10.1002/per.1959

Islam, G. (2014). Social identity theory. In T. Teo (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of critical psychology* (pp. 1781-1783). New York, NY: Springer.

Jaworska, N., & MacQueen, G. (2015). Correction: Adolescence as a unique developmental period. *Journal of Psychiatry and Neuroscience*, *40*(6), 386-386. doi:10.1503/jpn.150268

Jones, R., Vaterlaus, J., Jackson, M., & Morrill, T. (2014). Friendship characteristics, psychosocial development, and adolescent identity formation. *Personal Relationships*, *21*(1), 51-67. doi:10.1111/pere.12017

Joshi, S. S., & Deuskar, M. (2016). The role of adolescent romantic relationships in identity formation and attachment: An exploratory study. *Indian Journal of Health and Wellbeing, 7*(2), 220-224. Retrieved from http://0web.a.ebscohost.com.wagtail.ufs.ac.za/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=10&sid=54b4440b-d274-4053-b500-56cd42548cf8%40sessionmgr4007&hid=4201

Josselson, R. (2012). The "We of Me": Barack Obama's search for identity. In R. Josselson & M. Harthway (Eds.), *Navigating multiple identities: Race, gender, culture, nationality, and roles* (pp. 39-58). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Katz, J., & Joiner, T. E. Jr., (2002). Being known, intimate, and valued: Global self-verification and dyadic adjustment in couples and roommates. *Journal of Personality, 70*, 33-58. doi:10.1111/1467-6494.00177

Kerpelman, J., Pittman, J., Saint-Eloi Cadely, H., Tuggle, F., Harrell-Levy, M., & Adler-Baeder, F. (2012). Identity and intimacy during adolescence: Connections among identity styles, romantic attachment and identity commitment. *Journal of Adolescence*, *35*(6), 1427-1439. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2012.03.008

Kindelberger, C., & Tsao, R. (2014). Staying alone or getting attached: Development of the motivations toward romantic relationships during adolescence. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, *175*(2), 147-162. doi:.10.1080/00221325.2013.834291

King, J. E. (2006). Dysconscious racism: Ideology, identity, and miseducation of teachers. *Journal of Negro Education*, *60*(2), 133-146. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2295605.

Korobov, N., & Thorne, A. (2006). Intimacy and distancing: Young men's conversations about romantic relationships. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 21,* 27-55.

Kroger, J. (1997). Gender and identity: The intersection of structure, content, and context. *Sex Roles, 36*, 747-770. doi:10.1023/A:1025627206676

Kroger, J. (2007). Identity development: Adolescence through adulthood. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kroger, J., & Marcia, J. E. (2011). The identity statuses: Origins, meanings, and interpretations. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp. 31-54). New York, NY: Springer.

Kunnen, E. S., Bosma, H. A., Van Halen, C. P. M., & Van der Meulen, M. (2005). A self-organizational approach to identity and emotions: An overview and implications. In H. A. Bosma & E. S. Kunnen (Eds.), *Identity and emotion: Development through self-organization* (pp. 202-230). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Kwang, T., & Swann, W. (2010). Do people embrace praise even when they feel unworthy? A review of critical tests of self-enhancement versus self-verification. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *14*(3), 263-280. doi:10.1177/1088868310365876

Laursen, B., & Bukowski, W. (1997). A developmental guide to the organisation of close relationships. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *21*(4), 747-770. doi:10.1080/016502597384659

Lawton, C. A., & Hatcher, D. W. (2005). Gender differences in integration of images in visuospatial memory. *Sex Roles*, *53*(9-10), 717-725. doi:10.1007/s11199-005-7736-1

Lefkowitz, E. S., Boone, T. L., & Shearer, C. L. (2004). Communication with best friends about sex-related topics during emerging adulthood. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *33*(4), 339-351. doi:10.1023/b:joyo.0000032642.27242.c1

Letcher, A., & Slesnick, N. (2014). Early relationships of adolescents. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *31*(3), 366-383. doi:10.1177/0265407513496368

Letzring, T., & Noftle, E. (2010). Predicting relationship quality from self-verification of broad personality traits among romantic couples. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *44*(3), 353-362. doi:10.1016/j.jrp.2010.03.008

Longmore, M., Manning, W., & Giordano, P. (2001). Preadolescent parenting strategies and teens' dating and sexual initiation: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *63*(2), 322-335. doi:10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.00322.x

Low, J., Akande, D., & Hill, C. (2005). A cross-cultural comparison of identity development: South Africa and the United States. *Identity*, *5*(4), 303-314. doi:10.1207/s1532706xid0504_1

Luciano, E., & Orth, U. (2017). Transitions in romantic relationships and development of self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *112*(2), 307-328. doi:10.1037/pspp0000109

Luyckx, K., & Robitschek, C. (2014). Personal growth initiative and identity formation in adolescence through young adulthood: Mediating processes on the pathway to well-being. *Journal of Adolescence*, *37*(7), 973-981. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2014.07.009

Luyckx, K., Schwartz, S., Berzonsky, M., Soenens, B., Vansteenkiste, M., Smits, I., & Goossens, L. (2008). Capturing ruminative exploration: Extending the four-dimensional model of identity formation in late adolescence. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *42*(1), 58-82. doi:10.1016/j.jrp.2007.04.004

Maccoby, E. (1990). Gender and relationships: A developmental account. *American Psychologist*, *45*(4), 513-520. doi:10.1037/0003-066x.45.4.513

Madsen, S., & Collins, W. (2011). The salience of adolescent romantic experiences for romantic relationship qualities in young adulthood. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *21*(4), 789-801. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2011.00737.x

Magner, K., & Hill, P. (2017). Role of gender in identity formation. In K. Nadal, S. Mazzula, & D. Rivera, *The Sage encyclopaedia of psychology and gender*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Major, B., Testa, M., & Bylsma, W. H. (1991). Responses to upward and downward social comparisons: The impact of esteem-relevance and perceived control. In J. Suls & T. A. Wills (Eds.), *Social comparison: Contemporary theory and research* (pp. 237-257). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Marcia, J. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *3*(5), 551-558. doi:10.1037/h0023281

Marcia, J. (1980). Identity in adolescence. In J. Adelson (Ed.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Marcia, J. (2002). Adolescence, identity, and the Bernardone family. *Identity*, *2*(3), 199-209. doi:10.1207/s1532706xid0203_01

Marcia, J., Waterman, A., Matteson, D., Archer, S., & Orlofsky, J. (1993). *Ego identity*. New York, NY: Springer New York.

McAdams, D. P. (1985). Power, intimacy, and the life story: Personological inquiries into identity. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

McAdams, D. P. (1998). The role of defense in the life story. *Journal of Personality*, *66*(6), 1125-1146. doi:10.1111/1467-6494.00044

McAdams D. P. (2011). Narrative identity. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp. 99-115). New York, NY: Springer.

McAdams, D. P., & McLean, K. (2013). Narrative identity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *22*(3), 233-238. doi:10.1177/0963721413475622

McCormick, C. B., & Pressley, M. (2007). *Child and adolescent development for educators.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

McDougall, P., & Hymel, S. (2007). Same-gender versus cross-gender friendship conceptions: Similar or different?. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *53*(3), 347-380. doi:10.1353/mpq.2007.0018

McLean, K., & Breen, A. (2009). Processes and content of narrative identity development in adolescence: Gender and well-being. *Developmental Psychology*, *45*(3), 702-710. doi:10.1037/a0015207

McLean, K., Breen, A., & Fournier, M. (2010). Constructing the self in early, middle, and late adolescent boys: Narrative identity, individuation, and well-Being. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *20*(1), 166-187. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2009.00633.x

McLean, K., & Pasupathi, M. (2012). Processes of identity development: Where I am and how I got there. *Identity*, *12*(1), 8-28. doi:10.1080/15283488.2011.632363

McLean, K., Pasupathi, M., & Pals, J. (2007). Selves creating stories creating selves: A process model of self-development. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *11*(3), 262-278. doi:10.1177/1088868307301034

McLean, K., & Pratt, M. (2006). Life's little (and big) lessons: Identity statuses and meaning-making in the turning point narratives of emerging adults. *Developmental Psychology*, *42*(4), 714-722. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.42.4.714

McLean, K., & Syed, M. (2016). Personal, master, and alternative narratives: An integrative framework for understanding identity development in context. *Human Development*, *58*(6), 318-349. doi.org/10.1159/000445817

McLean, K., & Thorne, A. (2003). Late adolescents' self-defining memories about relationships. *Developmental Psychology*, *39*(4), 635-645. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.39.4.635

Meeus, W. (2011). The study of adolescent identity formation 2000-2010: A review of longitudinal research. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *21*(1), 75-94. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00716.x

Meeus, W., Branje, S., Van der Valk, I., & De Wied, M. (2007). Relationships with intimate partner, best friend, and parents in adolescence and early adulthood: A study of the saliency of the intimate partnership. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *31*(6), 569-580. doi:10.1177/0165025407080584

Meeus, W., Iedema, J., & Maassen, G. H. (2002). Commitment and exploration as mechanisms of identity formation. *Psychological Reports, 90*(3), 771-785. doi:10.2466/pr0.2002.90.3.771

Meeus, W., Van de Schoot, R., Keijsers, L., & Branje, S. (2012). Identity statuses as developmental trajectories: A five-wave longitudinal study in early-to-middle and middle-to-late adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *41*(8), 1008-1021. doi:10.1007/s10964-011-9730-y

Meeus, W., Van de Schoot, R., Keijsers, L., Schwartz, S., & Branje, S. (2010). On the progression and stability of adolescent identity formation: A five-wave longitudinal study in early-to-middle and middle-to-late adolescence. *Child Development*, *81*(5), 1565-1581. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01492.x

Meier, A., & Allen, G. (2009). Romantic relationships from adolescence to young adulthood: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. *Sociological Quarterly*, *50*(2), 308-335. doi:10.1111/j.1533-8525.2009.01142.x

Miller, S., Gorman-Smith, D., Sullivan, T., Orpinas, P., & Simon, T. (2009). Parent and peer predictors of physical dating violence perpetration in early adolescence: Tests of moderation and gender differences. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, *38*(4), 538-550. doi:10.1080/15374410902976270

Montgomery, M. (2005). Psychosocial intimacy and identity: From early adolescence to emerging adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *20*(3), 346-374. doi:10.1177/0743558404273118

Montgomery, M., & Sorell, G. (1998). Love and dating experience in early and middle adolescence: Grade and gender comparisons. *Journal of Adolescence*, *21*(6), 677-689. doi:10.1006/jado.1998.0188

Morgan, E., & Huebner, A. (2009). Adolescent growth and development. *Virginia Cooperative Extension*, *350-380*, 1-5. Retrieved from https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/49531

Munday, J. (2006). Identity in focus: The use of focus groups to study the construction of collective identity. *Sociology, 10*, 81-105. doi:10.1177/0038038506058436

Murray, S. L. (2001). Seeking a sense of conviction. In G. J. Fletcher & M. S. Clark (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Interpersonal processes* (pp. 107-126). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Murray, S. L., Griffin, D. W., Derrick, J. L., Harris, B., Aloni, M., & Leder, S. (2011). Tempting fate or inviting happiness? Unrealistic idealization prevents the decline of marital satisfaction. *Psychological Science*, *22*(5), 619-626. doi:10.1177/0956797611403155

Murray, S., & Holmes, J. (1993). Seeing virtues in faults: Negativity and the transformation of interpersonal narratives in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *65*(4), 707-722. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.65.4.707

Murray, S., Holmes, J., & Griffin, D. (1996). The benefits of positive illusions: Idealization and the construction of satisfaction in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *70*(1), 79-98. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.70.1.79

Nelson, L., & Barry, C. (2005). Distinguishing features of emerging adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *20*(2), 242-262. doi:10.1177/0743558404273074

Nesdale, D., & Flesser, D. (2001). Social identity and the development of children's group attitudes. *Child Development*, *72*(2), 506-517. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.00293

Newman, B., & Newman, P. (2017). *Development through life: A psychosocial approach.* Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage.

Nickerson, A., & Nagle, R. (2005). Parent and peer attachment in late childhood and early adolescence. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, *25*(2), 223-249. doi:10.1177/0272431604274174

Norona, J., Roberson, P., & Welsh, D. (2017). "I learned things that make me happy, things that bring me down". *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *32*(2), 155-182. doi:10.1177/0743558415605166

Overall, N., Fletcher, G., & Simpson, J. (2010). Helping each other grow: Romantic partner support, self-improvement, and relationship quality. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *36*(11), 1496-1513. doi:10.1177/0146167210383045

Ozretich, R. A., & Bowman, S. R. (2001). Middle childhood and adolescent development. *Oregon State University*, 1-4. Retrieved from http://extension.oregonstate.edu/tillamook/sites/default/files/documents/4h/ecno1527.pdf

Paulhus, D., & Vazire, S. (2009). The self-report method. In R. Robins, R. Fraley, & R. Krueger (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in personality psychology* (1st ed., pp. 224-239). New York, NY: Guilford.

Pe'rez-Sales, P. (2010). Identity and trauma in adolescents within the context of political violence: A psychosocial and communitarian approach. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 38*(1), 408-417. doi:10.1007/s10615-010-0262-9

Perrin, P., Heesacker, M., Tiegs, T., Swan, L., Lawrence, A., & Smith, M., … Mejia-Millan, C. M. (2011). Aligning Mars and Venus: The social construction and instability of gender differences in romantic relationships. *Sex Roles*, *64*(9-10), 613-628. doi:10.1007/s11199-010-9804-4

Perry, D., & Pauletti, R. (2011). Gender and adolescent development. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *21*(1), 61-74. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00715.x

Pfeffer, J., & Fong, C. (2005). Building organization theory from first principles: The self-enhancement motive and understanding power and influence. *Organization Science*, *16*(4), 372-388. doi:10.1287/orsc.1050.0132

Piaget, J. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children*. New York, NY: International University Press.

Piaget, J. (1966). *Psychology of intelligence*. New York, NY: Harcourt.

Pillemer, D. B. (1998). *Momentous events, vivid memories.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pinkus, R. T., Lockwood, P., Marshall, T. C., & Yoon, H. M. (2012). Responses to comparisons in romantic relationships: Empathy, shared fate, and contrast. *Personal Relationships, 19*, 182-201. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6811.2011.01347.x

Pinkus, R. T., Lockwood, P., Schimmack, U., & Fournier, M. A. (2008). For better and for worse: Everyday social comparisons between romantic partners. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95*, 1180-1201. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.95.5.1180

Pittman, J. F., Keiley, M. K., Kerpelman, J. L., & Vaughn, B. E. (2011). Attachment, identity, and intimacy: Parallels between Bowlby's and Erikson's paradigms. *Journal of Family Theory and Review, 3*, 32-46. doi:10.1111/j.1756-2589.2010.00079.x

Porterfield, S., Polette, K., & Baumlin, T. (2009). *Perpetual adolescence* (1st ed.). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Rauer, A., Pettit, G., Lansford, J., Bates, J., & Dodge, K. (2013). Romantic relationship patterns in young adulthood and their developmental antecedents. *Developmental Psychology*, *49*(11), 2159-2171. doi:10.1037/a0031845

Rovai, A., Baker, J., & Ponton, M. (2014). Social science research design and statistics: A practitioner's guide to research methods and IBM SPSS analysis (2nd ed.). Chesapeake, VA: Watertree Press.

Rubin, K. H., Bukowski, W. M., Parker, J. G., & Bowker, J. C. (2008). Peer interactions, relationships, and groups. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Child and adolescent development: An advanced course* (pp. 141-180). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Salkind, N. J. (2013). *Statistics for people who (think they) hate statistics*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Salmela-Aro, K. (2011). Stages of adolescence. *Encyclopedia of Adolescence*, 360-368. doi:10.1016/b978-0-12-373951-3.00043-0

Sandhu, D., & Tung, S. (2006). Gender differences in adolescent identity formation. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research, 21*(1-2), 29-40. Retrieved from http://www.pjprnip.edu.pk/pjpr/index.php/pjpr/article/viewFile/92/74

Schultz, D. P., & Schultz, S. E. (2009). *Theories of personality* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Schwartz, S., Beyers, W., Luyckx, K., Soenens, B., Zamboanga, B., & Forthun, L., …Waterman, A. (2011). Examining the light and dark sides of emerging adults' identity: A study of identity status differences in positive and negative psychosocial functioning. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *40*(7), 839-859. doi:10.1007/s10964-010-9606-6

Schwartz, S., & Montgomery, M. (2002). Similarities or differences in identity development? The impact of acculturation and gender on identity process and outcome. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *31*(5), 359-372. Retrieved from http://www.sethschwartz.info/pdfs/Identity_Acculturation_and_Gender.pdf

Schwartz, S., Zamboanga, B., Luyckx, K., Meca, A., & Ritchie, R. (2013). Identity in emerging adulthood: Reviewing the field and looking forward. *Emerging Adulthood*, *1*(2), 96-113. doi:10.1177/2167696813479781

Scinta, A., & Gable, S. (2005). Performance comparisons and attachment: An investigation of competitive responses in close relationships. *Personal Relationships*, *12*(3), 357-372. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6811.2005.00120.x

Seginer, R., & Noyman, M. S. (2005). Future orientation, identity and intimacy: Their relations in emerging adulthood. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *2*(1), 17-37. doi:10.1080/17405620444000201

Seiffge-Krenke, I. (2003). Testing theories of romantic development from adolescence to young adulthood: Evidence of a developmental sequence. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *27*(6), 519-531. doi:10.1080/01650250344000145

Seiffge-Krenke, I., & Lang, J. (2002). *Forming and maintaining romantic relations from early adolescence to young adulthood: Evidence of a developmental sequence*. Paper presented at the conference of the Society for Research on Adolescence, New Orleans, LA.

Shulman, S., & Scharf, M. (2000). Adolescent romantic behaviors and perceptions: Age and gender related differences, and links with family and peer relationships. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *10*(1), 99-118. doi:10.1207/sjra1001_5

Sigelman, C., & Rider, E. (2015). *Life-span human development* (8th Ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage.

Simon, B. (2008). *Identity in modern society* (1st ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Singer, J. (2004). Narrative identity and meaning making across the adult lifespan: An introduction. *Journal of Personality*, *72*(3), 437-460. doi:10.1111/j.0022-3506.2004.00268.x

Sluss, D., & Ashforth, B. (2007). Relational identity and identification: Defining ourselves through work relationships. *Academy of Management Review*, *32*(1), 9-32. doi:10.5465/amr.2007.23463672

Smetana, J. (2011). *Adolescents, families, and social development* (1st ed.). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Smetana, J. G., Campione-Barr, N., & Metzger, A. (2006). Adolescent development in interpersonal and social contexts. *Annual Review of Psychology, 59*(1), 255-84**.** doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.57.102904.190124

Sokol, J. T. (2009). Identity development throughout the lifetime: An examination of Eriksonian theory. *Graduate Journal of Counselling Psychology*, *1*(2), Article 14. Retrieved from http://epublications.marquette.edu/gjcp/vol1/iss2/14

Soller, B. (2014). Caught in a bad romance: Adolescent romantic relationships and mental health. *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, *55*(1), 56-72. doi:10.1177/0022146513520432

Southard, A., & Abel, M. C. (2010). Sex differences in romantic jealousy: Evaluating past and present relationship experience. *American Journal of Psychological Research, 6*(1), 41-49. Retrieved from https://www.mcneese.edu/f/c/fbb4fc9f/AJPR%2010-05%20 Southard%20Abel%2002-03%20revised.pdf

Spain, B. (2008). *Family diversity: A quantitative study of the impact of divorce and family structure on the academic performance of college students* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Database. (Order No. 3290950).

Spano, S. (2004). *Stages of adolescent development: Research facts and findings*. Ithaca, NY: *ACT for Youth*: Upstate Center of Excellence, Cornell University. Retrieved from http://www.actforyouth.net/resources/rf/rf_stages_0504.pdf

Spear, L. (2000). The adolescent brain and age-related behavioural, manifestations. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioural Reviews*, *24*(4), 417-463. doi:10.1016/s0149-7634(00)00014-2

Springer, K. (2010). *Educational research: A contextual approach*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Stangor, C. (2015). *Research methods for the behavioural sciences* (5th ed.). Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Steinberg, L. (2005). Cognitive and affective development in adolescence. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *9*(2), 69-74. doi:10.1016/j.tics.2004.12.005

Steinberg, L. (2014). Age of opportunity: Lessons from the new science of adolescence. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Steinberg, L., & Morris, A. (2001). Adolescent development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*(1), 83-110. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.83

Steyn, S. T. (2006). *Resilience in adolescents: A psycho-educational perspective.* Pretoria, South Africa: University of South Africa.

Strube, M. (1990). In search of self: Balancing the good and the true. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *16*(4), 699-704. doi:10.1177/0146167290164010

Swann, W., De la Ronde, C., & Hixon, J. (1994). Authenticity and positivity strivings in marriage and courtship. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *66*(5), 857-869. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.66.5.857

Swann, W., Wenzlaff, R., & Tafarodi, R. (1992). Depression and the search for negative evaluations: More evidence of the role of self-verification strivings. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *101*(2), 314-317. doi:10.1037//0021-843x.101.2.314

Swann, W., Wenzlaff, R., Krull, D., & Pelham, B. (1992). Allure of negative feedback: Self-verification strivings among depressed persons. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *101*(2), 293-306. doi:10.1037//0021-843x.101.2.293

Tajfel, H. (1972). Some developments in European social psychology. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *2*(3), 307-321. doi:10.1002/ejsp.2420020307

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole. Retrieved from https://student.cc.uoc.gr/uploadFiles/%CE%92310/ Tajfel%20&%20Turner%2086_SIT_xs.pdf

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (2nd ed., pp. 7-24). Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall.

Taylor, N., & White, K. (2015). *Crown House Welsh Joint Education Committee Psychology: Advanced Subsidiary level* (1st ed., p. 133). Wales, United Kingdom: Crown House.

Taylor, S., & Gollwitzer, P. (1995). Effects of mindset on positive illusions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *69*(2), 213-226. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.69.2.213

Taylor, S., & Lobel, M. (1989). Social comparison activity under threat: Downward evaluation and upward contacts. *Psychological Review*, *96*(4), 569-575. doi:10.1037//0033-295x.96.4.569

Taylor, S., Neter, E., & Wayment, H. (1995). Self-evaluation processes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *21*(12), 1278-1287. doi:10.1177/01461672952112005

Thom, D., & Coetzee, C. (2004). Identity development of South African adolescents in a democratic society. *Society in Transition*, *35*(1), 183-193. doi:10.1080/21528586.2004.10419113

Trope, Y. (1980). Self-assessment, self-enhancement, and task preference. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *16*(2), 116-129. doi:10.1016/0022-1031(80)90003-7

Valle, G., & Tillman, K. (2012). Childhood family structure and romantic relationships during the transition to adulthood. *Journal of Family Issues*, *35*(1), 97-124. doi:10.1177/0192513x12463555

Van de Bongardt, D., Yu, R., Deković, M., & Meeus, W. (2015). Romantic relationships and sexuality in adolescence and young adulthood: The role of parents, peers, and partners. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *12*(5), 497-515. doi:10.1080/17405629.2015.1068689

Vangelisti, A., & Daly, J. (1997). Gender differences in standards for romantic relationships. *Personal Relationships*, *4*(3), 203-219. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6811.1997.tb00140.x

Verkuyten, M. (2005). *The social psychology of ethnic identity*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Viejo, C., Ortega-Ruiz, R., & Sánchez, V. (2015). Adolescent love and well-being: The role of dating relationships for psychological adjustment. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *18*(9), 1219-1236. doi:10.1080/13676261.2015.1039967

Wagner, J., Becker, M., Lüdtke, O., & Trautwein, U. (2015). The first partnership experience and personality development. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *6*(4), 455-463. doi:10.1177/1948550614566092

Waldinger R. J., Diguer L., Guastella F., Lefebvre R., Allen J. P., Luborsky L., & Hauser S. T. (2002). The same old song? Stability and change in relationships schemas from adolescence to young adulthood. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. *31*(1), 17-29. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1557868/pdf/nihms-11685.pdf

Waterman, A. (1999). Identity, the identity statuses, and identity status development: A contemporary statement. *Developmental Review*, *19*(4), 591-621. doi:10.1006/drev.1999.0493

Waterman, A. (2015). What does it mean to engage in identity exploration and to hold identity commitments? A methodological critique of multidimensional measures for the study of identity processes. *Identity*, *15*(4), 309-349. doi:10.1080/15283488.2015.1089403

Way, N., & Chu, J. Y. (2004). *Adolescent boys: Exploring diverse cultures of boyhood.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Wayment, H., & Campbell, S. (2000a). How are we doing? The impact of motives and information use on the evaluation of romantic relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *17*(1), 31-52. doi:10.1177/0265407500171002

Wayment, H., & Campbell, S. (2000b). Romantic Evaluation Scale. *PsycTESTS Dataset*. doi:10.1037/t17100-000

Wayment, H., & Taylor, S. (1995). Self-evaluation processes: Motives, information use, and self-esteem. *Journal of Personality*, *63*(4), 729-757. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.1995.tb00315.x

Weger, H. (2005). Disconfirming communication and self-verification in marriage: Associations among the demand/withdraw interaction pattern, feeling understood, and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *22*(1), 19-31. doi:10.1177/0265407505047835

Wesner, K. (2008). *Social comparison of romantic relationships: The influence of family, friends, and media* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/10901

Wills, T. (1981). Downward comparison principles in social psychology. *Psychological Bulletin*, *90*(2), 245-271. doi:10.1037//0033-2909.90.2.245

Wilson, R., & Wilson, R. (2015). *Understanding emotional development* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

World Health Organization. (2017). *Adolescent development*. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/adolescence/dev/en/

Yurgelun-Todd, D. (2007). Emotional and cognitive changes during adolescence. *Current Opinion in Neurobiology*, *17*(2), 251-257. doi:10.1016/j.conb.2007.03.009

Zimmer-Gembeck, M., Hughes, N., Kelly, M., & Connolly, J. (2011). Intimacy, identity and status: Measuring dating goals in late adolescence and emerging adulthood. *Motivation and Emotion*, *36*(3), 311-322. doi:10.1007/s11031-011-9253-6

BIOGRAPHIC DETAILS

Please answer the following questions by marking the appropriate box with an X

Gender		Male		Female	

Age	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	21+

Grade		8	9	10	11	12

What is your home language?	

What career do you have in mind?	

Do you live with your biological parents?	Both parents	Only one	None
Are your biological parents …	Never married	Married	Divorced
How many siblings do you have?			
Who is your primary caregiver?			
What is your mother's highest education level?			
What is your father's highest education level?			

Indicate all the people who are currently living in your household:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

EGO IDENTITY PROCESS QUESTIONNAIRE (EIPQ)

For each of the following statements, circle the number that best describes how that statement applies to you. There are no right or wrong answers, so don't spend a lot of time on any one item. Be sure not to skip any items.

Question	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Slightly Disagree	4 Slightly Agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
I have definitely decided on the occupation I want to pursue.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I don't expect to change my political principles and ideals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have considered adopting different kinds of religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
There has never been a need to question my values.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am very confident about what kinds of friends are best for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My ideas about men's and women's roles have never changed as I became older.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I will always vote for the same political party.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have firmly held views concerning my role in my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have engaged in several discussions concerning behaviors involved in dating relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have considered different political views thoughtfully.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have never questioned my views concerning what kind of friend is best for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My values are likely to change in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
When I talk to people about religion, I make sure to voice my opinion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am not sure about what type of dating relationship is best for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have not felt the need to reflect upon the importance I place on my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Regarding religion, my beliefs are likely to change in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have definite views regarding the ways in which men and women should behave.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have tried to learn about different occupational fields to find the best one for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have undergone several experiences that made me change my views on men's and women's roles.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have consistently re-examined many different values in order to find the ones which are best for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Question	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Slightly Disagree	4 Slightly Agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
I think what I look for in a friend could change in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have questioned what kind of date is right for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am unlikely to alter my vocational goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have evaluated many ways in which I fit into my family structure.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My ideas about men's and women's roles will never change.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have never questioned my political beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have had many experiences that led me to review the qualities that I would like my friends to have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have discussed religious matters with a number of people who believe differently than I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am not sure that the values I hold are right for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have never questioned my occupational aspirations.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The extent to which I value my family is likely to change in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My beliefs about dating are firmly held.	1	2	3	4	5	6

ROMANTIC EVALUATION SCALE (RES)

Please read through the following statements carefully and rate the relevance each of the statements in your personal romantic relationships (past/present).

Question	1 Not at all true for me	2 Seldom true for me	3 Not true	4 Neutral	5 True	6 Mostly true for me	7 Very true for me
1. I think about how many times my partner has said nice things to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I think about my idea of what defines a worthwhile relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I learn from the experiences of people who have happier relationships than I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I compare my relationship with unhappy relationships I have had in the past.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I observe couples who are about as happy with their relationships as I am with mine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I think about how I would like my relationship to be in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I compare my relationship to relationships that are not as successful as mine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I reflect on happy relationships I have had in the past.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I think about feedback from others that I have received about my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I compare my current relationship to what I fear my relationship could become.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I think about how frequently we disagree or argue with each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I reflect on my own standards of what makes a good relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I observe couples who are happier in their relationships than I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I think about times in the past when I was unhappy with my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I compare my relationship to those of others who seem to be about as content as I am in their relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I envision my ideal relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I learn from relationships that are not as happy as mine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I compare my relationship now to my own previous happy relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I ask for input from my peers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I think about what I fear the relationship could become in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Question	1 Not at all true for me	2 Seldom true for me	3 Not true	4 Neutral	5 True	6 Mostly true for me	7 Very true for me
21. I think about objective information such as how often we go out and do things together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I compare my relationship with my own personal standards of what my relationship should be like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I compare my relationship with other relationships that seem to be more successful than mine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I reflect on past mistakes in my romantic life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. I learn from other couples who are as happy in their relationships as I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I compare images of what my relationship is like now to how I hope my relationship will be in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I observe the relationships of couples that are not as successful as mine.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. I think about positive experiences in my past relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. I remember what others have told me about the strengths and weaknesses of my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. I envision my 'worst fears' about what my relationship could be like in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix B – Authorisation from Department of Education

Enquiries: Dr. MC Liphapang
Ref: Research Permission L Naude
Tel. 051 404 9290
Email: maphokal@edu.fs.gov.za

education
Department of
Education
FREE STATE PROVINCE

Professor L Naude
35 Brebner Road
Bloemfontein

Dear Professor Naude

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1. This letter serves as an acknowledgement of receipt of your request to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education for the 2015/2016 cycle.

   Research Topic: Living and learning in Central South Africa.

   Approval is herewith granted to conduct research in the following schools: Kaelang, Lekhulong, Lereko & Tsoseletso

   Target Population: Learners from Grade 8-12 both male and female

   Period of research: August to September 2015 and February to September 2016. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year.

2. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension.

3. The approval is subject to the following conditions:

   3.1   The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.

   3.2   A bound copy of the research document should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 319, 3rd Floor, Old CNA Building, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein.

   3.3   You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.

   3.4   The attached ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.

4. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours sincerely

DR JEM SEKOLANYANE
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE: 17/08/2015

Strategic Planning, Policy & Research Directorate
Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300 - Room 318, Old CNA Building, 3rd Floor, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein
Tel: (051) 404 9283 / 9221   **Fax:** (086) 6678 678

Appendix C – Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA

UFS·UV
HUMANITIES
GEESTESWETENSKAPPE

25 January 2016

Prof L. Naudé
Department of Psychology
UFS

Application for extension for ethical clearance: Living and learning in Central South Africa (UFS-HUM-2013-30)

Dear Prof Naudé

With reference to your application for extension for ethical clearance with the Faculty of the Humanities, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Research Ethics Committee of the faculty that you have been granted extension with the assumption that there are no major changes with regards to the study.

Thank you for submitting the application for extension. We wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Prof LJS Botes
Dean: Faculty of the Humanities

Copy: Charné Vercueil (Research Co-ordinator: Faculty of the Humanities)

Appendix D – Consent from Principal

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

UFS·UV
HUMANITIES
GEESTESWETENSKAPPE

April / May 2016

Dear Principal

We would hereby like to ask your permission to conduct research at your school. We would like to your learnersto complete a surveywhich will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and learners may withdraw from the study at any point without any explanation. The study will be conducted in a confidential manner and all responses will be respected.

Permission from the Free State Department of Education as well as from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of the Humanities has already been granted to conduct this research. This research is conducted under the supervision of Prof L. Naudé.

Please feel free to contact us if you require any further information

Thank you in anticipation.

Post graduate students

Prof Luzelle Naudé
Email: naudel@ufs.ac.za

Letter of Permission from the Principal

I, ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬, hereby provide permission to the Psychology students to continue with the research project discussed with me at ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ (name of school).

I acknowledge that I understand that involvement in this research project is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any point.

Signature: ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

Name: ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

Date: 2016/05/13

Appendix E – Participant Informed Consent

Dear Participant

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study. The purpose of this research study is to explore your experiences and perceptions regarding being an adolescent in South Africa today. The information will be used by postgraduate Psychology students.

Participation in this study is voluntary and should you feel the need, you may withdraw from the study at any time. All your identifying data will be held in the strictest confidence. While the data will be published, all information will be kept confidential and responses will be kept anonymous.

You will be expected to complete a few biographic questions and some surveys.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to talk to the facilitator.

Thank you

_____   _____
Postgraduate student   Prof Luzelle Naudé
                                         Email: naudel@ufs.ac.za

Informed consent

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a participant in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time.

Name and Surname: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

NADIA_NAGEL_-_Finaal_Geredigeer.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

14%	12%	6%	3%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	etd.uovs.ac.za Internet Source	1%
2	scholar.ufs.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	1%
3	Submitted to University of the Free State Student Paper	1%
4	Submitted to Kean University Student Paper	<1%
5	era.library.ualberta.ca Internet Source	<1%
6	H. A. Wayment. "How are We Doing? The Impact of Motives and Information Use on the Evaluation of Romantic Relationships", Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 02/01/2000 Publication	<1%
7	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	<1%

McAdams, D. P., and K. C. McLean. "Narrative