

**IDENTITY-RELATED
DECISION-MAKING AMONG
MULTICULTURAL ADOLESCENTS**

BY

LUNDI SIWUNDLA

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

Signature:.....

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DEDICATION

This study project is dedicated to

- ✓ My father, God who has been a constant present help in all my times of need and pain. I am encouraged by Your words that read as follows: “Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”
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- ✓ Our son, Lihle Raphael Siwundla, whose three days of living were enough to leave an indelible sense of awe in the hearts of his parents. Even though his days were just three, his impact and life continues to live on as inspiration to us to face the most adverse of adversities with renewed strength and hope. It was Thomas Paine who said: “That which we obtain too easily, we esteem too lightly. It is dearness only which gives everything its value.”

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Abstract

This present study investigated South African Afrikaans-, English- and Xhosa-speaking male and female urban secondary school adolescents' (N = 1301) perception of the relative importance of identity-related domains by investigating the choices that they carried out in relation to meaningful identity-related areas of their lives. Consequently a structured questionnaire consisting of 14 domain particular areas was used. In Eriksonian terms, one could say that the South African society is in a psychosocial crisis.

Almost all the domain-specific items were regarded as relevant “Very important” or “Fairly important” by a notable or significant majority of participants. All fourteen of the domains were regarded as “Very important” by at least 35% of the participants from two cultural groups, namely African and Coloured sub cultural groups; while twelve of the domains were regarded as “Very important” by at least 50% of the African subgroup and thirteen domains were regarded as “Very important” by 40% of the Coloured subgroup. “*Leisure and recreational activities*”, “*Friendships with members of the same sex peer group*”, “*My political views and convictions*” and “*Friendships with members of the opposite sex peer group*” were however, still regarded as “Fairly important” by 56%, 53%, 58% and 52% of the total research group respectively. It should also be noted that generally females in the sample were more inclined to evaluate domains that had a bearing on interpersonal relationships as significantly more important than the males namely: *Friendship with members of the same-sex peer group*, *What kind of person I want a permanent relationship with*, *What kind of person I want to marry*, and *How I should act as husband or wife*. The males tended to evaluate the domains, *Sexual matters* and *Friendship with members of the opposite sex* more significantly important than the females did.

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM FORMULATION

1.1 General Introduction

Questions of identity have become important to many people's lives, especially to young people as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. The young person may spend years asking questions such as: Who am I? What are my values and goals? What is my life purpose? What makes me different from other people? According to Alberts and Meyer (1998) and Van Niekerk and Prins (2001), the South African society is experiencing changes in social, political, economic and cultural life. Van Niekerk and Prins (2001, p.9) highlight article excerpts from Dugmore in a South African health journal: "South Africans' psyches are under siege; we are going through such turmoil and change in our society...South African...children are dangerously stressed." Changes are affecting everyone, especially adolescents who are simultaneously faced with a challenge to weave their identities in the midst of these changes. As Alberts (1996) affirms, coming to grips with who you are in the present South Africa is complex. Identity development is a complex social process influenced by family, school, community, and church.

Although, with the advent of democracy in South Africa, many strides have been taken to try and level the disparities between the poor and the rich; much still needs to be done, as the majority of people are still living in poverty. A major cause for concern is that many Black adolescents may have challenges in developing a stable identity. For example, a stable vocational identity is needed to initiate career exploration activities, given the negative effects of apartheid, high unemployment rates, and continuing violence. In South Africa, it is likely that adolescents hold diverse perspectives of the value of work and decision-making towards career choosing. There is little research on such important

career issues. This aspect of the adolescents' identity - the choice of vocation - is but one domain among other equally relevant domains. These are identity choices adolescents are exploring and making as they navigate their lives.

1.1.1 Identity formation and life domains

The formation of one's identity has implications for mental health. Tsou (2002) maintains that adolescents who achieve a secure sense of themselves have higher self-esteem and tend to have better mental health. Further, the adolescents' religious orientation, for example, plays an important role in their ethnic identity development and in their psychological adjustment.

The exploration of identity development among urban high-school going Black and Coloured adolescents is highly relevant in South Africa, where society is characterized by complex multicultural differences. Almost 40% of the South African population is between the ages of 14 and 35. When they are in this developmental age, adolescents are generally subject to physical, social, spiritual and psychological changes: being in school where they choose careers, relationships, friendships, then to higher education where they hone career skills for the world of work; from being single to being married and/or supporting dependants (and therefore of necessity becoming more responsible); contributing more to the wider society through employment and other social and political activities (Mathoho & Ranchod, 2006). It is therefore important that in inquiring about healthy adolescent identity formation and choice-making, we face the reality of what identity choices adolescents are making. The period of adolescence is regarded by many developmental psychologists as one of the most challenging stages of the human life cycle. Identity development is generally accepted to be the major developmental task of adolescence. Adolescence is a time of discovery, emerging feelings and

exploration of new behaviour and relationships. During this stage, adolescents find themselves facing up to making choices about preferred identities relative to the changing societal influences. The cost of this reform process is definitely felt and may be especially dire if the adolescent falls short of achieving psychosocial functioning in relation to society. The inability to deal with this task normally affects the psychosocial functioning of an individual in society. Successful development of self is dependent on the development of a personal identity (Erikson, 1964).

Identity questions may ultimately lead to identity choices that may be risky. When we learn about the increased risks in relation to unprotected sex, violent behaviour, drug abuse and delinquency prevalent among urban adolescents, plus the general apathy, then it is clear that the relevance of this study is unquestionable. What compounds the situation is the fact that many have to fend for themselves while parents and caregivers wait to reap the benefits of the promise of a better life for all, or have died, leaving child-headed households.

1.1.2 Erikson-Marcia research paradigm

Erikson's (1968) construct of ego identity was selected as a theoretical framework for this study because of its psychosocial focus. Erikson's (1963) psychosocial theory of human development uniquely addresses adolescence as a specific developmental phase within a life stage framework. His theory is based on eight psychosocial stages spanning from birth to old age, in which inner psychological needs are mediated by various social influences. Erikson's identity development theory is of western origin, but it has been fruitfully applied in different cultural settings and societies. Erikson (1968) has enriched identity development theory and consequently his work has catapulted many empirical investigations in the last 50 years. Erikson's (1968, p.50) definition of identity incorporates

psychosocial dimensions: “ego identity is the awareness of ... self-sameness and continuity ... and the style of one’s individuality which coincides with the sameness and continuity of one’s meaning for others in the immediate community.”

During each stage there is a new developmental task or conflict to resolve, with either a positive or negative outcome. Usually, positive outcomes lead to mental health, while and negative outcomes often lead to failure to adjust. Erikson (1968) has identified several developmental issues that may become the focus of an identity crisis, namely the occupation, ideology, religion, and politics life domains. For Erikson (1968), there is a choice of an occupation that is both socially recognized and personally expressive. Another is the development of an ideological worldview that is worthy of a personal commitment. Such an ideology may be either religious or political in nature. Interaction with the social environment can give rise to periods of identity crisis, that is, periods during which the individual has to explore, reflect on, re-evaluate or make decisions with regard to identities that form part of his or her self-definition.

Erikson’s theoretical construct of identity formation was operationalised by Marcia (1964), who introduced the concept of identity statuses, which has stimulated a considerable number of empirical studies since 1964. Marcia’s (1964, 1966) identity status approach has become one of the useful and widely used methods of studying adolescent identity formation. Marcia has expanded Erikson’s bipolar concept of identity, versus role confusion, to include four qualitatively different ways of resolving the identity crisis. For Marcia (1967) identity is a self made lively organization of an individual’s beliefs, history, drives and abilities. The interview technique, the “Identity Status Interview” (ISI), that Marcia (1964) developed, measures these four decision-making statuses. These

statuses are defined in relation to two dimensions, namely crisis and commitment. Crisis is the problem-solving behaviour aimed at bringing out information about oneself and one's environment in order to make a decision about an important life choice (Grotevant, 1987). Commitment stands for the devotion to a specific set of goals, values, and beliefs (Marcia, 1988). Therefore, crisis is the sorting through of many choices, whereas commitment is the act of choosing one or more alternatives and following through with them. Since commitment represents the taking on of a set of standards, it can be said that it instills in the individual a sense of fidelity or purpose (Marcia, 1980).

For Marcia (1967) identity is a self made lively organization of an individual's beliefs, history, drives and abilities. The two dimensions define four identity statuses: Achievement (high on both commitment and exploration), Moratorium (low commitment, high exploration), Foreclosure (high commitment, low exploration), and Diffusion (low on both commitment and exploration). In the process of searching and exploring one's identity, the adolescent is thought to develop a personal view on issues of political, occupational, philosophical, and religious nature (Erikson, 1964, 1965). Marcia interviewed students aged 18 to 22 years about their occupational choices, religious and political beliefs, and values - all central aspects of identity. He classified students into four categories of identity status based on: 1) whether they had gone through an "identity crisis" as described by Erikson, and 2) the degree to which they were now committed to an occupational choice and to a set of values and beliefs.

Domains, such as career, religion, and politics, have been regarded as essential identity domains since Erikson's earliest work (Erikson, 1959). Erikson (1950) first identified identity problems in the areas of occupational choice and ideological commitments. Marcia (1966) kept the occupational domain and

redefined ideology as religion and politics. Some 15 years after Marcia's (1966) original publication, identity status theory was extended into the interpersonal domains (Grotevant, Thorbecke & Meyer, 1982), with the original domains, used in the first research project, classified under the heading of ideological. Feminist authors had criticized the male bias that Erikson's identity construct, as well as Marcia's original study, contained, thereby leading to identity researchers to rectify this bias by bringing in more "female oriented" domains.

The domains introduced under the heading of interpersonal are friendships, dating, and sex roles (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981). From the 1970s, more domains were added, such as *attitudes to premarital sex, sexual values and gender roles, friendships, and dating and leisure activities* (Alberts, Mbalo & Ackermann, 2003). While interpersonal domains were meant to investigate identity formation among females, it became apparent that these domains were equally as relevant for males. Youniss (1980, p.20) describes the importance of the interpersonal domain as follows: "For the person to discover himself or herself as an individual, he or she must be able to place the self in relation with other selves. One does not lose individuality in a relation, but gains a sense of self through it." Although leisure and recreation primarily form part of the interpersonal domain, Vondracek and Skorikov (1997) found that school, work, and leisure interests of high school students are closely related, and that leisure may play an important role in vocational identity development. Within the process of democratic transformation in South Africa, gender role issues are currently a high priority. Since the formation of a sexual identity is widely regarded as an essential identity component, the domain, sexual matter, is also important to consider.

Each theorist has selected some set of domains that he or she considers relevant. An interest in relevant identity-defining domains continued through the 1980s, as the identity status interview was extended for use with different age and cultural groups. Grotevant et al. (1982) used an extended identity status interview with high school students to investigate the domains of friendships, dating, and sex roles in addition to the more traditional domains of occupation, politics, and religion. As recognized, Raskin (1984) argues that an individual's experience of the importance of a particular domain at a specific stage of development may be related to the level of identity formation in that domain. Therefore, in this present South African situation, it emerges that adolescents from different cultural backgrounds formulate psychosocial identities from differing positions and there is therefore a need to investigate the relevance of meaningful identity-related domains, especially in an urban setting.

1.1.3 Preliminary studies on identity-related domains

Earlier studies investigated the male gender's perceptions in relation to three domains: occupation, religion and politics. Later more domains were added, such as attitudes to premarital sex, sexual values and gender roles, friendships, and dating and leisure activities (Alberts et al., 2003). The researchers reported that while some research found significant gender differences in relation to specific domains, other research found either less significance or no gender differences. It may be that in evaluating life domains, their relevance to particular adolescents is due to variables such as age, culture, present socio-cultural, economic and political factors.

In Alberts et al. (2003), a study investigating South African Afrikaans, English, and Xhosa-speaking secondary school adolescents' perceptions of the relative importance of identity-related domains, more

than 70% of the participants evaluated four domains (*my future career, moral values, how I should deal with family matters and relationships and my religious beliefs and convictions*) as very important, with *political matters* and *sexual matters* as the least important. Moreover, *career* and *religious choices* were regarded as very important by the entire sample. These findings present difficulties since research claims by Peltzer (2006) state that increasingly more urban adolescents are sexually active, are less concerned with future career prospects and have tended to emphasize freedom from all restraints in the guiltless pursuit of pleasure. Therefore, these authors concluded that additional research is needed to deal with the domains of politics and sexual matters. It may be expected, though, that in spite of the recent laments against political leadership generally, and with the recent advent of new political parties and youth leaders, political interest among Black adolescents could have risen. Findings from Alberts et al. (2003) study will be compared to those of the present study, considering the changes in the present study's "timing" of the research in terms of social, political and economic events, as well as its particular urban setting.

Watson and Protinsky (1991) reported a relatively small percentage of Black adolescents in the foreclosure status, and found that the majority were engaged in the identity-searching process (Alberts et al., 2003). On the contrary, this finding confirms the importance of taking different domains of identity development, as well as the gender variable, into consideration. Also, these findings seem to reveal the result of processes of change and development in society considering that in recent times the social, political and economic events may be shaping adolescent choices. This present study is peculiar since it seeks to review an urban school setting and not a rural setting. Also, the relevance of particular domains to research groups may be influenced accordingly.

1.1.4 Conclusion

In conducting a review of literature from South African studies (Thom, 1988; Ackermann, 1990; Alberts, 1990, 2000; Alberts & Meyer, 1998 and Alberts et al., 2003), the researcher realizes that the findings are conflicting. Moreover, from these studies the researcher can conclude that domains of identity that are relevant for particular adolescents in a specific life stage need to be considered for inclusion.

Consequently, the present study has included relevant domains of identity development. The research findings and theoretical basis, as outlined, does demonstrate that all identity-related domains may not be equally relevant to all adolescents at all times. The researcher is of the view that this study is essential since it attempts to produce information on areas of identity choices based on the multicultural and gendered outlook of urban high school-going adolescents' perceptions of the relevance of domains of identity formation. A basic theoretical assumption underlying the study reported here is that human perceptions are influenced by the social environment and gender. This is useful for both counselling and educational purposes in a South African culture that is diversified.

Moreover, understanding how identity is rooted in interpersonal, social, and cultural contexts is a necessary ingredient in the design of effective intervention programmes (Markstrom-Adams & Spencer, 1994). Next, the researcher will elaborate on the research problem that forms the basis of the present study, which also gives it impetus.

1.2 Problem Statement

It appears that young people from different cultural backgrounds in South Africa often create psychosocial identities from different points of curiosity and in different settings, and thus there is a need to investigate the relevance of meaningful identity-related domains in the present South African situation among urban adolescents from multi-cultural settings. It was decided to further pursue the issue of the relevance of identity-related domains among adolescents in the Eastern Cape Province because continuing changes have taken place in South African society since 2003.

In view of the preceding discussion, the research questions to be explored in this investigation are as follows:

1.3 Research aim and objectives

This study was designed to investigate the evaluation of life domains that were carried out by female and male urban high school-going adolescents in a multi-cultural setting, in relation to meaningful areas of their lives. Consequently the specific objectives of the present study are:

1. To investigate how the sample as a whole evaluates the 14 life domains,
2. To see whether there are significant differences in the ways that males and females evaluate the 14 life domains,
3. To investigate whether there are significant differences in the ways that different cultural groups evaluate the 14 life domains.
4. To investigate whether there are significant differences in the ways that different age groups evaluate the 14 life domains.

1.4 The research questions

In view of the preceding discussion, the research questions to be explored in this study are as follows:

- (1) How do present-day urban high school-going South African adolescents in selected secondary schools in East London, Eastern Cape evaluate the relative importance of different identity-related domains?
- (2) What are the most important domains to be included in present and future identity research among South African adolescents?
- (3) Do these perceptions differ significantly among adolescents from different cultural, gender and age groups?

1.5 The research hypotheses

The hypotheses were formulated in the format of null hypotheses. My first hypothesis is based on the comparison of empirical frequency distributions (for the 14 domains) with hypothetical frequencies based on the theory of equal use of the three response options (not important) NI, (fairly important) FI, and (not important) VI. This is done to establish the level of proportionality/ disproportionality in relation to each domain. The researcher seeks to statistically say (based on chi-square results) that a significant proportion of the sample evaluated a specific domain as significantly more or less important. Four specific research hypotheses were thus formulated in line with the research goals:

- (1) Urban high school-going adolescents in selected secondary schools in East London, Eastern Cape from different cultural groups do not regard all domains as equally relevant.
- (2) There are no significant differences in relation to how males and females evaluated the life domains.
- (3) There are no significant differences in relation to how the cultural groups evaluated the 14 life domains.
- (4) There are no significant differences in relation to how the age groups evaluated the 14 life domains.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.6.1 Defining Adolescence

Adolescence is a time when young people are confronted with the problem of self-definition.

This is a stage of meaningful changes taking place: physically, cognitively, emotionally, morally and socially. Whether this task of self-definition is created by social circumstances, an internal

developmental issue, or a combination of both these issues, has been debated in recent literature on adolescent development. Some writers have viewed adolescence as a by-product of social condition and historical circumstance (Erikson, 1968).

Adolescence is a developmental transition between childhood and adulthood. It is the period from puberty (the process of physical changes by which a child's body becomes an adult's body capable of reproduction) until full adult status has been attained. There are varying views on the actual time line of adolescence-especially about when it ends. Typically, we view adolescence beginning at puberty and ending at 18 to 21 years. Other authors suggest that there is a period of late adolescence that extends well into what is now known as the period of young adulthood.

Adolescence is described by Erikson as the period during which the individual must establish a sense of personal identity and avoid the dangers of role diffusion and identity confusion (Erikson, 1950). Adolescents must answer questions for themselves about where they came from, who they are, and what they will become.

1.6.2 Adolescent Identity

Identity can be defined as the individual characteristics by which a person is known. Identity theorists posit that the individual consists of a collection of identities, (such as: I am a father, a male and a worker) each of which is based on occupying a specific role (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980). Identities can be defined as one's answer to the question "who am I?" Many of the answers lie in the roles people occupy in a society. For instance, many youths today are seen as uninterested in politics, materialistic in nature, and consumer orientated. For Marcia (1967) identity is a sense, an attitude, a self-made vibrant organization of an individual's beliefs, history, drives and abilities.

Identity, or a sense of sameness and continuity, must be searched for. Identity is not given to the individual by society, nor does it appear as a maturational phenomenon; it must be acquired through sustained individual efforts. Unwillingness to work on one's own identity formation carries with it the danger of role diffusion, which may result in alienation and a lasting sense of isolation and confusion. However, it should be noted also that the individual does not have full control over his/her identity but rather is required to go through a process that is bigger than the individual, that involves the community of others, significant in their life. The virtue to be developed is fidelity. Adhering to one's values contributes to a stable identity (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980).

1.6.3 Identity synthesis and identity confusion

For Erikson, identity is best represented by a single dimension that has two elements that range from the ego extremity of identity creation to the ego extremity of identity confusion. **Identity creation or synthesis** represents a reworking of both childhood and present identifications into a bigger, self-made set of self-branded values, whereas **identity confusion** represents an inability to develop a workable set of values on which to stand. As Erikson (1968) expresses this in saying that ego identity represents a perpetual picture that one shows both to oneself and to the outside world. For example, career, relationship preferences, religious beliefs, and political ideals, among other aspects, meet to represent who one is. Therefore, the more consistent this picture is the closer to ego identity synthesis one is, whereas the more inconsistent the picture is, the more ego identity confusion will exist.

1.6.4 Exploration and commitment

An individual's identity status is determined by two criteria, which are, exploration and commitment.

Exploration is the problem-solving behaviour aimed at bringing out information about oneself and one's

environment in order to make a decision about an important life choice (Grotevant, 1987). **Commitment** stands for the devotion to a specific set of goals, values, and beliefs (Marcia, 1988).

1.6.5 Identity crisis

Unlike the popular association of the idea of **identity crisis** with negative meaning, for Erikson (1968), it represents a necessary turning point, an important moment in time that defines which direction development must assume. Consequently, crisis becomes a normal step in the process of development constituting exploration, experimentation and making decisions. Responsiveness to the crisis is not always the same for all cultures.

1.6.6 Identity statuses

Marcia (1964; 1966) provided the most widely recognized operationalization of Erikson's theoretical framework when he formulated four statuses of identity formation (**identity statuses**), i.e. identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and identity diffusion. Each status represents a combination of a level of exploration with a level of commitment. The presence or absence of exploration and commitment are the two criteria used for categorizing adolescents into identity statuses.

- **Identity diffusion** (limited exploration, no commitment)

This status represents individuals who are neither experiencing an identity crisis (not involved in exploration), nor having established commitments. However, these adolescents may have unclear commitments (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981).

- **Identity foreclosure** (limited exploration, firmer commitment)

This status represents individuals who have not made any active attempts at exploration, but who are already committed to choices in a virtually stable manner. They have opted to accept what others want them to do instead of exploring other possibilities (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981).

- **Identity moratorium** (exploration, no strong commitment)

This status represents an individual who is still exploring options and seems to be in the process of moving towards commitment (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981).

- **Identity achievement** (exploration, relatively firm commitment)

This status represents an individual who has committed, following a period of exploration and considering of options (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981).

1.6.7 Identity domains

Identity domains are intrapersonal and intra-social content areas, that may differ from individual to individual, that define a person's choices (Grotevant, 1993; Waterman, 1985). These domains are not just inside people's minds but exist inside and outside people. Domains can be described as issues of importance to the adolescent, or areas in a young person's life in relation to important decisions that must be made and that are, therefore, a major focus of attention during the identity formation process (Waterman, 1985).

Moreover, it is assumed that identity may operate differently across domains, and differently within individual domains, from the overall level (Grotevant, 1993). Erikson (1950) first pinpointed identity problems in the areas of career choice and ideological commitments. Marcia (1966) maintained the career domain, and termed ideology as 'religion and politics.' Marcia's (1966) identity status theory was extended into interpersonal domains (Grotevant, et al., 1982), with the original domains classified under the heading of ideological. The domains introduced under the heading of interpersonal were *friendships, dating, and sex roles* (Grotevant & Cooper, 1981). Some of the identified domains that seem relevant to the African context are: *how I should act as husband or wife, sexual matters, how I should deal with family matters and relationships, how I should deal with community matters, and how I should deal with persons of different cultures/races*. Therefore the domains that have been identified by different theorists represent a model of a possible selection of domains that can be assumed to consist of overall identity. Even so, those domains that have been identified can be broken down further.

1.7 Significance of study

While most of identity literature discussed has focused on schools where teaching is given in one language only, this study offers a fresh addition to South African literature, in that it was conducted in a parallel-medium school (English and Afrikaans), where separate classes are held for the different language groups.

1.8 Conclusion

The present chapter has explored broadly the introduction to adolescent identity development and the challenges in the process to identity achievement. Furthermore, the researcher has shown

why the topic selected is worth investigating in reference to existing research and why it is of significance in the field of human development and in policy making and has identified areas that have not been explored and that need further exploration. Identity development among multi-cultural urban high-school going Black, Coloured and Indian adolescents is extremely significant in South Africa. Consequently, the aim of this study is to investigate identity-related decision-making of Xhosa- English and Afrikaans speaking adolescents.

This present research will contribute to the expansion of our knowledge of human development and policy development, especially during adolescence. A summary of the earliest ego identity theories have been explored until the present, culminating in the discussion on the operationalization of identity theories through the use of identity domains. Identity-related domain studies were reviewed briefly and the conclusion was that the research findings demonstrate that all identity-related domains may not be equally relevant to all adolescents at all times. To facilitate positive identity development of adolescents, interventions need to focus on both developing individuals and the various changing contexts surrounding the individuals. Currently, education authorities are not providing enough support for positive decision-making and guidance services in schools. How should adolescents make decisions in a changing and at times unpredictable environment? This changing environment will require these young people to be open to change to deal with new situations, be aware of their changing self-concepts, and be willing to creatively respond to their situation in ways that enhance their identity development. Lastly, the basic definitions of the research terms were given and in the final section, an outline the structure of the body of the thesis is given.

1.9 Overview of the Thesis

In chapter one the research context is discussed with a broad introduction to the thesis topic, research problem, and central terms. In chapter two, the literature study on adolescence identity development will be explored, using the existing theory as the theoretical framework for understanding adolescence and identity development during adolescence. Furthermore, a summary of the main findings of both South African and international studies will be highlighted from a multicultural perspective. Chapter three, following on from chapter two, will explore the method the researcher used, particularly pointing out its relevance and usefulness for the proposed study. Chapter four will discuss the research findings, and the last section, chapter five, will explore the discussion ensuing from the results section. The limitations of the study will be identified.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The idea of the literature study is to help to develop a theoretical framework on which to base the empirical research. This chapter has been designed to give a theoretical background or context to the research problem and to review relevant literature on the evaluation of the identity-related domains by multicultural adolescents. Firstly, we will introduce the psychosocial theory of Erikson (1958, 1959, 1963, 1964, 1965 & 1968) and explore the stages he outlined as a life-long process in identity formation. Erikson's psychosocial theory provides a developmental framework to explore adolescent identity formation in relation to particular life domains. Next, we will explore the adolescent's identity formation construct as outlined by Erikson. Erikson's paradigm of identity formation will lead into a discussion of the operationalization of this construct by Marcia, with particular reference to Marcia's identity status model. Following these theoretical discussions, the stage will be set for a review of both international and South African literature studies that have been conducted with reference to identity domains. The literature review will therefore form the body of knowledge within which the present research project is embedded. Though a review of literature on identity formation and life domains, based on international research, will be given, it should be noted that the focus of the literature and research will be on South African adolescents and how they evaluate identity-related domains.

The use of the concept of identity in looking at personality development in adolescence is reasonably well established through theoretical structures, such as that of Erikson, and later on Marcia. Erikson's (1963) psychosocial theory of human development uniquely addressed

adolescence as a specific developmental phase within a life stage framework. His theory is based on eight psychosocial stages spanning from birth to old age, in which inner psychological needs are mediated by various social influences. At each stage there is a new developmental conflict to resolve, with either a positive or negative outcome. Usually, positive outcomes lead to mental health and negative ones to failure to adjust.

Erikson's stages also include an emphasis on the developmental task of identity formation in adolescence. In this period between puberty and early adulthood, adolescents engage in self definition and discover their sexual, occupational and ideological identities. This is attained through integrating some aspects of earlier childhood experiences with the adoption of certain socio-historically influenced values (Erikson, 1968). At the meeting point of self and context, Erikson spoke of personal identity as the set of goals, values, choices and beliefs that one shows to the world. Personal identity includes career goals, dating preferences, choices, and other aspects of self that identify an individual as someone in particular and that help to distinguish him or her from other people. In this study these components of identity are referred to as identity domains. Erikson (1959, 1963, & 1968) has enriched the identity development theory and consequently his work has catapulted more empirical investigations in the last 50 years.

Therefore, Erikson's (1959, 1963, & 1968) understanding of ego identity was selected as a theoretical framework for this study because of its psychosocial focus. It is within this framework that we locate the process of adolescent identity development among Xhosa, English and Afrikaans speaking South Africans.

2.2 Theoretical foundations for understanding adolescent identity development

2.2.1 Theory of psychosocial development

A developmental framework was provided by Erikson's (1968) theory of ego identity formation. According to Erikson (1968), no individual is born with a well-defined personal identity or self-concept. However, he asserted that identity formation is a major psychosocial task of adolescence that takes place, and is shaped in a social, cultural, and historical context (Erikson, 1964, 1965, & 1968). According to Erikson, a mature identity configuration is the result of a period of exploration and experimentation that typically takes place during adolescence and that leads to a decision or a commitment in various areas, such as occupation, religion, and political orientation. Adolescents face questions that confront them about their personal existence, such as: Who am I? What is my purpose in life? Is there a God? These questions trigger adolescent interest in deeper meaning of themselves and their world.

The central concept of Erikson's theory is the attainment of an ego-identity, and the identity crisis is the most vital characteristic of adolescence. Although a person's personal identity is established in ways that differ from culture to culture, the accomplishment of this developmental task has a common aspect and process in all cultures, according to Erikson. In order to acquire a strong and healthy ego-identity the young person must receive consistent and meaningful recognition, from significant others, of his achievements and accomplishments (Erikson, 1964).

Erikson (1968) has identified several developmental issues that may become the focus of an identity crisis. If the adolescent fails in his search for an identity, he will experience self-doubt and role diffusion that may result in involvement in self-destructive activity. In the process of

searching and exploring one's personal identity, the adolescent is thought to develop a personal view on issues of political, occupational, philosophical, and religious nature (Erikson, 1958, 1964 & 1965).

Also, the development of an ideological worldview that is worthy of a personal commitment, is another developmental issue that may present an identity crisis. Such an ideology may be either religious or political in nature. The task is to find modes of expression that reflect intrinsic motivations, and for which enough sources of social support exist within the individual's cultural life (Waterman, 1982). Interaction with the social environment can give rise to periods of identity crisis, that is, periods during which the individual has to explore, reflect on, re-evaluate and make decisions with regard to his or her self-concept. As has been noted, Anderson (1993) has observed that the changes in increased urbanization and industrialization have thrown many people into a strange, impersonal, and insecure world where they are often left groping for a sense of belonging.

For Erikson (1968) the search for a personal identity involves the creation of a meaningful self-concept in which past, present, and futures are linked together. The search for a personal identity also includes the formation of personal beliefs about life that can serve to guide the individual. The task is usually more difficult in a historical period in which the past has lost the anchorage of family and community tradition, the present is characterized by social change, and the future has become less predictable. The positive outcome of the identity crisis is dependent on the young person's willingness to accept his past, and to establish connections with their previous experiences. In effect this is brought about by conflict between maturational changes in the

individual and new demands that society makes because of these changes. This crisis pervades the entire stage from beginning to end. It is therefore fitting that we now turn our attention to Erikson's (1963) eight stage theory of personality development, spanning from birth to old age.

2.2.3 Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development

We have recognized that Erikson's psychosocial theory has enriched the identity development theory and consequently has propelled many empirical investigations in the last 50 years. We have also established that one of the main elements of Erikson's psychosocial stage theory is the development of ego identity. Ego identity is the conscious self awareness that we build up through social interaction. According to Erikson, our ego identity is constantly changing due to new experiences and information we acquire in our daily interactions with others. In addition to ego identity, Erikson also believed that a sense of competence also motivates behaviour and actions. Each stage in Erikson's theory is concerned with becoming capable in a psychosocial area of life. If the stage is handled well, the person will feel a sense of mastery. If the stage is dealt with poorly, the person will emerge with a sense of weakness (Erikson, 1963).

In each stage, Erikson believed people experience a conflict, a psychosocial crisis in social relationships, which serves as a turning point in development. In Erikson's view, these conflicts are centered on either developing a psychological ability or failing to develop that ability. During these times, the possibility for personal growth is high, but so is the potential for failure.

Moreover, each stage is not passed through and left behind, but each stage contributes to the formation of the total personality. Erikson developed the idea that every organism is born with a certain purpose, and continues to develop as it was intended to in interrelation with its

environment, through stages of psychosocial development. This is referred to as the epigenetic principle.

And now the eight stages of Erikson's psychosocial development theory will be discussed.

Psychosocial Stage 1 - Trust vs. Mistrust (birth to 18 months)

The first stage of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development occurs between birth and one year of age and is the most fundamental stage in life, because it is basic to the development of trust. Because an infant is utterly dependent, the development of trust is based on the dependability and quality of the child's caregivers. If a child successfully develops trust, he or she will feel safe and secure in the world, thereby experiencing hope. Caregivers who are inconsistent, emotionally unstable, or rejecting, contribute to feelings of mistrust in the children they care for. Failure to develop trust will result in fear and a belief that the world is inconsistent and unpredictable (Erikson, 1963).

Psychosocial Stage 2 - Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (18 months to 3 years)

The second stage of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development takes place during early childhood and is focused on children developing a greater sense of personal control through experimentation. Like Freud, Erikson believed that toilet training was a vital part of this process. However, Erikson's reasoning was quite different from that of Freud's. Erikson believed that learning to control one's body functions leads to a feeling of control and a sense of independence. Other important events include gaining more control over food choices, toy preferences, and clothing selection. Children who successfully complete this stage feel secure

and confident through a sense of will, while those who do not are left with a sense of inadequacy and self-doubt (Erikson, 1963).

Psychosocial Stage 3 - Initiative vs. Guilt (3 to 6 years)

During the preschool years, children begin to assert their power and control over the world through directing play and other social interactions. The child is trying out new things, and play is a mode that elicits the use of imagination. As the children freely express themselves through play, initiative is developed. Children who are successful at this stage feel capable and able to lead others, through a sense of purpose. Those who fail to acquire these skills are left with a sense of guilt, self-doubt and lack of initiative (Erikson, 1963).

Psychosocial Stage 4 - Industry vs. Inferiority (6 to 12 years)

This stage covers the early school years from approximately age 5 to 12 years of age. Here the child learns to master the more formal skills of life: (1) relating with peers according to rules (2) progressing from free play to play that may be highly structured by rules and may demand formal teamwork, such as soccer, and (3) mastering social studies, reading and mathematics. Homework is a necessity, and the need for self-discipline increases yearly. Erikson (1963) viewed the elementary school years as critical for the development of self-confidence. Ideally, elementary school provides many opportunities for children to achieve the recognition of teachers, parents and peers by producing things such as drawing pictures, solving addition problems, writing sentences, and so on. Marcia (1976) has stressed the crucial nature of the high-school years for identity formation. If children are encouraged to make and do things, and are then praised for their accomplishments, they begin to demonstrate industry by being diligent,

persevering at tasks until completed and putting work before play. Through social interactions, children begin to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments and abilities. On the contrary, if children are ridiculed or punished for their efforts, or if they find they are incapable of meeting their teachers' and parents' expectations, they develop feelings of inferiority about their capabilities.

The child who, because of his successful resolutions of earlier psychosocial crisis, is trusting, autonomous, and full of initiative will learn easily enough to be industrious. However, the mistrusting child will doubt the future. The shame and guilt-filled child will experience defeat and inferiority (Erikson, 1964).

Children who are encouraged and commended by parents and teachers develop a feeling of competence and belief in their skills. Those who receive little or no encouragement from parents, teachers, or peers will doubt their ability to be successful.

Psychosocial Stage 5 - Identity vs. Identity Confusion (12 to 22 years)

During adolescence, young people are exploring their independence and developing a sense of self. Up until this fifth stage, development depends on what is done to a person. At this point, development now depends mainly upon what a person does. An adolescent must struggle to discover his or her own identity, while negotiating and struggling with social interactions and “fitting in”, and developing a sense of morality and right from wrong. Adolescents begin to develop a strong link and commitment to ideals, beliefs and friends. Their task is to discover who they are as individuals, separate from their family of origin and as members of a wider society. If unable to find their way through this stage, they will experience identity confusion.

Unfortunately, some young people attempt to delay entrance into adulthood during this process, and go into a period of withdrawing from responsibilities, which Erikson called a "moratorium." Those unsuccessful with this stage tend to experience role confusion (Erikson, 1963). Those who receive proper encouragement and reinforcement through personal exploration will emerge from this stage with a strong sense of self, and a feeling of independence and control – what Erikson called fidelity. Those who remain unsure of their beliefs and desires will tend to be insecure and confused about themselves and the future.

Psychosocial Stage 6 - Intimacy vs. Isolation (young adulthood)

This stage covers the period of early adulthood when people are exploring personal relationships. Erikson believed it was vital that people develop close, committed relationships with other people, marriage being the most ideal commitment. Those who are successful at this step will develop relationships that are committed and secure. Remember that each step builds on skills learned during previous steps. Erikson believed that a strong sense of personal identity was important in developing intimate relationships and being able to share one's identity with another, through love. Studies have demonstrated that those with a poor sense of self tend to have less committed relationships and are more likely to suffer emotional isolation, loneliness, and depression (Erikson, 1963).

Psychosocial Stage 7 - Generativity vs. Stagnation (middle adulthood)

During adulthood, we continue to build our lives, focusing on our career and family. Those who are successful during this phase will feel that they are contributing to the world by being active in their home and community. Those who fail to attain this skill will feel unproductive and

uninvolved in the world. Erikson (1963) notes that when this stage is successfully resolved, generativity is the result, when an adult feels that he or she is being productive in society, and the unsuccessful resolution of this stage results in an adult feeling that he or she is unfruitful and unproductive.

Psychosocial Stage 8 - Integrity vs. Despair (old age)

This stage occurs during old age and is focused on reflecting back on life. Those who are unsuccessful during this stage will feel that their life has been wasted and will experience many regrets. The individual will be left with feelings of bitterness and despair. Those who feel proud of their accomplishments will feel a sense of integrity. Successfully completing this phase means looking back with few regrets and a general feeling of satisfaction. These individuals will attain wisdom, even when confronting death.

In the next section, a summary of Erikson's theoretical construct of adolescent identity development will be discussed in detail, and offered as a basis for grappling with and understanding the context of identity development in adolescence. However, the reader should keep in mind that Erikson's concept of identity is multidimensional and occurs in relation to particular identity domains, such as career goals, dating preferences, choices, and other aspects of self. Erikson spoke of cognitive, moral, social, and cultural aspects of identity, among many others (Erikson, 1963).

2.3 Erik Erikson's construct of identity development during adolescence

According to Erikson, an achieved identity is the result of a period of exploration and experimentation that occurs during adolescence, and that leads to a decision or a commitment in

various domain specific areas, such as occupation, religion, and political orientation. Moreover, during adolescence the individual begins to sense a feeling of his/her own identity, a feeling that one is a unique human being and yet prepared to fit into some important role in society, whether this role is a matter of adjusting or is totally new. The person becomes aware of individual characteristics, such as likes and dislikes, future goals, and the strength and purpose of controlling one's own future. It is a time for making religious decisions about one's beliefs (Erikson, 1968). The motivating inner driver in identity formation is the ego, in its alert and unconscious characteristic. The ego at this stage has the capacity to enable the young person to choose a combination of talents, attitudes, and skills with like minded people, and in tuning to the social environment, keeping its defences against threats and anxiety, as it learns to decide what obstacles, needs, and roles are most proper and of use. All of these ego selected characteristics are gathered and included by the ego to form one psychosocial identity Erikson, 1968).

This stage can cause one to feel isolated, empty, anxious, and indecisive. The adolescent feels he/she must make important decisions but is often unable to do so. Adolescents may feel that society is pushing them to make decisions, thus they become more unwilling. They are deeply concerned with how others view them, and are quick to show a lot of self awareness and shame. As a result, the adolescent behaviour is inconsistent and unpredictable during this confused state. At one moment he has an inner hesitation to commit himself to anyone for fear of being rejected, disappointed, or misled. Soon afterwards he or she may want to be a follower or a lover, no matter what the consequences of such a commitment may be. The term 'identity crisis' refers to the necessity to resolve the temporary setback in forming a stable identity, and to avoid a

confusion of roles. The identity crisis, though, may seem mostly dangerous since the entire future of an individual, as well as the next generation, appear to depend on it (Erikson, 1964).

It is also during this time that a sense of possessing a set of potentially bad or unworthy characteristics, or negative identity, may emerge. To deal with this sense of negative identity, the adolescent may project the bad qualities onto others, resulting in prejudice and crime, and discrimination against various groups of people. However, it is also an important part of the adolescents' readiness for ideological involvement (Erikson, 1964). If the adolescent adopts someone else's identity, it is often less satisfactory than developing their own. The adopted identity rarely becomes personal and can lead to foreclosure in adolescent development.

Rosenthal (1987) suggests that Erikson has been most successful in theorizing a combination of inner psychological drives and needs, as well as the strain of the external social world of the adolescent. In addition, his references to the importance of socio and cultural factors in this process, definitely serve to strengthen the suitability of this theory for the study of adolescent identity development in South Africa. South African adolescents have had to build up and put together identities within altering and often intimidating settings, and have often had to face contradictory and dynamic identity life choices. According to Erikson (1963) it is likely that these conflicting prescriptions may well be contributing to role uncertainty rather than to identity integration. Some theorists, such as Steven and Lockhart (1997), have maintained that Black South African adolescents' identity formations have been influenced in multifaceted ways. As a result, many adolescents manifest contradictory social identities in making choices. It is likely that contradictory social identities are shaping Black adolescents' experiences of their identity

development, even at present. Within an Eriksonian (1963) framework, this contradiction would also contribute to role confusion, rather than identity integration. In a society that is becoming increasingly individualized, these adolescents must develop an identity that allows them to cope with their social experiences as they make identity choices. Although Erikson's theory has proven useful and valid in empirical research on the construct of identity, the organization of adolescence, as central to identity, is sharpened by the metaphor of identity statuses used by Marcia (1966, 1980) to operationalize Eriksonian ideas about identity formation in adolescence.

2.4 Marcia's identity status model

Erikson's theoretical construct of identity formation was operationalised by Marcia (1964), who introduced the concept of identity statuses, which has stimulated a considerable number of empirical studies since 1964. Marcia's (1964, 1966) identity status approach has become one of the useful and widely used methods of studying adolescent identity formation. Marcia has expanded Erikson's original identity, versus role confusion stage, to include four qualitatively different ways of resolving the identity crisis. For Marcia (1967) identity is a sense, an attitude, a self made vibrant organization of an individual's beliefs, history, drives and abilities. Various semi-structured clinical interviews and coding strategies (e.g., Marcia, 1966 and Grotevant & Cooper, 1981), have been developed for categorizing adolescent identity development.

As was recognized by Erikson, identity is an evolving structure and at any given time an individual is inclined to fit into one of four identity statuses; however, over time the individual may change and be categorized in a different status. While Erikson saw identity as a balance between commitment and confusion about one's roles in society, Marcia observed two different

types of commitment and non-commitment strategies. According to Marcia (1980) many adolescents seem to progress toward a status of identity achievement. Identity achievement is rarest among early adolescents. It is more frequent among older high school students, college students and young adults.

According to Grotevant (1993), the identity statuses are understood to describe individuals' global identity, that is, the adolescents' overall or global identity status, and within any number of content areas, known as life domains or identity domains. For example, Erikson originally recognized identity challenges in the areas of occupational choice and ideological commitments. Later on, Marcia and other theorists adopted some of the original areas presented by Erikson and made some alterations by added religion and politics. Since one of the purposes of this present study was to determine whether urban multicultural high school-going adolescents in selected secondary schools in East London would differ in terms of their evaluation of the fourteen domains, it was important to include relevant identity domains. More and more domain areas have been added and conceptualized ever since Erikson's originally identified content areas, and this will be discussed in the next section.

2.4.1 Identity domains

As already said, Marcia's (1964, 1966) identity status approach measures identity across several domains. Waterman (1985) describes domains as issues of importance to the adolescent, or areas in a young person's life relative to which important decisions must be made, and which are, therefore, a major focus of attention during the identity formation process. In Marcia's original

work, the domains considered were: vocational choice, religious belief, and political ideology. These investigations were originally conducted on male adolescents. Podd, Marcia and Rubin's (1970) study was an exception in which no sex differences were found in identity formation between males and females. Later, when researchers became interested in identity development in women, other issues, thought to be of more concern to females, were suggested. These included sex role orientation (Matteson, 1977) and family versus career priorities (Archer, 1985). Grotevant and Adams (1984) made a distinction between ideological and interpersonal identity. They concluded that vocation, politics, religion, and philosophical lifestyle were issues important in ideological identity. Sex roles, friendship, recreation, and dating were issues important in interpersonal identity. Ultimately, Marcia stressed that identity formation needed to be measured in relation to domains that are personally relevant to adolescents (Marcia et al., 1993).

Erikson (1950) first identified identity problems in the areas of occupational choice and ideological commitments. Marcia (1966) kept the occupational domain and classified ideology as religion and politics. An interest in relevant identity-defining domains continued through the 1980's. From the 1970's, more domains were added, such as *attitudes to premarital sex, sexual values and gender roles, friendships, and dating and leisure activities* (Alberts et al., 2003; Marcia & Friedman, 1970; Schenkel & Marcia, 1972; Hodgson & Fischer, 1979, 1981; Matteson, 1977; Waterman & Nevid, 1977; Grotevant et al., 1982; and Grotevant & Adams, 1984). Erikson (1968) had postulated that for female adolescents, understanding their reproductive capacity was very important in the process of identity development.

Hodgson and Fischer (1979) concluded that while male identity seems to focus on individual competence and knowledge, female identity development seems to focus around issues of relationship with others. Also, relating to the issue of female identity development, Marcia and Friedman (1970), argued that intimacy and establishing intimate relationships occurred alongside, if not preceding identity formation. While interpersonal domains were meant to investigate identity formation among females, it became apparent that these domains were as relevant for males.

Later on, Marcia's (1966) original measuring instrument, the Identity Status Interview (ISI) was extended for use with different age and cultural groups. Grotevant, Thorbecke, and Meyer (1982) used an extended identity status interview (EOM – EIS - I & II) with high school students to investigate the domains of friendships, dating, and sex roles, in addition to the more traditional domains of occupation, politics, and religion, with the previously existing domains classified under the heading of 'ideological'.

The author agrees with Archer's (1982) view that examining the content areas separately provides greater clarity about the nature of identity formation than does the report of an overall identity status.

Therefore, in this present South African situation, it emerges that adolescents from different cultural backgrounds formulate psychosocial identities from differing positions and there is a need to investigate the relevance of meaningful identity-related domains in a multicultural context.

2.5 Review of international and South African identity domain studies

2.5.1. International studies highlighting cultural differences in the evaluation of domains

Traditionally researchers have investigated the process of identity formation in different cultures and settings. While most studies have found differences in terms of how different cultural groups evaluate domains, some have not. Beginning in the 1970s longitudinal investigations by Waterman and his colleagues (Waterman, Geary, & Waterman, 1974; Waterman & Goldman, 1976; Waterman & Waterman, 1971) found the identity achievement and moratorium statuses to increase and the foreclosure and diffusion statuses to decrease in frequency over time across both vocational and ideological domains. Generally though, it is reported that identity foreclosure seems to be more common among black than white research groups (Abraham, 1986; Streitmatter, 1988). However, while these studies report that black adolescents were mostly stuck as far as identity development, newer studies suggests that this trend may be changing with greater attempts from Black adolescents towards identity exploration.

International studies across ethnic groups do show significant differences across cultures (Tsou, 2002), with Watson and Protinsky (1991) reporting small margins of Black adolescents in foreclosure status with most in the process of identity probing. Hauser (1972) maintains that the reason why African American boys foreclosed was because of social limitations placed on them in comparison to the majority racial group. Erikson (1968) reveals that developing an identity by minority groups is often difficult since the latter are often undervalued. This may suggest that the identity development of minority groups internationally takes on a different process and that more research is needed to investigate these peculiarities.

In Hauser's (1972) longitudinal study among Black and White American adolescents, the cultural group's evaluation of life domains was similar and also some differences were also found. He noticed a retreat or overrepresentation of Black cultural groups in the identity foreclosed status and advancement or a majority of White adolescents in the identity achieved status. According to Marcia (1966), foreclosures demonstrate the highest degrees of authoritarianism, dependence, and unimaginative advances to personal problem solving and decision making compared with other identity groups. Clearly as demonstrated by conflicting findings in the cultural differences in the evaluation of domains, there seems to be a rising movement through the 1980s and 1990s of individuals who changed identity status moving mostly from a position of foreclosure or diffusion to moratorium or achievement. This may be indicative of a general exposure of adolescents to social conditions of choice and the movement from collectivism to more individualistic oriented identities. Minority groups have in the past adopted collectivistic identities because of the solidarity they have had to protect in defending their political and civil rights. However, the situation has very much changed with new role models assumed by adolescents and many governments adopting free societies based on democratic values (Norris et al., 2008). This present situation seems to have influenced the tendencies of adolescents in more exploratory approaches in self determination and self identity achievement.

Moreover, Streitmatter's (1988) study among American ethnic minority groupings (50% Anglo-White; 33% Hispanic; 11% Black; 4% Native or American Indian; 2% Asian and other); showed that ethnic minority groups, in this case African-American and Hispanics were noticeable more foreclosed than and those in the majority groups. According to Erikson (1980), the personal identity influences the adolescent for the rest of his/her life. If the adolescent adopts someone else'

identity, as is the case with the ethnic minority groups in this study, the foreclosed individual is often self-satisfied and content. He or she is happy with him/ herself. The adopted identity rarely becomes personal and can lead to foreclosure in adolescent development since such adolescents made commitments about life choices without the exploration process. Practically, this meant that the parents of these adolescents set down values for them to follow and since their parents' lives were based on repressed experiences, turned to religiosity thereby influencing their children towards foreclosed identities (Streitmatter, 1988).

These studies reveal that the impact of social influences on identity formation is more complex and needs to be addressed in developmental interventions for the adolescents exhibiting foreclosed identities. While many of these foreclosed adolescents are nonetheless on their way to identity achievement, many have been hampered by peculiar post-apartheid obstacles and have not adequately address the role of subjective agency in personal identity formation. Norris et al. (2008) reveal that in South Africa's racially conspicuous society, adolescent identity development is likely to be heterogeneous in respect to the toll that apartheid had on adolescents' racial groups. What is needed then are concerted efforts towards adolescent programmes that encourage independent development, thought and judgment, and that also provide adolescents, particularly the previously disadvantaged Black and Coloured groups with greater skills and options to deal with their social realities. If this is realized, adolescence in South Africa may well become a period during which black adolescents are able to avoid premature identity foreclosure, and rather experience the benefits of a psychosocial moratorium at a later stage (Erikson, 1963). The tendency for the parents of these adolescents to turn to God for guidance and solace during the suppressive times may have influenced them to pressurize adolescents to making early

commitments. This would explain the adolescents' socialization in accordance to Christian or Islamic religions. This tendency towards religiosity could have impacted on the identity development of the adolescents who presented with foreclosed identities (Mdikana, 2000). Mdikana's investigation revealed that parents are still an important influence in the lives of adolescents participating in his study, but that when it was about the more specific decision making, the role of parents seemed to be lessening. For example, he noted that collectivism is becoming less important when it came to making important decisions such as marriage. A high occurrence of foreclosure in the religious domain is, however, an international trend among adolescents from societies in which religion is a high priority (Alberts, 2000). In accord with these findings, Alberts et al. (2003) also found that out of the four domains that were regarded as very important by more than 70% of the total research group, religious matters was among these. This could have affected the identity development of these adolescents and may account for the foreclosed identities they were experiencing.

These results may reflect the importance of looking into the ideological context in which adolescents develop (Bekker, 1993). Individuals though unique are largely the products of their culture. An individual and cultural identity cannot be separated from each other. So identity development is affected by changes occurring within the socio-cultural context as well as in the individual (Stevens & Lockhart, 1997). Adolescents' social contexts include the meaning and belief systems in which they and important and influential others live, and in which considerable inconsistencies occur about how much adolescents internalize or reject the value systems around them. In total, the religious and cultural contexts in which adolescents develop clearly differ in quality, intensity and in their developmental effects (Moosa & Moonsamy, 1997). This

difference seems to be based on how active these adolescents are in religious and cultural practices.

2.5.2 South African studies highlighting cultural differences in evaluation of identity domains

Alberts (1990) found high levels of foreclosure and low levels of identity achievement in vocational decision-making among African university students, while in the domain of politics, 93, 6% of the respondents were categorized in more sophisticated modes of achievement and moratorium. This result may be attributed to significant exposure to political dialogue that African adolescents were subjected to in the light of a political tense situation of the 1990s, and a lesser exposure to educational advancements. Ackermann (1990) conducted the first study of the evaluation of life domains in South Africa when he investigated how a sample of Afrikaans-speaking school-going adolescents (from a Caucasian background) from the Western Cape Province responded to 13 life domains that appeared in the literature. In ranking the percentages for the "Very important" response option, there was a noticeable finding that religion was the highest evaluated domain for both genders and that the domains of sexual matters and politics were evaluated the lowest. They were unsure about sexual matters and political interests and they seemed to be experiencing what Marcia (1980) refers to as identity diffusion and foreclosure.

In reality, these findings may be expected considering that sexual education and political involvement are often ignored by many parents and so may limit adolescent sexual and political exploration. Ackermann (1990) concluded that the 13 domains were evaluated as relatively

important to the participants, and that significant differences were found in the relative importance of individual domains (politics and sexual matters) depending on the age and gender of participants. Moreover, Alberts (1996) reported in his study among African male and female adolescents that these adolescents used sophisticated decision-making processes in forming occupational identity, while males were foreclosed in the religious domain. Consequently, then it seems that more African adolescents have been exploring occupational decision-making and are making career choices in view of this exploration. However, religious exploration among male adolescents may still be limited because they may still be taking on prescribed views from parents without engaging in personal exploration (Mdikana, 2000).

In Alberts et al. (2003), a study investigating South African Afrikaans-, English-, and Xhosa-speaking secondary school adolescents' perceptions of the relative importance of identity-related domains, more than 70% of the participants evaluated four domains (*my future career, moral values, how I should deal with family matters and relationships and my religious beliefs and convictions*) as very important, with political matters and sexual matters as the least important. Moreover, career and religious choices were regarded as very important by the entire sample. Conclusively nine out of 14 domains were regarded as very important by at least 50% of the total research group, and lower very important responses were normally accompanied by relatively high fairly important responses. Of the fourteen domains, only politics and sexual matters were regarded as not important by more than 20% of the total research group. In part, this may be due to the often perceived silence and embarrassment by parents (and often among young people themselves) in discussing sexual issues with adolescents and the lack of political education among the young

people. Overall it seems that these domains were relevant to the life experience of these adolescents and that they are meaningful to them.

Also Botha and Ackermann's 1997 study found that significantly more Afrikaans and English-speaking than Xhosa-speaking adolescents were categorized in the identity achievement status, and more Xhosa-speaking adolescents were categorized in the foreclosure status in relation to the occupational domain. As already noted, researchers (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990; Abraham, 1986; Hauser, 1972 & Streitmatter, 1988) have concluded that identity foreclosure is more common among black than white research groups. High levels of occupational foreclosure were also found among Black male university students in the study of Alberts (1990). In the religious domain, an overrepresentation of the less sophisticated modes (foreclosure and diffusion) was evident in both Alberts' studies (1990, 2000). Alberts et al.'s (2003) study confirms that there seems to be a changing trend with more African adolescents highly represented in more sophisticated modes of decision-making concerning career and religion domains. For Erikson (1968), occupational identity involves the choice of an occupation that is both socially recognized and personally expressive. Another is the development of an ideological worldview that is worthy of a personal commitment. Such an ideology may be either religious or political in nature. With the large scale investments in primary and secondary education, more adolescents seem to be responding by exploring occupational opportunities. Traditionally, for African adolescents the choice of a career was usually not based on considerations such as personal interest or preference hence the realization of the important moratorium mode was prevented and identity foreclosure was fostered.

50% of Xhosa – speaking adolescents could not fit any identity status classification, in comparison to 17% of Afrikaans and 21% of English – speaking adolescents. Waterman (1982) and Mdikana (2000) suggest that this could either mean that these adolescents are experiencing identity diffusion or that they keep moving between the identity statuses and thus could be a positive growth. For black adolescents many of which tend to make foreclosure decisions in relation to career choice, this decision it seems, is often influenced by limited opportunities resulting from difficult economic and financial conditions, the disparities the present government seeks to redress through new and improved education and economic policies. Consequently this thwarts the recognition of the value of moratorium (Botha & Ackermann, 1997). Additionally, Botha and Ackermann's (1997) study reveal that the majority of respondents from Black cultural background had not decided on their careers and thus were experiencing identity diffusion and foreclosure.

Furthermore, the politically destabilized environment of the past with limited educational, career, economic, social, political and leisure opportunities were harmful towards Black adolescents' psychosocial development, a factor that was unhelpful towards positive psychosocial development. Phillips and Pittman (2003) have offered some explanations for the relationship between the socio-economic background of adolescents and their identity formation, by noting that poverty status is negatively related to career aspirations. They conclude that lowered aspirations and expectations for oneself may be an indicator that exploration is already being retarded and a predictor of a shortened period of active identity exploration. By this reasoning, diffusion or foreclosure should be more common among adolescents from lower socioeconomic levels. Thom and Coetzee (2004) in a South African study offered two possible explanations for the difference between the identity development from multicultural contexts in South Africa, that is, the effects of cultural identity and

positive cultural role models. They concluded that the black adolescents had developed a stronger identity than the white adolescents due to the former's culture being recognised more in the democratic system. Consequently, these researchers proposed that possibly the period during which White adolescents examine and experiment with psychosocial moratorium, an Eriksonian (1977) term, may be prolonged than was previously the case because of the anxiety of being in the minority. Norris, Roeser, Richter, Lewin, Ginsburg, Fleetwood, Taole and van der Wolf (2008) uphold that this is evidence that South Africans need to address inequalities so that confidence in government can be restored.

It can be concluded then that black adolescents acquired a stronger sense of identity than the whites because the former emphasise a strong cultural identity for the development of a sense of individual identity. Researchers like Stevens and Lockhat (1997) had explained the cultural identity development among blacks as a product of the struggle that black adolescents identified with during the apartheid years and that many of these adolescents continued to draw from the strength of their cultural identity after apartheid. Furthermore, a study by Moosa and Moonsamy (1997) looked at how black students negotiate identity formation in predominantly white tertiary institutions.

Moosa and Moonsamy's (1997) study on black adolescents confirm the importance of broader socio-political and cultural influences on identity formation. The findings suggest that the black adolescent students at the University of the Witwatersrand not only showed a greater tendency to revitalise their African culture but also to integrate Western and African cultures.

In effect, the stronger sense of identity among African adolescents found in Thom and Coetzee's (2004) study could be attributed to the influence of positive black role models in the political,

economic, political, cultural, religious spheres who have emerged after the apartheid era. Common among most of the abovementioned studies is the fact that the development of identity is influenced by a number of factors such as the culture and sociopolitical factors. The expanded opportunities for Black South Africans may relate to their optimistic views of contemporary South African society and may strengthen their freedom to explore their options.

According to Stead's (1996) study the identity construct plays an important role in the career development of adolescents. Stead (1996) development in view of the changes now rapidly occurring in South Africa that are interacting with the career development of individuals, reported that black adolescents' drive to know who they are is what drives them towards career decisions.

Additionally, in South Africa particularly languages have cultural significance and may be used to transfer the cultural way of life and expectations and consequently affect how some adolescents may evaluate life domains. As said already, in this present study some grades are taught in particular languages, hence Afrikaans and English classes.

To conclude, the research findings and theoretical basis as outlined, does demonstrate that all identity-related domains may not be equally relevant to all adolescents at all times. Identity domain research across cultures are conflicting, indicating possibly qualitative differences in an African situation. Moreover, gender, age, life stages, socio-cultural, socio-historical and the social context have an influence on identity development and more research of these variables is needed hence the present study. Urban-school adolescents' face up to identity challenges that may differ from those faced by rural adolescents that would lead to them evaluating life domains differently. It would then

appear that young people from different cultural backgrounds in South Africa often create psychosocial identities from different points of curiosity and in different settings and thus there is a need to investigate the relevance of meaningful identity-related domains in the present South African situation among adolescents from multi-cultural settings.

2.5.1.1 Gender differences in the evaluation of domains

Research during the 1970s emphasized several gender differences in identity development (Waterman, 1982). Males were more likely to achieve an identity during the college years, whereas females were somewhat more likely to be foreclosed, especially in the ideological areas of occupation, religion, and politics. Gender does have a significant role in adolescents' perceptions of the relative importance of life domains. However, while some research studies found significant gender differences e.g. Ackermann (1990) in relation to politics and sexual matters, others found either less significant or no gender differences. Previous research (Grotevant, Thorbecke, & Meyer, 1982) has shown that the identity of girls is more strongly developed than that of boys, particularly in the interpersonal area. Consequently, for relational identity we expect girls to be overrepresented in achieving commitment and underrepresented in diffusion in comparison with boys.

In a study by Mdikana (2000), in terms of the main decisions taken by both males and females, the investigation indicated that the majority (70%) of them wants to further their studies at tertiary institutions. Sixty percent of the female respondents and 75% of the male respondents indicated that they would get married. Forty percent of the females said "no" to marriage, and 15% of the males indicated that they would not like to get married in future. Moreover, gender differences were marked. Seventy-five percent of the males were, for example, classified into the achievement status,

as opposed to only 35% of the females and 55% of the females were classified into foreclosure, as opposed to only 15% of the males. Therefore significant gender differences occurred in relation to occupational exploration. The religious domain revealed a similar pattern as the occupational domain, with a relatively high percentage of males (50%) in the achievement status, and the majority (75%) of the females in foreclosure, There were also significant gender differences regarding religious exploration. With regards to dating, more participants (35% of the males and 45% of the females) were classified into the diffusion status than into any of the other three domains (occupation, religion and dating). These results suggest that gender differences are evident in the identity development process, and that they align along the traditional division between interpersonal and ideological development.

Similarly, Alberts (2000) investigated the patterns of identity-related choices shown by male and female adolescents in relation to occupation, religion, politics and attitudes towards premarital sex. Contrary to what was expected, significantly more female (85.71%) and male (76%) adolescents made use of the more sophisticated decision-making modes, that is, occupational commitments were made after a period of active exploration of alternatives (identity achievement) and participants were actively exploring occupational alternatives with a view to a commitment in the future (moratorium). With regards religion, significantly higher levels of less sophisticated decision-making modes (foreclosure and identity diffusion) were used by male adolescents. This finding may reveal that pressure is often placed on adolescents by parents to a religious commitment and when they are free to make own decisions, will either react by losing interest in religious activities or that they will be foreclosed or commit without having investigated.

Moreover, the data revealed that the political domain area is meaningful to male adolescents with

72 % having explored and committed to political decisions. In addition, significantly more female adolescents used the sophisticated decision-making modes (identity achievement and moratorium) in the formation of a sexual identity, with the highest proportion 58.44 % being in the identity achievement mode. This content area is obviously meaningful to female adolescents with the majority found in mature identity formation. However, a comparison between patterns of identity-related choices between females and males, revealed no significant gender differences for the areas of occupation, and religion but a significant difference was established for the content area of politics. Several gender differences were apparent when domain-specific analyses were examined. Males were more likely to explore and commit in politics, whereas females were more likely to explore in sex roles, thereby confirming the trend that more females tend towards interpersonal domains and males towards ideological domains.

However, intercultural differences and significant gender differences were evident in most domains in Albert's et al. (2003) study. Significantly more females than males reported a high priority to domains such as future career, moral values, and friendships with same sex peers, gender role, and community matters. However, the male participants regarded relationships with the opposite sex and sexual matters as more important than the females did revealing that more males than females may be interested in opposite sex relations and sexual matters. It is evident then these studies highlight significant differences in gender in the evaluation of domain and that these differences may be due to age, cultural, and political considerations.

2.5.3 Studies highlighting similarities among cultural groups in evaluation of identity domains

Watson and Protinsky (1992) in assessing the identity status of 237 African-American high school students found that the majority of adolescents were engaged in an identity-searching process rather than experiencing identity foreclosure. This finding differed from previous research on the African-American adolescent identity process. Moreover, it was found that females were more likely than males to be in identity-achieved status. Also, in contrast to the findings mentioned in the previous section that the majority of black adolescents were found to be in the foreclosed status, Watson and Protinsky (1991), reported a relatively small percentage of Black adolescents in the foreclosure status, and found that the majority were engaged in the identity-searching process. More studies as highlighted above in the 1990s and 2000s have confirmed this trend highlighting significant changes due to cultural, economic and political events impacting on adolescents. With the advent of new opportunities, exploration of options that were not available before has instigated many adolescents towards identity searching.

Also, in Thom and Coetzee's (1988) study, no significant differences in the developmental level of career identity were found between White and African adolescents. This finding is in contrast to what was expected since blacks and those previously disadvantaged had been exposed to limited opportunities. Also, high levels of occupational foreclosure were not found in the study of Alberts (2000). Changes due to socio-economic, political, acculturation in the South African society are happening presently and therefore this may be affecting adolescent psychosocial development. Mdikana (2000) reported on Adams and Adams's (1995) study which highlighted more similarities than differences in the psychosocial development among African-American, American, Indian,

Mexican and White Americans. He concluded that there were more similarities than differences in psychosocial development between the four cultural groups. Seemingly, less clear differences have been found generally from both international and South African studies between multicultural adolescents as was reported in past studies. More Black adolescents seem to be gravitating towards identity achievement following moratorium.

In addition Alberts' (1990, 2000) studies do not confirm the assumption that African adolescents tend to reveal only unsophisticated modes of decision making, which would imply high representation in the identity foreclosure and diffusion statuses. For example, the political domain showed a significant overrepresentation of the more sophisticated modes among males in both studies. A significant difference was established between the genders in relation to the political domain in the second study, with female adolescents displaying a more diverse pattern of confronting political issues. The females were well represented in both the identity achievement and diffusion statuses. In the interpersonal domain, namely, attitudes towards premarital sex, between 50% and 60% of males, as well as females, were classified into the identity achievement status. On the contrary these findings confirm the importance of taking different domains of identity development as well as the gender variable into consideration. The results also seem to reveal the result of processes of change and development in society, and this is precisely the reason why it is necessary to investigate adolescents' identity development in considering changes occurring in an urban school setting.

More recently, Alberts et al. (2003), a study investigating South African Afrikaans-, English-, and Xhosa-speaking secondary school adolescents' perceptions of the relative importance of identity-

related domains, more than 70% of the participants evaluated four domains (my future career, moral values, how I should deal with family matters and relationships and my religious beliefs and convictions) as very important, with political matters and sexual matters as the least important. Moreover, career and religious choices were regarded as very important by the entire sample. These findings present researchers with questions since research claims by Peltzer (2006) state that more and more, especially urban adolescents are sexually active, are less concerned with future career prospects and have tended to emphasize freedom from all restraints and a guiltless pursuit of pleasure. Political and sexual matters were regarded as of least importance as in Ackermann's 1990 study. The findings of this study emphasize the importance of carefully considering the domains included in future research on identity formation, depending on variables such as socioeconomic and socio-cultural characteristics of the specific research groups to be included in the investigation.

Therefore, Alberts et al. (2003) concludes that additional research is needed to deal with the domains of politics and sexual matters. It may be expected though that in spite of the recent laments against political leadership generally, with the recent advent of new political parties and youth leaders, that political interest among black adolescents could have risen. Findings from Alberts et al. (2003) study will be compared to those of the present study considering the changes in the present study's "timing" of the research in terms of social, political and economic events as well as its particular urban setting.

2.6 Conclusion

To conclude, the reviewed literature seems to give conflicting results. The differences in identity developmental processes between cultural groups seem to be narrowing, with the recent studies finding less clear differences between Black and white respondents than in past studies. The research findings do not conclusively confirm the general assumption that African adolescents, and particularly Xhosa adolescents, tend to reveal more unsophisticated modes of decision-making, and are therefore mostly represented in the identity foreclosure and diffusion statuses. Both international and South African recent findings seem to reveal a tendency towards identity achievement and moratorium among Black adolescents. However, the findings demonstrate that all identity-related domains may not be equally relevant to all adolescents at all times. Where differences exist between Western studies and African studies relating to the individual content areas, these differences may indicate possible qualitative differences in an African situation. What then becomes important, according to these findings, is to take different domains, various cultural groups and the gender variable into consideration. Furthermore, enough tools need to be given to adolescents to limit the potentially negative impacts that social, political and economic transitions may have on them. In this manner, adolescence in South Africa may well become a period during which Black adolescents are able to avoid premature identity foreclosure, and rather experience the longer term benefits of a psychosocial moratorium (Erikson, 1963).

It was decided to further pursue the issue of the relevance of identity-related domains among adolescents in the Eastern Cape Province, because continuing changes have taken place in South

African society since 2003. Because of the complexity of South African society there was also a need to address the question from a multicultural perspective (Alberts et al., 2003).

In the next chapter, the method of study, a description of the research group, research instruments and research procedures will be given.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD OF STUDY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe research methods utilized in this investigation, through a discussion of the research design, research group, data collection tools, method of data analysis and procedures. This present study is quantitative and descriptive in nature as it is a description of decisions or choices of adolescents. Important life choices or decisions of adolescents are explored in relation to different life domains. An investigation of the participants' responses to identity-related domains is given. Domains can be described as issues of importance to the adolescent, or areas in a young person's life in relation to which important decisions must be made, and that are, therefore, a major focus of attention during the identity formation process (Waterman, 1985).

This study was designed to investigate the evaluations of life domains that were carried out by female and male urban high school-going adolescents from different cultural background, in relation to meaningful areas of their lives. It also serves to describe, or explain, why adolescents make choices with a view to predicting future patterns of behaviour. As already stated, since the present study is quantitative, the researcher's aim was to determine the relationship between the independent variable (e.g. gender) and the dependent or outcome variables (e.g. the life domains) which the questionnaire will measure. The subjects will be measured once only, and only associations will be established between the variables. For an accurate estimate of the relationship between variables, it was necessary that the present study utilize the entire school samples from two schools. In this way, the estimate of the relationship is less likely to be biased.

3.2 Participants

A sample of convenience was used. A total of 1301 adolescent learners from two previously disadvantaged secondary schools in the lower socio-economic urban areas of East London, Eastern Cape province were included in the sample. All the participants were between 14 and 21 years of age. It was decided to carry out the investigation among secondary school learners from Grades 8 to 12 who attend an historically Coloured school and an historically Indian school in an urban setting in East London. Racial identity is one of the factors that influence adolescent identity formation. What was different, though, for the historically Indian secondary school in comparison to the other, was that it consisted of Indian learners, in addition to African and Coloured learners.

The Xhosa-speaking groups from both schools essentially share the same ancestry, culture, traditions, beliefs and language. Most grew up and reside in the former apartheid government-created township areas of Mdantsane and Duncan Village. These areas are extremely overpopulated and underprivileged and the educational standards of schools in these areas are generally deemed to be weaker, and carry the historical disadvantages, as compared to historically Coloured and Indian schools. The Afrikaans-speaking groups, or the so-called Coloured group, from both schools were also culturally alike, sharing the same language and ways of living. The learners that are English-speaking do not come from a Caucasian background but are Coloured, Indian and African learners who generally speak English as a home language of choice. The participants indicated that they had Xhosa, English or Afrikaans as a home language. The participants were affiliated to a variety of religious denominations. The learners were invited to participate after letters of consent were written to parents and caregivers.

The researcher set out to get all the learners in the two schools to participate during the days in which research data was collected. Due to their absence from school, some learners were unable to participate. Moreover, though the ideal would have been to obtain an even number of participants from both sexes, this did not happen as there was an unequal ratio of males and females in each class.

Consequently, the questionnaire was administered to the learners who were present on the days the research was conducted, irrespective of the number of males ($N = 519$) in comparison to that of females ($N = 782$). The researcher went from classroom to classroom, grade by grade from the morning to the afternoon, while recording the classes seen, so as not to repeat the administering of questionnaires to the same learners.

3.3 Research Instrument

3.3.1 Introduction

A 13-item questionnaire, which had been developed by Ackermann (1990) for a similar investigation among white Afrikaans-speaking adolescents, was adapted for the purpose of this study. The items were carefully considered for their cross-cultural applicability. The items included by Ackermann (1990) were future career, religion, politics, moral values, life goals and ideals, leisure and recreation, gender role, choice of friends of the same sex, choice of friends of the opposite sex, what kind of person I would like to date, what kind of person I would like to have a permanent relationship with, what kind of person I want to marry one day, and sexual matters.

3.3.2 The Questionnaire

The following sections were included in the questionnaire: Introduction (explaining the purpose and instructions of the investigation) and the 14 content areas to be evaluated. The questionnaire was meant to be self-explanatory, and the purpose of the investigation, the declaration of confidentiality, and the instructions were formulated clearly in the questionnaire. The aim of the present investigation was presented as follows in the questionnaire: “The aim of this questionnaire is to examine how different areas of life are looked upon or evaluated by adolescents of different ages. As a result, your involvement is very important. Will you please complete the questionnaire?”

The participants were asked to indicate how important each one of the 14 life domains was to them at this stage of their lives. This was done in accordance with a 3-point scale of “Very important,” “Fairly important,” and “Not important.” These response classes were described as follows: If an area is very important to you at this stage, you would probably think about it often, ask questions and/or read about it and make decisions relating to it.

If an area is fairly important to you at this stage, you would sometimes think about it, ask questions and/or read about it and make decisions relating to it.

If it is not important to you at this stage, you would probably rarely, or never, think about it, ask questions and/or read about the area, or deal with it. Apart from the identified item areas already referred to, the participants were asked to add any other areas of life that may be important to them, but that had not been included in the identified list. The questionnaire was available in Afrikaans, English, and Xhosa to ensure that all participants completed the questionnaire.

3.3.3 Cross-cultural use

A 14-item questionnaire that had been previously developed by Alberts et al. (2003) for a similar investigation among Afrikaans, English and Xhosa-speaking secondary school adolescents was used for the purpose of this study. This study was conducted in the Western Cape as well as rural Eastern Cape settings. This forms a good contrast for this present study since it was conducted in an urban context. Furthermore, discussions ensued among adolescent identity researchers and students to decide on relevant domains for present day adolescents.

3.3.4 Domain items included

The author was therefore of the view that the content domains chosen are meaningful and relevant areas in the lives of the adolescents taking part in the study. The items included by Alberts et al. (2003) were as follows:

- future career
- religion
- politics
- moral values
- leisure and recreation
- choice of friends of the same-sex
- choice of friends of the opposite sex
- what kind of person I would like to have a permanent relationship with
- what kind of person would I like to marry one day
- how I should act as husband or wife
- sexual matters

- how I should deal with family matters and relationships
- how I should deal with community matters and
- how I should deal with persons of different cultures/races.

In addition to selecting from the identity literature, the main life domains that would be relevant to most cultures e.g., career, religion, politics and sexual matters, a conversation occurred to identify the main areas of life that are meaningful to African adolescents at the present point in time. Consequently, identity researchers developed the instrument that the researcher decided to use. As a result, the questionnaire consists of identity-related life domains (e.g. my future career, what kind of person to marry, and moral values), that deal with the choices and commitments that are relevant to African adolescents as well. An important aim of the researcher was to include identity-related domains that will be relevant to the experience of adolescents from different cultural settings. Moreover, one could argue that these life domains are relevant to most adolescents in present-day South Africa, irrespective of cultural and racial background.

3.3.5 Motivation for choosing life domains

Young people, especially from the formerly disadvantaged and lower socio-economic areas, are eager-and also pressurized by parents-to choose lucrative careers and be successful. Furthermore, career development has been established as an integral part of total identity development (Erikson, 1964). In South Africa, career identity is all the more vital considering the unemployment rate, the dropout rates at school and university, and the high levels of school and

university failures. The domain, career identity, is crucial because it is one of the identity constructs that leads to a description of self (Mdikana, 2000).

A major cause for concern is that many Black adolescents may have challenges in developing a stable vocational identity and initiating career exploration activities, given the negative effects of apartheid, high unemployment rates, and continuing violence. In South Africa, it is likely that adolescents hold diverse perspectives on the value of work and decision making towards career choosing. There is, however, little research on the important career issues.

Religion forms an important part of the cultural life of the African, Coloured and Indian communities in South Africa, with significant consequences for identity development among the youth. The domain of religion was included because it is a main concern in most cultural groups in South Africa. Furthermore, religion can vary in the lives of teenagers, from a compulsory period of intense boredom to a force that sprouts an entire network of relationships (parent-child, peers), to an all-inclusive life world of belief, behaviour and ritual practices. Moreover, its effect on the development of identity during adolescence, and on emotional, physical, and psychosocial health, achievement-oriented conduct in school, work and daily life can vary widely.

As far as politics is concerned, the question was what effect the present sociopolitical status quo would have on adolescents' political identity formation. There seems to be an increased attention that has recently been given to the youth by political organizations. The recent wake of events in the United States of America where they elected their first ever Black president, Barack Obama, youth voter turnout was recorded as the highest ever. In fact, the last South African election on

May 22nd 2009 was also recorded as the election in which voter apathy among the youth was turned around as a considerably greater number of young people voted than in 1994.

Understanding their sexuality is obviously an important developmental task for adolescents worldwide. Risky sexual behaviour, such as inconsistent condom use and sexual intercourse with multiple partners is relatively common among adolescents and youth in South Africa (Simbayi, Chauveau and Shisana, 2004). There is scientific evidence that most infections occur during adolescence and the early adulthood stages of life (UNAIDS, 2002). Moreover, with this risky behaviour comes the increased risk of unplanned pregnancies and the contraction of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), particularly HIV.

In a survey by Lovelife (South Africa's national HIV prevention programme for the youth), youth were asked to identify their greatest challenges. According to the 2001 national survey of South African, the youth between the ages 12-17 represented a sample of 2204 youths. The survey was designed to shed light on how South African youth view their lives today and what they think about their futures, with particular focus on HIV/AIDS and sexual behaviour. HIV and teenage pregnancy were among the greatest challenges faced by youth. HIV/AIDS is one of the greatest threats to the country's developmental goals and it has a devastating effect on young people. Apart from the high rates of infection among the youth, they are also often left as orphans, and many have become sole breadwinners for siblings. Many are left homeless and unwanted. This often means the end of their youth status as they are forced to take on the roles traditionally undertaken by adults in the society. They are thus unable to identify themselves as youth or with the issues of youth. Many young women drop out of school due to unwanted pregnancies and are unable to finish their education because of a lack of financial resources.

According to Fee and Youssef (1993), the most important motivation for targeting adolescents with sexuality education is the fact that adolescents reach sexual maturity before they develop mental / emotional maturity. Therefore, the domain *Sexual matters* was included in the questionnaire.

The rest of the 11 domain areas, that is, *Moral values, Leisure and recreation, Choice of friends of the same-sex, Choice of friends of the opposite sex, What kind of person I would like to have a permanent relationship with, What kind of person I would like to marry one day, How I should act as husband or wife, Sexual matters, How I should deal with family matters and relationships, How I should deal with community matters, and How I should deal with persons of different cultures/races* go without saying that they are adolescent fundamental questions. Often youth educators and practitioners from school and youth organizations are required to present workshops on these important and meaningful topics so as to enhance their coping skills.

Moreover, the South African society has, generally speaking, in recent times been regarded as lacking in moral compass. The domain, 'moral values' was included because, according to LaVoie (1976), identity formation comprises moral development. The moral regeneration movement has been introduced by the South African government in a desperate effort to salvage values of ubuntu as a result of the noted widespread immorality among South Africans, of which 40 % are adolescents. While there are widespread general reports about the carefree attitudes of youth and their general pursuit of pleasure and a disdain for all forms of moral restraint, there are conflicting reports of more responsible young people who have been appalled by the

questionable and immoral behaviour displayed by some leaders in the spotlight, particularly in South African politics.

Different forms of interpersonal domains were formulated as leisure activities: friendships with members of same-sex and different sex, dating, marriage, and gender roles. It was decided to distinguish between various forms of interpersonal relationships, including leisure activities, friendships, dating, marriage, and gender role issues. Youniss (1980, p. 20) describes the importance of the interpersonal domain as follows: "For the person to discover himself or herself as an individual, he or she must be able to place the self in relation with other selves. One does not lose individuality in a relation, but gains a sense of self through it." Vondracek and Skorikov (1997) found that school, work and leisure interests of high school students are closely related, and also that leisure may play a central role in career identity development.

In South Africa at present, issues pertaining to gender and gender equality are priority issues, especially among adolescents (Mathoho & Ranchod, 2006). Many schools have programmes that promote the rights of women and girls. These programmes are based on the notion that the more involved youth are in the issues that face them, the more respect they have for the processes used in the resolution of these issues. Moreover, youth are often more open to ideas, and are influenced by peers rather than by adults. Consequently, the domains *choice of friends of the same-sex, choice of friends of the opposite sex, what kind of person I would like to have a permanent relationship with, what kind of person I would like to marry one day, how I should act as husband or wife* were added.

The South African family institution has been bombarded by tremendous stresses such as extreme poverty, single-parent households, child-headed households, and illnesses such as AIDS etc. It is therefore true that the role and responsibility of many adolescents in families is changing dramatically. With globalization and the free movement of people through trade and employment, domestically and across borders, South Africans from all backgrounds are confronted with fellow citizens and foreign nationals in new and often conflicting ways. South Africa is not unfamiliar with open slander, ridicule and discrimination between ethnic and racial groups and xenophobic attacks on African nationals. These experiences may present challenges for many adolescents.

Stevens and Lockhart (1997) maintain that adolescent identity development includes adolescents' attitudes and views regarding family, community and different cultural relations, since social context and socio-cultural factors form part of the process of identity development. Hence the domains of *how I should deal with family matters and relationships, how I should deal with community matters, and how I should deal with persons of different cultures/races* were relevant and were thus added in the questionnaire.

3.4 Procedure

Consent was sought from the principals of the schools and they cooperated with the data collection process. The administering of questionnaires was done by the researcher. The questionnaire took approximately 15 to 25 minutes to complete. The following methodical criteria were considered in the process of collecting the data: systematic and accurate recording of observations, establishing trust and rapport with the participants and creating optimal

conditions in terms of location or setting for the collection of the data. All this was done to ensure that the data collected was reliable (Stead & Watson, 1992). To ensure open and truthful participation, the anonymity of responses was emphasized. Participants were approached at their school and asked to participate in the study. Data collection occurred in the participants' classrooms and was conducted by the researcher.

To ensure clarity, the instructions were, however, read through with the participants. Because the questionnaire was administered within school hours, all the learners that were present completed the questionnaire. After the administering of the questionnaire, the researcher then collected them all, and using different files sorted them per class and per grade level. The questionnaires were securely locked away in a cubicle in an office awaiting data entry. The data was then entered into the SPSS programme for further analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

SPSS is a widely used computer programme designed to assist the statistical analysis of quantitative data. This programme was used to identify nominal data in order to count or measure the frequency distribution of some variables e.g. male and female. Data analysis is about investigating variables, the relationships between these variables and the patterns in these relationships. The calculation of the frequency distribution of the participants' responses to the various domain-specific items, as well as the significance of differences between the subgroups (gender groups, age groups, cultural groups, language groups), was the main goal of the statistical analyses. The chi-square procedure of the statistical package SPSS was used for this purpose. It is used when one wants to see if there is a relationship between two categorical

variables. Moreover, a chi-square goodness of fit test allows us to test whether the observed proportions for a categorical variable differ from hypothesized proportions. Firstly, nominal data of the total sample was entered into the computer programme to determine the frequency distribution of the participants' responses to the various domain-specific items, relative to 'very important', 'fairly important' and 'not important'.

Secondly, the total sample was evaluated for frequency distribution in terms of gender - male or female. Thirdly, the significance of difference between the subgroups was investigated by means of the chi-square test of independence since participants were allocated to categories and not scores. Moreover, the effect of gender as an independent variable was investigated by means of chi-square test. For example, are there any significant interactions between gender and the participants' responses, namely to 'my future career?' All the chi-square test results were shown in the form of contingency tables.

The chi-square compares the observed frequencies in each of the cells of a contingency table with the expected frequencies of each cell. The test compares the frequency of actual numbers of participants who fall into each cell with the numbers of participants we would expect to fall into each cell if there were in fact only random differences between the reported response patterns of male and female participants. The value for chi-square will reflect the size of the difference between observed and expected frequencies (Brace, Kemp and Snelgar, 2006). The greater the difference between observed and expected frequencies, the more likely the result is to be significant. If the chi-square variable is greater than 0, 05 it is statistically significant, and

therefore means that gender (independent variable) is dependent (has an effect) on that particular life domain (dependent variable).

3.6 Envisaged ethical issues

The author is committed to human development and improving the quality of life of adolescents. The author's aim is to facilitate the process whereby the participants in the research enterprise become co-owners of the project. Moreover, the author wants to facilitate an active commitment to the participants in presenting their responses accurately. This is thus a project that does more than just observe and record and analyze. It seeks to suggest recommendations for the school and parenting bodies to come to terms with these ways of being, so that they can better accommodate and help these adolescents. However, this commitment raises some methodological questions. The author has struggled with the question of the distance of the researcher from the topic. This came about, in part, because the primary researcher is an "insider" in that he is part of the school in which the investigation is held.

The researcher has been working as a life skills educator and consultant in the school. The questions posed by the study are therefore questions with which the author has witnessed these adolescents grappling from day to day. This study is therefore not an academic exercise, in the detached sense. It has its own commitments, and the fact that it was conducted by an insider is positive since it means that the researcher is familiar with the settings and the types of students in the study. This background knowledge will help the researcher in making sense of the data/results. Being an insider can help the researcher build solidarity with the participants - but the researcher is also aware of some pitfalls. Therefore it is the researcher's hope that the

involvement of the researcher's supervisor in the study will introduce the necessary checks and balances. This research report was inspired by curiosity and a deep-seated interest in the lives lived out through choices made by adolescents in an urban school setting. I wanted to understand how these adolescents make relevant choices in the efforts to negotiate the often challenging terrain of adolescence. But above all, the greatest inspiration was my love for young people and my belief in their potential to succeed if given the opportunity to explore both personal and corporate identities. The participants were minors and so consent was obtained from their parents. Since the data was obtained from human participants, the researcher had to tell participants about the purpose of the study, and that participation was voluntary in the research. The researcher also kept the participants' biographical details confidential.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter a description and justification of the data gathering method the researcher used was given. The researcher also outlined how the data was analyzed. Moreover, the researcher described the research design, participants, and administration of the questionnaire. In the next chapter the results of the study will be presented.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The study investigated Afrikaans (from a so-called Coloured background), English (from an Indian background) and Xhosa-speaking secondary school adolescents' (N= 1301) perceptions of the relative importance of identity related domains. This study also investigated evaluation of life domains in terms of gender groups, cultural groups and age groups. The first part of the chapter deals with how the total sample evaluated the life domains (See Table 4.1 below). In order to determine how the participants evaluated the 14 life domains, chi-square analyses were performed. Following that, a presentation of how the gender groups (See Table 4.2 below) evaluated the 14 life domains was made. In order to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between the independent variable 'gender groups' and the evaluation of the life domains, chi square analyses (tests of independence) were performed.

Following this, a presentation was made of the results of the domain-specific areas and how these were evaluated by the cultural groups (See Table 4.2 below). In order to investigate whether there was a significant relationship between the independent variable 'cultural groups' and the evaluation of the life domains, chi square analyses, and particularly tests of independence, were carried out. Lastly, a presentation of how the age groups evaluated the life domains was given.(See Table 4.4 below). In order to investigate whether there was a significant relationship between the variable 'age groups' and the evaluation of the life domains, chi square analyses (tests of independence) were conducted. Each of the 14 life domains was evaluated

according to 3 response options of “Very important, or VI,” “Fairly important, or FI,” and “Not important, or NI.”

4.2 Evaluation of life domains by total sample (hypothesis 1)

4.2.1 Decision-making in general by total sample

Almost all the domain-specific items were regarded as relevant (very important or fairly important) by a significant majority of participants. Six of the 14 items were regarded as “very important” by at least 60% and more of the total research group. The approximate figures were: ‘*My future career*’ (94%), ‘*Family matters*’ (80%), ‘*Kind of person to marry*’ (68%), ‘*Moral values*’ (67%), ‘*How to act as husband or wife*’ (65%) and ‘*What kind of person I would want to have a permanent relationship with*’ (60%). All fourteen of the domains were regarded as important (either as very important or fairly important) by at least 68% of the participants. The domains that were regarded as least relevant were ‘*Leisure and recreational activities*’ (31%), ‘*Sexual matters*’ (27%), ‘*Friendships with members of the same sex peer group*’ (25%), ‘*My political views and convictions*’ (22%), and ‘*Friendships with members of the opposite sex peer group*’ (21%). ‘*Leisure and recreational activities*’, ‘*Friendships with members of the same sex peer group*’, ‘*My political views and convictions*’ and ‘*Friendships with members of the opposite sex peer group*’ were, however, still regarded as “fairly important” by 56%, 53%, 58% and 52% of the total research group respectively. The frequency distribution of the total research group responses to the various domain-specific items is presented in Table 4. 1.

Table 4.1: Sample evaluation per domains

Variables	Response categories, N = 1301						Significance		
	Very Important		Fairly Important		Not Important		Chi-Square	df	p
Question 1 (my future career)	1225	94.5	71	5.5	1	0.1	2185.653	2	.000
Question 12 (how I should deal with family matters and relationships)	1051	81.1	222	17.1	23	1.8	1376.255	2	.000
Question 9 (what kind of person I want to marry one day)	885	68.8	251	19.5	151	11.7	738.704	2	.000
Question 4 (moral values)	875	69	366	28.8	28	2.2	859.522	2	.000
Question 10 (how I should act as husband or wife)	846	65.7	296	23	145	11.3	634.578	2	.000
Question 8 (what kind of person I want a permanent relationship with)	791	61.9	363	28.4	123	9.6	537.986	2	.000
Question 2 (my religious beliefs and convictions)	763	59.5	483	37.6	37	2.9	626.962	2	.000
Question 14 (how I should deal with persons from other cultures)	661	51.3	542	42	86	6.7	428.799	2	.000
Question 13 (how I should deal with community matters)	632	48.9	558	43.2	103	8	380.775	2	.000
Question 5 (leisure and recreational activities)	398	31.9	731	58.6	119	9.5	451.341	2	.000
Question 11 (sexual matters)	350	27.4	520	40.7	407	31.9	35.175	2	.000

Question 6 (friendships with members of the same sex)	325	25. 2	692	53. 6	273	21. 2	242.6 00	2	.000
Question 3 (political views and convictions)	283	22. 3	765	60. 3	220	17. 4	420.5 98	2	.000
Question 7 (friendships with members of the opposite sex)	280	21. 8	678	52. 8	325	21. 3	222.1 65	2	.000

4.2.1.1 Evaluation of life domains by total sample

The discussion that follows focuses on findings related to specific domains of identity formation on how the total sample evaluated the 14 domains. The empirical evidence obtained was compared, in the analysis, with the theory of proportionate evaluation of the domains in relation to the response options NI (not important), FI (fairly important) and VI (very important). In order to illustrate the different proportions of the entire sample in the manner of evaluating the 14 life domains, the following results have been arranged from the domain which is most relevant and meaningful (evaluated as most important), to the least relevant and meaningful (evaluated as least important).

The following presentation will reveal how the total sample evaluated the 14 life domains.

Domain: *My future career*

The largest proportion, 94.5% of the respondents evaluated the domain career as very important. A total of 0.1% of the respondents evaluated the domain, *My future career* as not important and 5.5% as fairly important. The chi square analysis yielded the value of 2185.653, $df = 2$ and the level of

significance is 0.000. This means that the empirical frequency distribution differs significantly from the theory of proportionate evaluation in terms of NI, FI and VI.

The frequency distribution is significantly disproportionate, with by far the overwhelming majority evaluating the domain, *My future career* as very important. This means that the majority of the respondents in this sample do evaluate future career aspirations as essential, and this is encouraging to know, that young people clearly consider this domain as important to them.

Domain: *How should I deal with family matters and relationships?*

A large proportion of the sample, 98.2%, evaluated this domain as either very important or fairly important. The value of the chi square analysis is 1376.255, $df = 2$ and the level of significance is 0.000. This means that the empirical frequency distribution differs significantly from a proportionate division in relation to the theoretical frequency distribution for the three categories (not important; fairly important and very important). The majority of participants evaluated this domain as very important and therefore significant to them. It would be fascinating to know where this interest stems from, as many young people are living in unstable and dysfunctional families that are burdened by challenges, such as poverty (Van Niekerk & Prins, 2001 and Moosa, Moonsamy & Fridjhon, 1997).

Domain: *What kind of person do I want to marry one day?*

This domain yielded an empirical frequency distribution that varies disproportionately, with more than half of the participants, 68.8% experiencing this domain as very important in their lives. A percentage of 11.7% of the respondents evaluated the domain, *What kind of person I want to marry* as not important, and 19.5% as fairly important. The chi square analysis yielded the value of 738.704, $df = 2$ and the level of significance is 0.000. A two thirds majority of the young people in the sample did evaluate this domain as important and meaningful, and it is clear that this domain is of interest to them.

Domain: *Moral values*

A large proportion of the respondents, 97.8% of the total sample, experienced this domain as either very important or fairly important, and therefore quite meaningful in their lives. A negligible 2.2% of the respondents evaluated the domain, *Moral values* as not important; 28.8% as fairly important and 69% as very important. The chi square analysis yielded the value of 859.522, $df = 2$ and the level of significance is 0.000. This chi-square calculation compared the observed frequencies in each of the cells of the contingency table with the expected frequencies of each cell to determine the size of the difference. Since the difference between observed and expected frequencies is great, this result is significant.

Using the chi square analysis in comparing the empirical frequency distribution with the theory of a proportionate division of the response options, the empirical frequency distribution varies

disproportionately, with by far the overwhelming majority evaluating the domain, *Moral values* as very important. This tendency is encouraging, considering the negative moral fibre that is so often reported among the young people in South Africa (Freeman, 1993).

Domain: *How I should act as husband or wife*

A sizable proportion of the respondents, 65.7%, evaluated the domain, *How I should act as husband or wife* as very important, 23% regarded it as fairly important and 11.3% as not important. The chi square analysis yielded the value of 634.578, $df = 2$ and the level of significance is 0.000. This chi square result means that a significant difference was obtained when the two sets of frequency distributions were compared: the theoretical one (theory of proportionality) and the empirical one. This means that the empirical frequency distribution varies disproportionately with 88.7% of the total sample experiencing this domain as either very important or fairly important and therefore meaningful in their lives. It is clear that a greater number of adolescents in this sample consider this domain relevant, and this may indicate that they are thinking consciously about husband and wife relations.

Domain: *What kind of person do I want a permanent relationship with?*

A large proportion of the sample, 90.3% evaluated this domain as either very important or fairly important. The value of the chi square analysis is 537.986, $df = 2$ and the level of significance is 0.000. This chi square result means that a significant difference was obtained when the two sets of frequency distributions were compared: the theoretical one (theory of proportionality) and the

empirical one. This means that the empirical frequency distribution differs significantly from a proportionate division in relation to the theoretical frequency distribution for the three categories with 90.3% evaluating the domain, *What kind of person I want a permanent relationship with*, as either very important or fairly important.

Domain: *My religious beliefs and convictions*

A large proportion of the sample, 97.1%, evaluated this domain as either very important or fairly important. The value of the chi square analysis is 626.962, $df = 2$ and the level of significance is 0.000. The empirical frequency distribution differed significantly in comparison to the theoretical distribution, based on the proportionate distribution over the three response options of VI, FI and NI, with 97.1% evaluating the domain, *My religious beliefs and convictions*, as either very important or fairly important, signifying that this domain is meaningful to the adolescents in this study. This finding is contrary to what people say these days about the religious interests of young people; it seems that young people are serious about religion (Anderson, 1993).

Domain: *How I should deal with persons of different cultures.*

Of the sample respondents, 51.3% evaluated the domain, *How I should deal with persons of different cultures* as very important; 42% as fairly important and 6.7% as not important. The chi square analysis yielded the value of 428.799, $df = 2$ and the level of significance is 0.000. This means that the empirical frequency distribution varies disproportionately with 51.3% of the total sample experiencing this domain as very important, and therefore reasonably important in their

lives. It is encouraging to see the positive interest and high regard shown in evaluating this issue by a relatively high proportion of the sample. South Africa is challenged by a culture of low tolerance towards the human rights of different cultural groups and nationalities (Vetton, 1995). It is encouraging to see a greater proportion of the sample evaluating this domain as significant.

Domain: *How I should deal with community matters.*

A considerable proportion, 92.1%, of the sample evaluated this domain as either very important or fairly important. The significant chi square value of 380.775, $df = 2$ and the level of significance equal to 0.000 means that a significant difference was obtained when the two sets of frequency distributions were compared: the theoretical one (theory of proportionality) and the empirical one. There young people in the sample evaluate community matters as quite important to them; this is an indication of significant interest in community issues and must be promoted. South African municipalities have come under attack for a pervasive service delivery inadequacy, and if young people can be enlisted to participate in community matters, it spells great potential for community development (Desmond & Desmond, 2006).

Domain: *Leisure and recreational activities*

A substantial proportion of the respondents, 90.5%, evaluated this domain as important (either as very important or fairly important) to them, with over 50% of them (58.6% to be exact) evaluating it as fairly important. Even so, the significant chi square value of 451.341, $df = 2$ and level of significance = 0.000 means that a significant difference was obtained when the two sets of

frequency distributions were compared: the theoretical one (theory of proportionality) and the empirical one, thereby indicating that a large proportion of the participants experienced the domain as relatively important in their lives. The young people in the sample evaluated the domain *Leisure and recreational activities* as important; this is a mark of encouraging involvement and interest shown by young people in recreation and sporting activities and may signify positive wellbeing.

Domain: *Sexual Matters*

A high proportion of the respondents, 68.1% evaluated this domain as either “very important” or “fairly important.” The empirical data revealed that the largest proportion, 31.9% of the respondents in comparison to the other domains, responded “not important” in evaluating the domain, *Sexual matters*. Furthermore, 40.7% regarded the domain as “fairly important.” The lowest group of respondents for this domain, 27.4% evaluated the domain as “very important”. However, the chi square analysis revealed a value of 35.175, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.000. This means that a significant difference was obtained when the two sets of frequency distributions were compared: the theoretical one (theory of proportionality) and the empirical one.

Consequently a large proportion of the participants considered the domain as relatively important in their lives with the greater proportion (66.9% = VI + FI) of the respondents considering this domain as relatively significant to them. The pattern of responding in relation to this domain is, however, puzzling.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*

Of the respondents, 78.8% of the sample evaluated this domain as either very important or fairly important. Moreover, 21.2% evaluated the domain as not important, 53.6% as fairly important and 25.2% as very important. The significant chi square value of 242.600, $df = 2$ and level of significance = 0.000 means that a significant difference was obtained when the two sets of frequency distributions were compared: the theoretical one (theory of proportionality) and the empirical one, thereby indicating that a large proportion of the participants experienced the domain as relatively important in their lives, with the greater proportion, 78.8%, of the respondents experiencing this domain as carrying great weight to them.

Domain: *My political views and convictions*

The observed data reveals that 82.6% of the sample considers the domain, *My political views and convictions* as relevant to them, and therefore either “very important,” 22.3% or “fairly important,” 60.3%, while 17.4% considered it as “not important.” The significant chi square value of 420.598 $df = 2$ and level of significance = 0.000 also signifies that a significant difference was obtained when the two sets of frequency distributions were compared: the theoretical one (theory of proportionality) and the empirical one. A large proportion of the participants experienced the domain as relatively important in their lives, with 82.6% of the respondents experiencing this domain as meaningful to them. Therefore, it is clear that the adolescents in the sample still have a relatively high interest in political matters, and that political matters are rather important in their lives.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*

A considerable proportion of 74.6% of the sample respondents demonstrated that this domain is either “very important” or “fairly important” to them. Furthermore the data revealed that 21.8% of the respondents evaluated this domain as “very important”, 52.8% as “fairly important” and 21.3% as “not important.” The significant chi square value of 222.165 $df = 2$ and level of significance = 0.000 also means that a significant difference was obtained when the two sets of frequency distributions were compared: the theoretical one (theory of proportionality) and the empirical one. A large proportion of the participants experienced the domain as relatively important in their lives, with a large proportion, 74.6% of the respondents experiencing this domain as meaningful to them. Therefore, it is clear that the school-going adolescents in the sample still have vested interest in opposite-sex friendships, and that it is rather important in their lives.

4.1.2 Evaluation of life domains by gender groups (hypothesis 2)

4.1.2.1 Decision-making per domain by gender groups

In order to establish whether significant differences occurred in the patterns of evaluation of 14 life domains between the gender groups (male and female), chi square analyses (tests of independence) were performed. In effect, chi square analyses (tests of independence) were performed where the observed frequencies in each of the cells of the contingency tables were compared with the expected frequencies of each cell to determine the size of the difference. The responses of the two genders for (VI, FI, NI) were taken separately, to determine whether the two patterns are basically similar or not; and whether the pattern is in line with the pattern of distribution (in

terms of VI, FI, NI) for the sample as a whole) irrespective of the separate breakdown for the genders. The findings of how the male and female groups evaluated the domains are presented in Table 4. 2.

Table 4.2: Domains by gender/sex of respondents

Variables		Very Important		Fairly Important		Not Important				
		Fre q	%	Freq	%	Fre q	%	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2- sided)
Q1(my future career)	Male	481	93	35	6.8	1	0.2	4.326	2	.115
	Female	74	95.4	36	4.6	0	0			
Q2(my religious beliefs and convictions)	Male	264	51.7	223	43.6	24	4.7	26.48	2	.000
	Female	499	64.6	260	33.7	13	1.7	4		
Q3(political views and convictions)	Male	115	22.5	281	55.1	114	22.4	16.20	2	.000
	Female	168	22.2	484	63.9	106	14	0		
Q4 (moral values)	Male	305	60.5	179	35.5	20	4	33.30	2	.000
	Female	570	74.5	187	24.4	8	1	3		
Q5(leisure and recreational activities)	Male	167	35.5	273	55.8	58	11.6	6.570	2	.037
	Female	231	30.8	458	61.1	61	8.1			
Q6(friendships with members of the same sex)	Male	108	20.8	285	55	125	24.1	10.39	2	.006
	Female	217	28.1	407	52.7	148	19.2	4		

Q7(friendships with members of the opposite sex)	Male	142	27.7	258	50.3	113	22	18.17	2	.000
	Female	138	17.9	420	54.5	212	27.5	1		
Q8(what kind of person I want a permanent relationship with)	Male	295	57.8	169	33.1	46	9	9.264	2	.010
	Female	496	64.7	194	25.3	77	10			
Q9(what kind of person I want to marry one day)	Male	344	66.7	103	20	69	13.4	2.617	2	.270
	Female	541	70.2	148	19.2	82	10.6			
Q10(how I should act as husband or wife)	Male	344	67.2	110	21.5	58	11.3	1.124	2	.570
	Female	502	64.8	186	24	87	11.2			
Q11(sexual matters)	Male	165	32.6	216	42.7	125	24.7	22.57	2	.000
	Female	185	24	304	39.4	282	36.6	8		
Q12(how I should deal with family matters and relationships)	Male	397	76.8	107	20.7	13	2.5	11.00	2	.004
	Female	654	84	115	14.8	10	1.3	7		
Q13(how I should deal with community matters)	Male	234	45.5	228	44.4	52	10.1	7.203		.027
	Female	398	51.1	330	42.4	51	6.5			
Q14(how I should deal with a person from other cultures)	Male	231	45.2	230	45	50	9.8	20.15		
	Female	430	55.3	312	40.1	36	4.6	5	2	.000

4.1.2.2 Gender effects

The effect of gender as an independent variable was investigated by means of the chi-square technique within the total sample. For the following domains, no significant interactions between the independent variable of gender and the patterns of evaluation for the 14 domains occurred, namely: *My future career, What kind of person I want to marry, and How I should act as husband or wife*. Out of the 14 domains, for 11 domains there were significant interactions between the independent variable of gender and the patterns of evaluation of particular domains, namely *My religious beliefs and convictions, My political views and convictions, Moral values, Leisure and recreational activities, Friendship with members of the same-sex peer group, Friendship with members of the opposite sex, What kind of person I want a permanent relationship with, Sexual matters, How I should deal with family matters and relationships, How I should deal with community matters and How I should deal with persons of different cultures*.

It should also be noted that, generally, females in the sample were more inclined to evaluate domains that had a bearing on interpersonal relationships as significantly more important than the males, namely: *Friendship with members of the same-sex peer group, What kind of person I want a permanent relationship with, What kind of person I want to marry, and How I should act as husband or wife*. The males tended to evaluate the domains, *Sexual matters* and *Friendship with members of the opposite sex* more significantly important than the females did. The significant interactions in these domains are outlined below. The degrees of freedom (df) were 2 in all cases.

The following presentation will outline how the gender groups evaluated the 14 life domains.

Domain: *My future career*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis of this domain presented a value of 4.326, $df = 2$ and the level of significance = 0.115. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (gender variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My future career*). This implies that the empirical frequencies for both male and female were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with by far the largest proportions of the two genders evaluating this domain as very important (93% of the males and 95, 4% of the females), and only small percentages for both genders relating to the FI and NI response options (see Table 4. 2).

Consequently, the independent variable of gender did not have an effect on the evaluation of the domain, *My future career*. In other words the two genders evaluated this domain in a basically similar manner. The data revealed that the proportions for the genders were: Male: VI = 93%, FI = 6.8% and NI = 0.2%. The females evaluated this domain as follows: VI = 95.4%, FI = 4.6% and NI = 0%. In South Africa, discrimination based on sex is unlawful and strongly discouraged in practice, and both males and females are encouraged to participate equally and benefit from educational opportunities and career development (Thom & Coetzee, 2004). It is clear that both females and males evaluate this domain as extremely important in their lives. The result contradicts the assumption that female learners are less serious than males about career issues.

Domain: *My religious beliefs and convictions*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis revealed a chi square value of 26.484, $df = 2$ and a level of significance equal to 0.000. This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the two genders differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the gender division. It became clear that there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as more important, in comparison to the male learners. For example, in relation to the VI response option, Table 2 shows that 64.6% of the females used this option, in comparison to 51.7% of the males (59.5% is the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables).

The data revealed that the proportions for the genders were (see Table 2): Male: VI = 51.7%, FI = 43.6% and NI = 4.7%. The females evaluated this domain according to: VI = 64.6%, FI = 33.7% and NI = 1.7%. Evidently this pattern in terms of the sets of frequency distributions between the genders proved to be dissimilar. The pattern of evaluation between the genders was significantly dissimilar with the tendency for females to evaluate this domain as more important than the males. Therefore, it is clear that the female adolescents in the sample still have a vested interest in, and present a larger growing interest in religious issues than the males. The males did indeed evaluate this domain as relatively important, but the female learners evaluated it as significantly more important than the males.

Domain: *My political views and convictions*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis of this domain presented a value of 16.200, $df = 2$ and the level of significance = 0.000. This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. Furthermore the sets of frequency distributions for the two genders differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the gender division. It became clear that there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as more important, in comparison to the male learners. For example, in relation to the FI response option (See Table 2), 63.9% of the females used this option in comparison to 55.1% of the males (60.3% is the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables).

The two variables are not independent. The variable of gender did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *My political views and convictions*. There was a tendency for females to evaluate the domain as more important, compared to males, with the data showing the following pattern (see Table 2): Males: VI= 22.5%, FI= 55.1% and NI= 22.4%. For the females, the data revealed the following: VI= 22.2%, FI= 63.9% and NI= 14%.

This indicates that the female adolescents in the sample are taking more interest than the male adolescents in political issues, and this is an encouraging trend towards female mobilization and participation in politics. This is something which is relevant in South Africa as the promotion of

gender equality and women's leadership development across the board is sought according to the Commission on Gender Equality's 1997 and 1998 Annual Report.

Domain: *Moral values*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis revealed a chi square value of 26.484, $df = 2$ and a level of significance equal to 0.000. This result suggests that there was a significant interaction in terms of the independent variable of gender and the evaluation of this domain. The two variables are not independent. The variable of gender did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *Moral values*. The data in Table 2 revealed the following pattern: Males: VI= 60.5%, FI= 35.5% and NI= 4%. For the females, the data revealed the following: VI= 74.5%, FI= 24.4% and NI= 1%.

This finding means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution, based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. Furthermore, the sets of frequency distributions for the two genders differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the gender division. It became clear that there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as more important, in comparison to the male learners. For example, in relation to the VI response option 74.5% of the females used this option in comparison to 60.5% of the males (69% is the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables).

There is a tendency for females to evaluate this domain as more important, suggesting that they are more interested than male adolescents in moral issues. This finding may signify a greater consciousness among females to moral rightness and fairness and greater exposure to and receptivity to such teaching than males. Some cultural expectations are for females to be homely and exhibit a sense of 'good' hence some African families, a wife in a husband's family is often seen as someone who will teach her children manners and moral actions (Mdikana, 2000; Mtotywa, 2007).

Domain: *Leisure and recreational activities*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis revealed a chi square value of 6.570, $df = 2$ and a level of significance equal to 0.037. This chi square value means that a significant difference on the 5% level of significance was obtained. This means that the finding has a 95% chance of being true. The variable of gender did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *Leisure and recreational activities*.

This implies that there was a significant difference between the empirical frequency distribution (of all the empirical frequencies: for male and female jointly) and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. The data revealed the following pattern (see Table 2): Males: VI= 35.5%, FI= 55.8% and NI= 11.6%. For the females, the data revealed the following: VI= 30.8%, FI= 61.1% and NI= 8.1%. This finding was contradictory and inconclusive as to which direction the tendency was leaning: males are more concentrated in the VI and NI response options, but the females more condensed in the FI option.

Since recreation may mean different things to adolescents, and especially males and females, it would be revealing to find out to what this trend may be attributed to and whether the genders considered sport as a recreational activity or not.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis revealed a chi square value of 10.394, $df = 2$ and a level of significance equal to 0.006. The emerging pattern revealed that: males: VI = 20.8%, FI = 55% and NI = 24.1%. For the females, the pattern was: VI = 28.1%, FI = 52.7% and NI = 19.2%. The two variables are not independent.

This finding means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution, based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. Furthermore, the sets of frequency distributions for the two genders differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the gender division. It became clear that there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as relatively more important in comparison to the male learners. For example, in relation to the VI response option, 28.1% of the females used this option in comparison to 20.8% of the males (25.2% is the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables). Therefore, it is clear that the female adolescents in the sample seem to evaluate same-sex friendships as relatively more important than males.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis revealed a chi square value of 18.171, $df = 2$ and a level of significance equal to 0.000. This result suggests that there was a significant interaction in terms of the independent variable of gender and the evaluation of this domain. The two variables are not independent. The variable of gender did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*.

This implies that there is a significant difference between the empirical frequency distribution (of all the empirical frequencies: for male and female jointly) and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. The emerging pattern showed the female data as follows: VI= 17.9% and FI= 54.5% and NI = 27.5%. For the males, the data revealed that VI = 27.7%, FI = 50.3% and NI = 22% (See Table 4.2).

There was a clear tendency for the males to evaluate this domain as more important than the females. The males were by far superior in VI (27.7% against 17.9%), and also the females had a stronger representation in NI. So there is clear pattern with the males evaluating the domain as more important.

Domain: *What kind of person would I want a permanent relationship with?*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis of this domain presented a value of 9.264, $df = 2$ and the level of significance = 0.010. This result suggests that there was a significant difference in how the two gender groups evaluate this domain. The two variables are not independent. A greater

proportion of the female participants, 64.7%, compared to 57.8% for the male participants, experienced the domain as “very important,” 25.3% females compared to 33.1% males evaluated it as “fairly important” and 10% females compared to 9% males as “not important” in their lives.

This finding means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. Furthermore, the sets of frequency distributions for the two genders differed on opposite sides of the calculated ‘benchmark’ for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the gender division. It became clear that there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as relatively more important in comparison to the male learners.

Therefore the variable of gender did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *What kind of person would I want a permanent relationship with?*. There is a noted tendency for females to evaluate the domain as relatively more important than the males. This is not surprising as, traditionally, females are socialized to think that marriage is desirable for them and that it is honourable to be married and permanently united to her husband, children and, indeed the husbands’ family as well as her in-laws (Mdikana, 2000).

Domain: *What kind of person I want to marry one day*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis revealed a chi square value of 2.617, $df = 2$ and a level of significance equal to 0.270. The patterns of evaluation were similar: VI= 70.2%, FI= 19.2% and NI= 10.6% for females and VI= 66.7%, FI= 20% and NI= 13.4% for males. The

empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (gender variable and the evaluation of the domain of *What kind of person I want to marry one day*) This implies that the empirical frequencies for both male and female were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with at least two thirds of both genders evaluating this domain as “very important” (66.7% of the males and 70.2% of the females), and only smaller percentages for both genders relating to the FI and NI response options (see Table 2). Even though the trend may suggest that both gender groups consider this domain as relevant and may be questioning themselves about what kind of person they want to marry, the core finding is that more females, in comparison to males, consider this domain important to them.

Domain: *How I should act as husband or wife*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis revealed a chi square value of 1.124, $df = 2$ and a level of significance equal to 0.570. This chi square value means that the variables of gender and the evaluation of this domain are independent. The patterns of evaluation were similar according to: VI= 64.8%, FI= 24% and NI= 11.2% for females and VI= 67.2%, FI= 21.5% and NI= 11.3% for males. This finding suggests that gender did not influence how the participants evaluated the domain *How I should act as husband or wife*.

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (gender variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should act as husband or wife*) This implies that the

empirical frequencies for both male and female were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with both genders evaluating this domain as “very important” (67.2% of the males and 64.8% of the females), and only smaller percentages for both genders relating to the FI and NI response options (see Table 2). Therefore both genders evaluate this domain as quite important to them.

Domain: *Sexual matters*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis of this domain presented a value of 22.578, $df = 2$ and the level of significance = 0.000. The noted patterns were: VI= 24%, FI= 39.4% and NI= 36.6% for females and VI= 32.6%, FI= 42.7% and NI= 24.7% for males. This result suggests that there was a significant difference in how the two gender groups evaluated this domain, meaning that the variables are dependent. This finding means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution, based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. Furthermore the sets of frequency distributions for the two genders differed on opposite sides of the calculated ‘benchmark’ for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the gender division. It became clear that there was a tendency among the male learners to evaluate this domain as more important, in comparison to the female learners. For example, in relation to the VI response option 24% of the females used this option in comparison to 32.6% of the males (27.4% is the ‘benchmark’ in terms of no significant relationship between the variables).

There was a tendency for the males in this sample to evaluate it as more important than the females, and it may suggest a greater attention placed by males in this sample on sexual issues and may suggest that males are vigorously questioning themselves about this domain (Alberts et al., 2003).

Domain: *How I should deal with family matters and relationships*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis of this domain presented a value of 11.007, $df = 2$ and the level of significance = 0.004. The variable of gender did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *How I should deal with family matters and relationships*. This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution, based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the two genders differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the gender division. It became clear that there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as more important, as compared to the male learners. For example, in relation to the VI response option 84% of the females used this option, in comparison to 76.8% of the males (81.1% is the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables). The emerging patterns revealed that: VI= 84%, FI= 14.8% and NI= 1.3% for females compared to VI= 76.8%, FI= 20.7% and NI= 2.5% for males.

Therefore the data showed that the greater proportion of the female participants, compared to the male participants, experienced the domain as relatively more important in their lives. It seems that

the female adolescents in the sample tended to place more importance than male adolescents on family matters and relationships, but the males also evaluated it as important.

Domain: *How I should deal with community matters?*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis revealed a chi square value of 7.203, $df = 2$ and a level of significance equal to 0.027. This chi square value means that a significant difference on the 5% level of significance was obtained. This finding indicates that the independent variable of gender did have an effect on the way this domain was evaluated. The empirical frequency distribution differed significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (gender variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should act as husband or wife*) This implies that the empirical frequencies for both male and female were basically dissimilar (and dissimilar to the theoretical frequencies), with female adolescents evaluating this domain as “very important” by 51.1% compared to 45.5% of the males (see Table 2).

The patterns of evaluation between the genders revealed the tendency for females to evaluate this domain as relatively more important as follows (See Table 2): VI= 51.1%, FI= 42.4% and NI= 6.5% compared to VI= 45.5%, FI= 44.4% and NI= 10.1% for males.

Consequently the female adolescents in the sample evaluated community matters as relatively more important, compared to the males, and this may signify a positive involvement and interest in community issues.

Domain: *How I should deal with persons of different cultures*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis of this domain presented a value of 20.155, $df = 2$ and the level of significance = 0.000. This result suggests that there was a significant interaction in how the two gender groups evaluated this domain, meaning that the variables are dependent.

This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the two genders differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the gender division. It became clear that there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as more important, in comparison to the male learners. For example, in relation to the VI response option, 55.3% of the females used this option in comparison to 45.2% of the males (51.3% is the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables). The female and male participants presented the following data: VI= 55.3% of the females compared to 45.2% for males; FI= 40.1% of the females compared to 45% for males and NI= 4.6% of the females compared to 9.8% for males.

The patterns of evaluation between the genders were significantly dissimilar with the tendency for females to evaluate this domain as more important. Significantly more females in this sample seem to be concerned about, and interested in the question *How I should deal with persons of different cultures*, and this is remarkable. This domain seems less meaningful to the male sample

and this is worrying, considering that many foreigners from African nations have been killed recently, and violence and intolerance against them still continues in some communities according to a 2010 Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) publication by editors Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera.

4.1.3 Evaluation of life domains by cultural groups (hypothesis 3)

In order to establish whether significant differences occurred in the patterns of evaluation of 14 life domains between the cultural groups (African, Coloured and Indian), chi square analyses (tests of independence) were performed. In effect, chi square analyses were performed where the observed frequencies in each of the cells of the contingency tables were compared with the expected frequencies of each cell to determine the size of the difference. The Indian sub-group was very small, however the decision was taken to include the data in the analysis for the reason that I wanted to have a third cultural group included.

The findings of how the African, Coloured and Indian cultural groups evaluated the domains are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Evaluation of domains by cultural groups

Variables		Response Categories						Significance		
		Very Important		Fairly Important		Not Important		Chi Square statistics		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Q1 (my future career)	African	684	95	35	4.9	1	0.1	4.345	4	0.361
	Coloured	511	93.4	36	6.6	0	0.0			
	Indian	30	100	0	0	0	0.0			
Q2(my religious beliefs and convictions)	African	425	59.7	268	37.6	19	2.7	4.712	4	0.318
	Coloured	315	58.2	208	38.4	18	3.3			
	Indian	23	76.7	7	23.3	0	0.0			
Q3 (political views and convictions)	African	152	21.4	425	59.9	132	18.6	3.795	4	0.435
	Coloured	126	23.8	322	60.9	81	15.3			
	Indian	5	16.7	18	60	7	23.3			
Q4: (moral values)	African	496	70.7	191	27.2	15	2.1	10.149	4	0.038
	Coloured	352	65.5	172	32	13	2.4			
	Indian	27	90	3	10	0	0.0			
Q5(leisure and recreational activities)	African	205	30	415	60.8	63	9.2	8.807	4	0.066
	Coloured	187	35	293	54.8	55	10.3			
	Indian	6	20	23	76.7	1	3.3			
Q6(friendships with members of the same sex)	African	158	22.1	412	57.5	146	20.4	11.834	4	0.019
	Coloured	158	29	264	48.5	122	22.4			

	Indian	9	30	16	53.3	5	16.7			
Q7(friendships with members of the opposite sex)	African	136	19.1	391	55	184	25.9	11.755	4	0.019
	Coloured	132	24.4	273	50.4	137	25.3			
	Indian	12	40	14	46.7	4	13.3			
Q8(what kind of person I want a permanent relationship with)	African	442	62.6	200	28.3	64	9.1	1.506	4	0.826
	Coloured	333	61.6	153	28.3	55	10.2			
	Indian	16	53.3	10	33.3	4	13.3			
Q9(what kind of person I want to marry one day)	African	481	67.6	142	19.9	89	12.5	4.091	4	0.394
	Coloured	386	70.8	103	18.9	56	10.3			
	Indian	18	60	6	20	6	20			
Q10(how I should act as husband or wife)	African	449	63	176	24.7	88	12.3	14.558	4	0.006
	Coloured	381	70	114	21	49	9			
	Indian	16	53.3	6	20	8	26.7			
Q11(sexual matters)	African	207	29.3	290	41	210	29.7	7.197	4	0.126
	Coloured	132	24.4	218	40.4	190	35.2			
	Indian	11	36.7	12	40	7	23.3			
Q12(how I should deal with family matters and relationships)	African	587	82	118	16.5	11	1.5	4.080	4	0.395
	Coloured	437	79.5	102	18.5	11	2			
	Indian	27	90	2	6.7	1	3.3			
Q13(how I should deal with community matters)	African	344	48	319	44.5	54	7.5	1.473	4	0.831
	Coloured	273	50	226	41.4	47	8.6			
	Indian	15	50	13	43.3	2	6.7			
Q14(how I should deal with person from other	African	352	49.2	315	44	49	6.8	3.623	4	0.459

cultures)										
	Coloured	294	54.1	215	39.6	34	6.3			
	Indian	15	50	12	40	3	10			

4.1.3.1 Evaluation of life domains by cultural groups

4.1.3.1.1 Cultural group effects

The significance of differences between the cultural groups was investigated by means of the chi-square (test of independence) technique. All the chi-square figures were rounded off to 3 decimals. According to Table 4.3, significant cultural group differences occurred in four of the 14 domain items. These domains were *Moral values*, *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*, *Friendships with members of the opposite-sex peer group*, and *How to act as husband or wife*.

The following is a presentation of how the cultural groups evaluated the 14 life domains.

Domain: *My future career*

The chi square (test of independence) value in relation to this domain yielded the value of $X^2 = 4.345$, $df = 4$ and the level of significance is equal to 0.361. This chi-square means that the empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables, cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My future career*. This implies that the empirical frequencies for the three cultural groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with by far the largest proportions of the three cultural groups evaluating this domain as “very important”

(95% of the African, 93.4% of the Coloured and 100% of the Indians), and only small percentages for both African and Coloured groups relating to the FI and NI response options (see Table 4.3).

The patterns represented by the cultural groups respectively were (See Table 4.3): African: VI= 95%; Coloured: VI= 93.4% and Indian: VI= 100%. For the “fairly important” category, it was African: FI= 4.9%; Coloured: FI= 6.6% and Indian: FI= 0%. Lastly, for the “not important” category, data revealed that: African: NI= 0.1%; Coloured: NI= 0% and Indian: NI= 0%.

This pattern of evaluation seems to suggest that all three cultural groups consider that the domain *My future career* is very important to them. This is an encouraging trend to the custodians of young people’s education, as it shows that young people consider their career development as paramount, irrespective of cultural grouping (Mdikana, 2000; Alberts et al., 2003).

Domain: *My religious beliefs and convictions*

The chi square analysis (test of independence) in relation to this domain, *My religious beliefs and convictions*, offered a chi square value of 4.712, $df = 2$ and the level of significance = 0.318. This chi-square revealed that the empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables, the cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My religious beliefs and convictions*. This implies that the empirical frequencies for the three cultural groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with the three cultural groups evaluating this domain as very important (59.7% of African, 58.2% of the Coloured and 76.7%

of the Indian), and smaller percentages for the three cultural groups relating to the FI and NI response options (see Table 4.3).

In this regard, the patterns of evaluation were: African: VI= 59.7%; Coloured: VI= 58.2% and Indian: VI= 76.7%. For the “fairly important” option, it was: African: FI= 37.6%; Coloured: FI= 38.4% and Indian: FI= 23.3%. For the “not important” option, the data showed that: African: NI= 2.7%; Coloured: NI= 3.3% and Indian: NI= 0%. This domain seems relevant to all three cultural groups, and all three evaluated this domain as relatively important to them.

Domain: *My political views and convictions*

The analysis of this domain confirmed a chi square (test of independence) value of 3.795, $df = 4$ and a level of significance = 0.435. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables, cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My political views and convictions*. This implies that the empirical frequencies for all three cultural groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with all the cultural groups evaluating this domain as ‘fairly important’ as follows: (59.9% of the African, 60.9% of the Coloured and 60% of the Indian) (see Table 4.3).

As a result, the pattern of evaluation was: VI option: African= 21.4%, Coloured= 23.8% and Indian= 16.7%; FI option: African= 59.9%, Coloured= 60.9% and Indian= 60% and NI option: African= 18.6%, Coloured= 15.3% and Indian= 23.3%. Since all three cultural groups evaluated

this domain as relatively important, it seems that for the young people in this sample, political issues are relatively important and that interest in the political process may be rising again.

Domain: *Moral values*

The chi square analysis for the domain, *Moral values* revealed the value of 10.149, $df = 4$ and a level of significance = 0.038. This chi square value means that a significant difference on the 5% level of significance was obtained. The pattern of evaluating this domain was as follows: VI option: African= 70.7%, Coloured= 65.5% and Indian= 90%; FI option: African= 27.2%, Coloured= 32% and Indian= 10% and NI option: African= 2.1%, Coloured= 2.4% and Indian= 0% (see Table 4.3).

Furthermore, a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution, based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the three cultural groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the cultural group division. For example, 70.7% of the African, compared to 65.5% of the Coloured and 90% of the Indian groups considered this domain as very important, with (69% being the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables).

It became clear that there was a tendency among Indian and African groups to evaluate this domain as relatively more important than the Coloured cultural group, with none of the Indian

group represented in the “not important” option. Due to the small representative sample of the Indian group, a bigger sample would have given a more accurate picture. Even so, there was a notable recognition of moral values even including the Coloured cultural group.

This may indicate greater awareness of moral values among these adolescents in this sample, a finding which may give testimony to the widespread call for ‘moral regeneration’ in South Africa (Thom & Coetzee, 2004).

Domain: *Leisure and recreational activities*

The analysis in relation to this domain presented a chi square (test of independence) value of 8.807, $df = 4$ and a level of significance = 0.066. This chi-square revealed that the empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables, cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *Leisure and recreational activities*. This implies that the empirical frequencies for the three cultural groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies). The pattern of evaluating this domain was as follows: VI option: African= 30%, Coloured= 35% and Indian= 20%; FI option: African= 60.8%, Coloured= 54.8% and Indian= 76.7% and NI option: African= 9.2%, Coloured= 10.3% and Indian= 3.3% (see Table 4.3).

It would seem that all the adolescents in this sample are exposed to some form of leisure activity since they are in schools where sport and play are encouraged, and this would explain the

interest shown by these young people in leisure activities. This needs to be commended as it stimulates both their physical and social well being (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

Domain: *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*

The chi square value (test of independence) for this domain was 11.834, $df = 4$ and a level of significance = 0.019. This data reveals that the independent variable cultural group did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*. This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the three cultural groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the cultural group division. The following response options were received for the VI option: African= 22.1%, Coloured = 29% and Indian = 30% and for the FI option: African = 57.5%, Coloured = 48.5% and Indian = 53.3%, while the NI option revealed that: African= 20.4%, Coloured= 22.4% and Indian= 16.7% (see Table 4.3).

There was an inconclusive pattern of evaluation between the three cultural groups. For example, in relation to the VI response option: 22.1% of the African group compared to 29% of the Coloured and 30% of the Indian groups evaluated in favour of this option, with 25.2% being the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables. The "fairly important" response options revealed that: 57.5% of the African group compared to 48.5% of the Coloured and 53.3% of

the Indian groups evaluated in favour of this option. The Coloureds and Indians tended to opt for the VI option and the African group were stronger in the FI option, that is, stronger in a more moderate response.

It seems that while this result revealed significant differences between the cultural groups, the pattern of evaluation between them is unclear.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*

The chi square (test of independence) analysis for this domain revealed a value of 11.755, $df = 4$ and a level of significance = 0.019. The pattern of evaluation between the three cultural groups differs significantly in relation to the domain, *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*, and to the sample as a whole.

This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the three cultural groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the cultural group division.

The following response options between the cultural groups were noted for the very important option: African: 19.1%, Coloured: 24.4% and Indian: 40%. For the fairly important option, it was:

African: 55% Coloured: 50.4% and Indian: 46.7% and for the not important option, it was African: 25.9%, Coloured: 25.3% and Indian: 13.3%. While the Indian sub-group tended to opt for the VI option, the Coloured and African sub-groups were stronger in the FI option, that is, stronger on a more moderate response.

There was a tendency among the Indian learners to evaluate this domain as relatively more important, in comparison to the African and Coloured learners. For example, in relation to the VI response option 40% of the Indian learners used this option in comparison to 19.1% of the African and 24.4% of the Coloured learners, with 21.8% as the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables (see Table 4.3). This tendency may suggest a greater freedom to explore such relationships among the Indian group, while among African and Coloured groups, the tendency is for opposite sex friendships to be discouraged as they are considered as sexual and as a distraction from more important matters, such as focusing on academic achievement (Mdikana, 2000). However, this result shows that for both African and Coloured adolescents this domain was also relevant to them.

Domain: *What kind of person do I want a permanent relationship with?*

The analysis in relation to this domain presented a chi square value of 1.506, $df = 4$ and a level of significance = 0.826. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *What kind of person do I want a permanent relationship with?*) This implies that the empirical frequencies for all three cultural

groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with all the cultural groups evaluating this domain as very important (62.6% of the African, 61.6% of the Coloured and 53.3% of the Indian) (see Table 4.3).

Domain: *What kind of person would I want to marry one day?*

The analysis in relation to this domain presented a chi square value of 4.091, $df = 4$ and a level of significance = 0.394. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables, cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *What kind of person would I want to marry one day?* This implies that the empirical frequencies for all three cultural groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with by far the largest proportions of the three cultural groups evaluating this domain as very important (67.6% of the African, 70.8% of the Coloured and 60% of the Indian), and only small percentages for both genders relating to the FI and NI response options (see Table 4.3).

Domain: *How I should act as husband or wife*

The analysis in relation to this domain presented a chi square value of 14.558, $df = 4$ and a level of significance = 0.006. This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the three cultural groups

differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the cultural group division.

The pattern of evaluation was as follows: VI option: African= 63%, Coloured= 70% and Indian= 53.3%; FI option: African= 24.7%, Coloured= 21% and Indian= 20% and NI option: African= 12.3%, Coloured= 9% and Indian= 26.7% (see Table 4.3). The Coloured group has evaluated this domain relatively more importantly, based on the VI result, with Indians at the other extreme (53%). And Indians opted more often for the NI option. Indians also come from very traditional families and possibly this could be a reason why this domain is not that important to them.

There was a tendency among the Coloured and African cultural groups to evaluate this domain as relevant and relatively more important to them than to the Indian sub-group. It seems that the Coloured subgroup in this sample consider this domain as relatively important to them. This is a positive trend towards marital relationship building among the adolescents in this sample during a time when marriages are increasingly disintegrating (Van Niekerk & Prins, 2001).

Domain: *Sexual matters*

The chi square (test of independence) value for this domain was 7.197, $df = 4$ and a level of significance = 0.126. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *Sexual matters*). This implies

that the empirical frequencies for all three cultural groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with all the cultural groups evaluating this domain as “fairly important” (41% of the African, 40.4% of the Coloured and 40% of the Indian) (see Table 4.3).

The pattern of evaluation showed that, of the ‘very important’ option, the following percentages were forthcoming: African= 29.3%, Coloured= 24.4% and Indian= 36.7%.; while of the ‘fairly important’ option, 41% were African, 40.4% were Coloured and 40% were Indian and for the ‘not important’ option: 29.7% were African, 35.2% were Coloured and 23.3% were Indian.

In comparison to the other domains, this one yielded a peculiar result. It possibly indicates that this is an exceptional area in the lives of young people, with parents and society reacting in unpredictable and often emotional ways to it. While all three cultural groups consider this domain as ‘very important’ and ‘fairly important’ in moderate proportions, yet many also consider this domain as ‘not important’. However, it is encouraging to see that for some adolescents in this sample, irrespective of cultural group, especially when many young people in South Africa are acquiring and dying from sexually transmitted diseases (Peltzer, 2006), *Sexual matters* is meaningful to them.

Domain: *How I should deal with family matters and relationships.*

The chi square (test of independence) value for this domain was 4.080, $df = 4$ and a level of significance = 0.395. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two

variables (cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should deal with family matters and relationships*). This implies that the empirical frequencies for all three cultural groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with the pattern of evaluation for “very important” as 82% of the African, 79.5% of the Coloured and 90% of the Indian (see Table 4.3).

The similar pattern in the evaluation of this domain suggested that all the groups evaluated this domain as quite important to them, and may suggest renewed hope from the young people in this sample in engaging with, and finding solutions to family issues.

Domain: *How I should deal with community matters.*

The chi square value for this domain was 1.473, $df = 4$ and a level of significance = 0.831. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should deal with community matters*). This implies that the empirical frequencies for all three cultural groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with the larger proportions of the three cultural groups evaluating this domain as ‘very important’ (48% of the African, 50% of the Coloured and 50% of the Indian) (see Table 4.3).

Consequently, the independent variable of cultural group did not have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *How I should deal with community matters*. The data revealed that the proportions

for the cultural groups were: VI: African= 48%, Coloured= 50% and Indian= 50% while the FI was: African= 44.5%, Coloured= 41.4% and Indian= 43.3% and NI: African = 7.5%, Coloured= 8.6% and Indian= 6.7%.

It seems that the adolescents in this sample find community matters relatively important to them, and this is commendable. There is a move by the non-governmental organizations, working closely with communities, to engage young people in schools in community development issues (Van Niekerk & Prins, 2001). Community participation and problem solving is encouraged in schools, particularly through life skills, and this finding may be revealing these positive trends.

Domain: *How I should deal with persons of different cultures.*

The chi square (test of independence) value in relation to this domain yielded the value of $X^2 = 3.623$, $df = 4$ and the level of significance = 0.459. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should deal with persons of different cultures*). This implies that the empirical frequencies for all three cultural groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with the larger proportions of the three cultural groups evaluating this domain as “very important” (49.2% of the African, 54.1% of the Coloured and 50% of the Indian) (see Table 4.3).

All three cultural groups take particular interest in, and consider this domain as relatively important to them. This is optimistic news in South Africa, considering the intolerance and

disdain for human rights, particularly towards African nationals, due to xenophobic attacks in recent times according to the 2010 publication of SAMP.

4.1.4 Evaluation of life domains by age groups (hypothesis 4)

4.1.4.1 Evaluation of domains by age groups

In order to establish whether significant differences occurred in the patterns of evaluation of 14 life domains between the age groups (16 years or younger and 17 to 21 years), chi square analyses (tests of independence) were performed. This demarcation for the age groups was chosen because I wanted to differentiate between younger and older adolescents. In effect, chi square analyses were performed where the observed frequencies in each of the cells of the contingency tables were compared with the expected frequencies of each cell to determine the size of the difference. The findings of how the two age groups evaluated the domains are presented in Table 4.4

Table 4.4: Evaluation of domains by age groups

Variables		Very important		Fairly important		Not important		Chi Square Value	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Q1 (my future career)	16yrs or younger	728	94.5	41	5.3	1	0.1	.764	2	.683
	17 to 21 yrs.	497	94.3	30	5.7	0	0.0			
Q2 (my religious beliefs and convictions)	16yrs or younger	442	58	295	38.7	25	3.3	2.271	2	.321
	17 to 21 yrs.	321	61.6	188	36.1	12	2.3			
Q3 (political views and convictions)	16yrs or younger	171	22.6	455	60.3	129	17.7	.168	2	.920
	17 to 21 yrs.	112	21.8	310	60.4	91	17.1			
Q4 (moral values)	16yrs or younger	500	66.2	236	31.3	19	2.5	6.597	2	.037
	17 to 21 yrs.	375	73	130	25.3	9	1.8			
Q5 (leisure and recreational activities)	16yrs or younger	240	32.5	420	56.8	79	10.7	3.666	2	.160
	17 to 21 yrs.	158	31	311	61.1	40	7.9			

	yrs.									
Q6(Friendships with members of the same sex)	16yrs or younger	194	25.4	404	52.8	167	21.8	.659	2	.719
	17 to 21 yrs.	131	25	288	54.9	106	20.2			
Q7(Friendships with members of the opposite sex)	16yrs or younger	150	19.7	388	51.1	222	29.2	15.930	2	.000
	17 to 21 yrs.	130	24.9	290	55.4	103	19.7			
Q8(What kind of person I want a permanent relationship with)	16yrs or younger	442	58.2	229	30.1	89	11.7	14.681	2	.001
	17 to 21 yrs.	349	67.5	134	25.9	34	6.6			
Q9(what kind of person I want to marry one day)	16yrs or younger	504	66.2	153	20.1	104	13.7	8.021	2	.018
	17 to 21 yrs.	381	72.4	98	18.6	47	8.9			
Q10(how I should act as husband or wife)	16yrs or younger	471	62	185	24.3	104	13.7	15.078	2	.001
	17 to 21 yrs.	375	71.2	111	21.1	41	7.8			

Q11 (sexual matters)	16yrs or younger	179	23.6	290	38.3	288	38	34.483	2	.000
	17 to 21 yrs.	171	32.9	230	44.2	119	22.9			
Q12 (how I should deal with family matters and relationships)	16yrs or younger	614	79.9	137	17.8	17	2.2	2.905	2	.234
	17 to 21 yrs.	437	82.8	85	16.1	6	1.1			
Q13 (how I should deal with community matters)	16yrs or younger	380	49.5	316	41.1	72	9.4	6.624	2	.036
	17 to 21 yrs.	252	48	242	46.1	31	5.9			
Q14 (how I should deal with a person from other cultures)	16yrs or younger	387	50.9	317	41.7	57	7.5	1.998	2	.368
	17 to 21 yrs.	274	51.9	225	42.6	29	5.5			

Significant differences in the patterns of evaluation of the life domains between the age groups were established in relation to the following seven domains: *Moral values*, *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*, *What kind of person do I want a permanent relationship with*, *What kind of person would I want to marry one day*, *How I should act as husband or wife*, *Sexual matters* and *How I should deal with community matters*.

The following is a presentation of how the age groups evaluated the 14 life domains.

Domain: *My future career*

The chi square value in relation to this domain *My future career* yielded the value $X^2 = .764$, $df = 2$ and the level of significance was equal to 0.683.

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My future career*). This implies that the empirical frequencies for both age groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with by far the largest proportions of the two age groups evaluating this domain as very important (94.5% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 94.3% for the 17 years and older group), and only small percentages for both age groups relating to the FI and NI response options (see Table 4).

The pattern of evaluation was: VI= 94.5% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 94.3% for the 17 years and younger group; FI= 5.3% for the 16 years and younger group

compared to 5.7% for the 17 years and older group and NI= 0.1% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 0% for the 17 years and older group.

It is clear that, as with the older age group, the younger age group evaluated this domain as quite meaningful in their lives. It is surprising and yet encouraging seeing that just as with the older age group, the younger age group is very interested in their future careers.

Domain: *My religious beliefs and convictions*

The chi square analysis in relation to this domain, *My religious beliefs and convictions*, offered a chi square value of 2.271, $df = 2$ and the level of significance = 0.321. This means that no significant relationship was found between the two age groups and the evaluation of this life domain.

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My religious beliefs and convictions*). This implies that the empirical frequencies for both age groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with by far the largest proportions of the two age groups evaluating this domain as “very important” (58% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 61.6% for the 17 years and older group), and only small percentages for both age groups relating to the FI and NI response options (see Table 4. 4).

This finding revealed the following data patterns: VI= 58% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 61.6% for the 17 years and younger group; FI= 38.7% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 36.1% for the 17 years and older group and NI= 3.3% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 2.3% for the 17 years and older group. This data revealed that the 16 years and younger age group considered this domain as relevant and relatively important to them, as much as the older age group did. This result may suggest that the younger age group have also been exposed and are interested in religious activities too.

Domain: *My political views and convictions*

The analysis of this domain presented a chi square value of .168, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.920. This chi-square value revealed clearly that no significant interaction was established between the independent variable, age group and the evaluation of this domain.

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My political views and convictions*). This implies that the empirical frequencies for both age groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with similar proportions for the two age groups evaluating this domain. For example, the data showed that 22.6% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 21.8% for the 17 years and older group opted for the “very important” option (see Table 4. 4).

The pattern of evaluation of the domain, *My political views and convictions*, revealed that: VI= 22.6% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 21.8% for the 17 years and older group; FI= 60.3% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 60.4% for the 17 years and older group and NI= 17.7% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 17.1% for the 17 years and older group. Again, the younger group has unexpectedly shown that this domain is also meaningful to them and seems to also take interest in political issues as the older age group, yet a notable group of young people from both age groups consider this domain as “not important” to them.

Domain: *Moral values*

The chi square analysis for the domain, *Moral values* revealed the value of 6.597, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.037. This chi square value means that a significant difference on the 5% level of significance was obtained.

Furthermore, this chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. The sets of frequency distributions for the two age groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated ‘benchmark’ for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the age group division. There was a clear pattern where the older group evaluated this domain more strongly. For example, for the VI option, the older group evaluated 73% against 66% (see Table 4); the tendency is in the direction of the older group evaluating the domain more strongly. This is also expected because the older group would be cognitively more mature in comparison to the

younger group; they would be generally speaking in a stronger position to weigh up moral questions.

The pattern of evaluation was as follows: VI= 66.2% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 73% for the 17 years and older group; FI= 31.3% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 25.3% for the 17 years and older group and NI= 2.5% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 1.8% for the 17 years and older group.

It is evident that the older age group in the sample takes interest in, and considers moral issues relevant, and this is reassuring.

Domain: *Leisure and recreational activities*

The analysis in relation to this domain presented a chi square value of 3.666, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.160. This indicates that there was no significant interaction between the independent variable of age group and the evaluation of this domain. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *Leisure and recreational activities*). This implies that the empirical frequencies for both age groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with similar proportions for the two age groups evaluating this domain. For example, the data showed that 32.5% for the 16 years and younger group, compared to 31% for the 17 years and older group opted for the very important option (see Table 4.4).

The observed pattern was: VI= 32.5% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 31% for the 17 years and older group; FI= 56.8% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 61.1% for the 17 years and older and NI= 10.7% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 7.9% for the 17 years and older group. The emerging patterns clearly demonstrated that the younger group evaluated this domain as meaningful in their lives like the older group, yet some young people from both age groups consider this domain as “not important” to them. The younger age group is expected to tend towards sport and play activities because of the heightened interest in leisure activities during the childhood school years and early adolescent stages (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

Domain: *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*

The chi square value for this domain was 0.659, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.719. This means that there was no significant interaction between the independent variable ‘age group’ and the evaluation of this domain. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*). This implies that the empirical frequencies for both age groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with similar proportions for the two age groups evaluating this domain. For example, the data showed that 25.4% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 25% for the 17 years and older group opted for the “very important” option (see Table 4.4).

The data patterns revealed the following: VI= 25.4% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 25% for the 17 years and older group; FI= 52.8% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 54.9% for the 17 years and older group and NI= 21.8% for the younger group compared to 20.2% for the 17 years and older group. Clearly the older age group considered this domain as important, just as the younger age group did, yet the pattern was inconclusive as 21.8% for the younger group compared to 20.2% for the 17 years and older group considered this domain as “not important.”

Domain: *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*

The chi square analysis for this domain revealed a value of 15.930, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.000. This chi square value means that a significant difference was obtained when the two sets of frequency distributions were compared.

This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the two age groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated ‘benchmark’ for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the age group division.

It is clear, in relation to all three response options that the tendency is for the older group to evaluate this domain more strongly, and it is understandable because the older adolescents would be more interested in opposite-sex relationships because of their higher levels of

maturity. The data indicated the following: VI= 19.7% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 24.9% for the 17 years and older group; FI= 51.1% for the 16 years and younger age group compared to 55.4% for the 17 years and older group and NI= 29.2% for the 16 years and younger age group compared to 19.7% for the 17 years and older age group (see Table 4.4). The pattern of responding between the age groups tended to reveal more 17 years and older group in the VI and FI response options, while the 16 years and younger group were in the FI and NI options. What is expected about this finding is that the older age group respondents considered opposite sex friendships as relatively more important compared to the younger age group respondents.

Domain: *What kind of person do I want a permanent relationship with?*

The analysis in relation to this domain presented a chi square value of 14.681, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.001. This indicates that there was a significant relationship between the independent variable of age group and the evaluation of this domain.

This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the two age groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the age group division.

The older group evaluated this domain as more important than the younger group, and it is understandable in the light of the greater physical, emotional and social maturity of the older adolescents. There was a tendency for the older age group to consider this domain as “very important,” with 58.2% for the 16 years and younger group compared to 67.5% for the older group with 61.9% as the ‘benchmark’ in terms of no significant relationship between the variables (see Table 4.4).

Domain: *What kind of person would I want to marry one day?*

The analysis in relation to this domain presented a chi square value of 8.021, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.018. This indicates that there is a significant association between the variable of age group and the evaluation of this domain. This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the two age groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated ‘benchmark’ for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the age group division.

There was a tendency for both age groups to consider this domain as very important, by at least two thirds of the adolescents in each age group. For example, 66.2% for the younger age group compared to 72.4% for the 17 years and older group evaluated this domain as very important with 68.8% as the ‘benchmark’ in terms of no significant relationship between the variables

(see Table 4.4). What was expected about this finding is that older adolescents considered this domain more important to them, compared to the younger age group.

According to the data the following patterns emerged: VI= 66.2% for the younger age group compared to 72.4% for the 17 years and older group; FI= 20.1% for the younger group compared to 18.6% for the older group and NI= 13.7% for the younger group compared to 8.9% for the older group.

The older group evaluated this domain as more important than the younger group. Yet, there was also a tendency for the younger group to evaluate this domain as relevant too. This finding is understandable because the older group is showing interest in the relationship with their future marital partner in the light of the greater emotional maturity of these adolescents (Mathunyane, 1992).

Domain: *How I should act as husband or wife*

The analysis in relation to this domain presented a chi square value of 15.078, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.001. This indicates that there is a significant interaction between the variable of age group and the evaluation of this domain.

This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is

evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the two age groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the age group division.

There was a tendency for the older age group to consider this domain as more important than the younger with 62% for the 16 years and younger group compared to the 71.2% for the older group of the adolescents and 65.7% as the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables (see Table 4.4). What was expected about this finding is that older adolescents considered this domain more important to them, compared to the younger age group because it is expected that they would be considering issues about the relationship between husband and wife (Mdikana, 2000).

Domain: *Sexual matters.*

The chi square (test of independence) value for this domain was 34.483, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.000. This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the two age groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the age group division.

The data patterns showed the following: VI= 23.6% for the younger age group compared to 32.9% for the older group; FI= 38.3% for the younger group compared to 44.2% for the older

group and NI= 38% for the younger group compared to 22.9% for the older group. There was a tendency for the older age group to consider this domain as more important than the younger group, with 23.6% for the younger age group compared to 32.9% for the older group and 27.4% as the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables (see Table 4.4). The trend is in the direction of the older group evaluating this domain as more important across all three response options. What was expected about this finding is that older adolescents considered this domain as more important to them compared to the younger age group because it is expected that they may be considering more issues concerning their sexuality. The older age group may be exposed to life skills lessons in their schools that deal with their sexuality and how to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases (Van Niekerk & Prins, 2001).

Domain: *How I should deal with family matters and relationships.*

The chi square value for this domain was 2.905, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.234. This means that there is no significant interaction between the variable age group and the evaluation of this domain. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should deal with family matters and relationships*). This implies that the empirical frequencies for both age groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with similar proportions for the two age groups evaluating this domain. For example, the data showed that 79.9% for the younger age group in comparison to 82.8% for the older group opted for the "very important" option (see Table 4.1).

The data showed the following: VI= 79.9% for the younger age group in comparison to 82.8% for the older group; FI= 17.8% for the younger group in comparison to 16.1% for the older group and NI= 2.2% for the younger in comparison to 1.1% for the older group. It is unpredicted and inspirational to see that the younger age group also finds family issues and relationships important, as do the older group, in spite of their chronological age.

Domain: *How I should deal with community matters.*

The chi square value for this domain was 6.624, $df = 2$ and a level of significance = 0.036. This means that there is a significant interaction on the 5% level of significance occurring between the variable age group and the evaluation of this domain. This chi square value means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the two age groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the age group division.

The data indicated that: VI= 49.5% for the younger age group in comparison to 48% for the older age group; FI= 41.1% for the younger group compared to 46.1% for the older group and NI= 9.4% for the younger compared to 5.9% for the older group. Although both age groups considered this domain as relatively important to them, the direction of the trend is for the older age group to evaluate this domain more importantly across FI and NI response options. The

interest shown by the older age group in community issues is positive and needs to be encouraged.

Domain: *How I should deal with persons of different cultures.*

The chi square value in relation to this domain yielded the value of $X^2 = 1.998$, $df = 2$ and the level of significance = 0.368. The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should deal with persons of different cultures.*) This implies that the empirical frequencies for both age groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with similar proportions for the two age groups evaluating this domain. For example, the data showed that 50.9% for the younger age group compared to 51.9% for the older group opted for the “very important” option (see Table 4.1).

The observed data revealed the following: VI= 50.9% for the younger age group compared to 51.9% for the older group; FI= 41.7% for the younger group compared to 42.6% for the older group and NI= 7.5% for the younger group compared to 5.5% for the older group. Again the younger age group has shown that they are interested in this domain, a tendency that needs to be encouraged more in South Africa in the quest to promote tolerance and the culture of respect for human rights of all people.

CHAPTER 5: INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The study investigated Afrikaans (from a so-called Coloured background), English (from an Indian background) and Xhosa-speaking secondary school adolescents' (N= 1301) perceptions of the relative importance of identity related domains. This study also investigated evaluation of life domains in terms of the following independent variables: gender, cultural, and age groups.

5.2 Discussion of evaluation of life domains by the total sample (hypothesis 1)

The discussion that follows will focus on findings related to specific domains of identity formation.

Domain: *My future career*

The largest proportion of the respondents in the sample, 94.5% of the respondents, evaluated the domain career as either “very important” or “fairly important.” The frequency distribution was significantly disproportionate with by far the overwhelming majority evaluating the domain, *My future career* as “very important.” This means that the majority of the respondents in this sample evaluate future career aspirations as essential and this is encouraging to know that young people evaluate this domain as highly relevant. Therefore the null hypothesis is being rejected. A decision about a future career is an important matter during adolescence and an important part of identity development (Erikson, 1964). There is a greater emphasis in educational advancements in schools and the Education Department has come under a great spotlight in recent years due to

proposed changes and failure in the curriculum, and the frequent educator protests against government policy and working conditions. However, there has also been a focus on supporting learners in their efforts to find careers, through career expos and exhibitions that have exposed learners to career opportunities. Some South African researchers have also emphasized the need for effective career guidance at school level, particularly in the previously Black schools (Alberts & Bennett, 2000; Botha & Ackermann, 1997; Mdikana, 2000).

All this may have influenced the considerations by these adolescents that this domain is very important to them. Alberts et al. (2003) found in their study with a similar sample, a similar pattern of evaluation of the domain career. This trend may be attributed to the more flexible and open democratic education system and the promotion of career opportunities that were previously unavailable to the previously disadvantaged groups, and different child-rearing styles among this sample of adolescents. This environment presents the adolescent with more opportunities for exploration, consideration of alternatives, and decision making. Also, in the light of the often low socio-economic status considerations of especially Black and Coloured families, career advancement is encouraged by caregivers and parents. Young people are encouraged to choose careers in view of financial rewards that these jobs are likely to bring for them (Mdikana, 2000).

Botha and Ackermann (1997) articulated this view when they stated that an economically disadvantaged position encourages the adolescent to choose a career which holds a promise of financial independence. It is clear that the domain of career is a meaningful identity related domain for the young people in the study and can be included in future identity research among

school-going adolescents in similar contexts. It is encouraging to know that young people are actively engaged in preparing for future prospects, and this may serve as a motivator in improving academic performance.

Domain: *My religious beliefs and convictions*

A large proportion of the sample, 97.1% evaluated this domain as either “very important” or “fairly important.” This finding is in conflict with the hypothesis of an equal distribution among the choice options. In other words, we have a disproportionate distribution among the choice options. This signifies that this domain was meaningful to the adolescents in this study. This finding seems contrary to what people say these days about the religious interests of young people; it seems that young people are serious about religion. Therefore the null hypothesis is being rejected. Religion can be an irrelevant activity setting for young people, involving a compulsory time of boredom, or it can be an important setting that develops a network of friends and belief system, behaviour and ritual practices.

To the adolescents in this sample, it was clear that religion seems important to them and that this seems to be a result of positive experiences that these adolescents have of religious activities. The conclusion may be drawn that the adolescents in the sample evaluated religion as quite important in their lives, and that it needs to be included in similar research in the future. This finding is also in harmony with findings obtained by Alberts et al. (2003) and can be included in future research on identity in similar contexts. This result is not unexpected, because approximately 70% of all South Africans consider themselves part of a Christian denomination

and adolescents in African communities are encouraged to go to church from an early stage (Alberts et al., 2003). While in some denominations they are not bound to make firm commitments at an early stage, among the Pentecostal churches, firm commitments are required at an early age (Pargament & Brant, 1998).

Domain: *My political views and convictions*

The observed data revealed that 82.6% of the sample considered the domain, *My political views and convictions* as relevant to them and therefore either “very important” by 22.3% or “fairly important” by 60.3%; while 17.4% considered it as “not important.” Therefore, it is clear that the adolescents in the sample still have a relatively high interest in political issues and that these are rather important in their lives. This present research came in the aftermath of a massive political campaigning for the elections, because it was conducted at a time when there was much deliberation and talk, even among young people, about the elections and the next president. Many saw the recent 2009 elections as an election that revived the interest of young people in the political agenda of South Africa, particularly as there was a concerted effort to draw the youth support. At the time of the research, during May and June 2009, there was heightened political mobilization. Yet this domain, in comparison to the other domains, displayed one of the lowest VI percentages, a trend which seems to spell some caution that we cannot generalise in saying that young people are all politically motivated. This result differs from the finding by Alberts et al. (2003), where the domain of politics appeared to be of least importance in comparison with other domains. Consequently, a high proportion regarded this domain as relatively important in their lives and can therefore be included in future research on identity formation. Politics may no longer be as

encompassing or fashionable as in the past, and activism may have lost its mass appeal among the youth. However, young Black South Africans seem to be taking a renewed interest in political participation, including voting and registering to vote; while many white adolescents are apathetic and many are leaving the country. Some have criticised this trend as a selfish move for personal gain and to secure lucrative tender deals, a slating of the African National Congress's Youth League president, Molema who has allegedly been a beneficiary from such deals.

Domain: *Moral values*

A large proportion of the respondents, 97.8% of the total sample, regarded this domain as either “very important” or “fairly important” and therefore quite meaningful in their lives. The evaluation was performed disproportionately for the domain of *Morals values*, with the “very important” option being endorsed by 69% of participants, 28.8% of the participants endorsed the “fairly important” option, and only 2.2% endorsing the “not important” option. This means that the null hypothesis is being rejected. This tendency is encouraging, considering the negative moral fibre that is so much reported among the young people in South Africa. This finding is congruent with what Alberts et al. (2003) found in their study with a similar sample.

From the findings it is clear that the domain of morals can be included for identity research in similar South African contexts. It seems that there is a move by the youth to embrace a shared sense of morality, and a rejection of the negative reports, claiming that they seek liberation from all restraints and are on an irresponsible pursuit of pleasure. Mdikana (2000) gives us an indication of the origins of this influence when he says that the African adolescents' moral

reasoning is socialized according to traditional African values and norms. The norms of the African culture are aimed at the wellbeing of the group, thus ensuring that conformity with group norms is emphasized (Mdikana, 2000).

Domain: *Leisure and recreational activities*

A substantial proportion of the respondents, 90.5%, evaluated this domain as relatively important to them, with over 50% of them, 58.6% to be exact, evaluating it as “fairly important”, indicating that a large proportion of the participants experienced the domain as relatively important in their lives. The fact that the young people in the sample evaluated the domain *Leisure and recreational activities* as relatively important, is a mark of encouraging interest shown by young people in recreation, and may signify positive wellbeing. It also shows interest in extramural activities which support skills and social development. This means that the null hypothesis is being rejected. This result is in disharmony with the findings of the study which was conducted by Alberts et al. (2003), where the differences in the domain of *Leisure and recreation* were not very clear, with the Afrikaans and English-speaking adolescents regarding this domain as more relevant than the Xhosa-speaking adolescents. However, a fairly high proportion of the present study still regarded this domain as relatively important to their lives and can therefore be included in future research on identity formation.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*

A proportion of 78.8% of the sample evaluated this domain as either “very important” or “fairly important.” The relatively large proportion of the participants experienced the domain as relatively important in their lives. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

The findings of this study are similar to the results of the study which was conducted by Alberts et al. (2003) with a similar sample. The social circle of same-sex friendships is important to adolescent identity development. The same-sex friendships are often highly esteemed and strong devotion to friends and belief systems develop (Erikson, 1964). It is clear that the domain, *Friendship with members of same sex peer group* can be included for identity research amongst African, English and Afrikaans-speaking adolescents in similar contexts.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*

A relatively big total of 74.6% of the sample respondents demonstrate that this domain is either “fairly important” or “very important” to them. Also the data revealed that the second largest proportion, 21.3% of the respondents, in comparison to the other domains responded “not important.” Therefore, it is clear that the school-going adolescents in the sample still have a vested interest in opposite-sex friendships, and that it is rather important in their lives. The null hypothesis is being rejected.

Parents and educators view such relationships with suspicion as they often become sexual relationships. However, as research has proven, adolescents are often engaged in sexual activity (Peltzer, 2006). This finding is in line with what Alberts et al. (2003) found in their study with a similar sample. This finding means that there is a need to include the domain of opposite sex relationships in future identity research in the South African context.

Domain: *What kind of person I want a permanent relationship with*

A large proportion of the sample, 90.3%, evaluated this domain as either “very important” or “fairly important.” This means that the empirical frequency distribution differed significantly from a proportionate division in relation to the theoretical frequency distribution for the three categories (not important; fairly important and very important). The null hypothesis is being rejected. The conclusion can be made that the young people in the sample evaluated the domain of permanent relationships as quite important in their lives.

Adolescents, as said before, are having heterosexual relationships and they seem to be concerned about whether their dating relationships will last, and whether they will be loving relationships. The relevance that this domain has to the adolescents in this sample is to be expected, since many of them come from dysfunctional families and are no stranger to broken relationships that have sometimes ended in divorce. This finding is also congruent with the findings by Alberts et al (2003) and Mtotywa (2007) and can therefore be included in future research on identity in similar contexts.

Domain: *What kind of person I want to marry one day*

For the domain *What kind of person I want to marry one day*, the evaluation was performed disproportionately. Therefore the null hypothesis is being rejected. The two domains, namely, *What kind of person I want to marry one day* and *What kind of person I want a permanent relationship with* are related, and it was expected that there would be a similarity in the evaluation pattern for these domains. Also, young people seem to be becoming more aware and responsive to relationship issues during adolescence.

It is encouraging to marriage proponents to see more young people thinking about future marriage partners, and pre-marital counselling may be beneficial to them to assist in decision-making. Therefore this domain can be included in future research on identity among South African adolescents in similar contexts.

Domain: *How I should act as husband or wife*

About two thirds, 65.7% of the respondents from the sample evaluated the domain of *How I should act as husband or wife* as “very important;” 23% as “fairly important” and 11.3% of the respondents “not important.” This means that the empirical frequency distribution varies disproportionately with 88.7% of the total sample experiencing this domain as either very important or fairly important and therefore important in their lives. Therefore the null hypothesis is being rejected. This finding indicates that the largest proportion of the sample evaluated the domain of *How I should act as husband or wife* as very important. South Africa has the highest statistics in the world for

violence against women, for a country not at war. One in every six women is in a domestically abusive relationship and at least one woman is murdered every 6 days (Vetton, 1995).

This status quo has necessitated that men's and women's groups encourage and participate in efforts to engage boys and men in working co-operatively with women in reshaping masculinity and dismantling the structures of men's power and privilege, and ending the cultural and social permission for acts of violence. This movement is growing in South Africa and has ensured that organizations such as Masimanyane Women Support Centre, where the present researcher is employed, engages young boys and girls in human rights clubs in some secondary schools around East London. The school learners voluntarily join the club after presentations and workshops are conducted. The clubs are based on the premise that empowering youth to facilitate change in schools and communities is one of the most effective tools that can be used in dealing with violence against girls, and gender inequality. The more input that youth have into the issues that face them, the more respect they have for the processes used in the resolution of such issues. Therefore these clubs promote the rights of women and girls throughout the school environment, and encourage similar trend in communities.

These youth are also exposed to workshops on gender sensitivity, and therefore the present interest in gender relations between husband and wife is expected, since some of the respondents in this present study have been exposed to life skills lessons on gender awareness. Consequently, this finding means that this domain can be included in future research on identity.

Domain: *Sexual Matters*

A high proportion of the respondents, 68.1%, evaluated this domain as either “very important” or “fairly important.” The empirical data revealed that the largest proportion, 31.9% of the respondents in the sample responded “not important” in evaluating the domain, *Sexual matters*. However, 40.7% regarded the domain as “fairly important.” The lowest quantity of respondents for this domain, 27.4% evaluated the domain as “very important.” This finding is in conflict with the hypothesis of equal distribution among the choice options and therefore the null hypothesis is being rejected. This finding is also in agreement with results obtained by Alberts et al. (2003) and can be included in future research on identity. These authors had established that the domain, *Sexual matters* was regarded as relatively less important to the Eastern and Western Cape Xhosa-speaking groups, than to the other Afrikaans- and English-speaking groups. However, a two-thirds proportion of the sample (66.9%) considered this domain as either very important or fairly important to them.

The pattern of response in relation to this domain is puzzling when we consider research on adolescent sexual behaviour. In a study by Peltzer (2006), comparing the sexuality and sexual behaviour among 16 to 17 year-old South African adolescents, he found that almost two-thirds of urban (62 per cent) and rural (61 per cent) adolescents indicated that they had had sexual intercourse. Furthermore, there is evidence that most infections occur during adolescence and early adulthood stages of life (UNAIDS, 2002).

Domain: *How I should deal with family matters and relationships*

In relation to the domain, *How I should deal with family matters and relationships*, a large proportion of the sample, 98.2%, evaluated this domain as either “very important” or “fairly important.” Only 1.8% of the participants chose the “not important” option. This means that the empirical frequency distribution differed significantly from a proportionate division found in relation to the theoretical frequency distribution for the three categories (not important; fairly important and very important). This result is quite similar to the finding obtained by Alberts et al. (2003), where the domain of family matters appeared to be important in the lives of young people.

The study by Mdikana (2000) of identity-related decision-making among Xhosa-speaking adolescents revealed that about 50% of the participants regarded their parents, particularly the mother, as a major factor in influencing their lives. Traditionally, parents play a huge role in the life and identity of African adolescents.

Though this trend may be changing, it is still clear that many adolescents are still open to parental influences. Accordingly, these adolescents seem to be motivated by a sense of commitment to better their lives, their families and communities (Mdikana, 2000). Mdikana (2000) reports that the Black family has been slowly stripped of its ability to provide a structured and caring atmosphere where the child’s full development can be encouraged. This idea of giving back to family and community is particularly stressed in the upbringing of African adolescents.

Domain: *How I should deal with community matters*

A very large proportion, 92.1%, of the sample evaluated this domain as either “very important” or “fairly important.” This means that the empirical frequency distribution differed significantly from a proportionate division found in the theoretical frequency distribution, and indicating that a large proportion of the participants experienced the domain as important in their lives. This finding is in conflict with the hypothesis of equal distribution among the choice options. The conclusion can be drawn that the young people in the sample evaluate *How I should deal with community matters* as quite important in their lives.

The null hypothesis is rejected. It is expected that this domain is important to young people because they are impacted by such community issues as crime, violence against women and children, drug and alcohol abuse, HIV and AIDS, poverty, lack of basic housing and unemployment, among others. This finding is also in accord with findings obtained by Alberts et al. (2003) and can be included in future research on identity in similar contexts.

Domain: *How I should deal with persons of different cultures*

Just over half, 51.3%, of the respondents evaluated the domain of *How I should deal with persons of different cultures* as “very important;” 42% as “fairly important” and 6.7% as “not important.” This means that the empirical frequency distribution varied disproportionately with 51.3% of the total sample experiencing this domain as very important and therefore meaningful in their lives. Therefore the null hypothesis is being rejected. This finding is in line with what Alberts et al. (2003) found in their study with a similar sample.

According to the 2010 SAMP report xenophobia in South Africa increased significantly after the democratic government came into power in 1994. The SAMP publication further reported that in a citizen survey across the member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), South Africans were found to express the most hostile anti-foreigner views, with 21% of South Africans in favour of a complete ban on entry by foreigners and 64% in favour of strict limitations on the numbers allowed in, in comparison to other nations in SADC. The adolescents in this sample may be aware of xenophobic attacks that were recently committed against foreigners and the relevance of this domain to them is clear considering that a number of foreign learners could also be attending their schools. It is clear that the domain of *How I should deal with persons of different cultures* is an important domain for the young people in this study, and can be included in future identity research among school going adolescents from similar contexts.

5.3 Evaluation of life domains in terms of gender groups (hypothesis 2)

The discussion relating to the relationship between the variable of gender group and the evaluation of the 14 life domains is presented as follows:

Domain: *My future career*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (gender variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My future career*). The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was not rejected.

Consequently, the independent variable of gender did not have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *My future career*. In other words, the two genders evaluated this domain in a basically similar manner. In this regard, this finding is similar to the results obtained by Alberts et al. (2003), who also found similar patterns of evaluation between the gender groups. In South Africa, discrimination based on sex is unlawful and strongly discouraged in practice. Both males and females are encouraged to equally participate and benefit from educational opportunities and career development. It is clear that both females and males evaluate this domain as extremely important in their lives. After all, adolescence is the time when individuals are more concerned about their future than any of the other developmental phases. The result contradicts the assumption that female learners are less serious than males about career issues.

Both genders seemed to evaluate career as important in their lives. Mdikana (2000) found that significant gender differences occurred, regarding the exploration of careers, with 75% of males, as opposed to 35% of females, exploring career choices. Contrary to traditional trends whereby more males compared to females were encouraged to pursue career choices, especially among African families, education is now widely encouraged, even for female adolescents, and as the results show, many females are considering their options and making occupational decisions. This may represent the independence and career aspirations that female adolescents are encouraged to have towards the goals for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls in education and business fields. This present finding may reveal more of this positive tendency and needs to be encouraged, since Erikson (1963) emphasized that an important aspect of identity development revolves around the choosing of an occupation. Yet, in practice more work is needed to eliminate sexist and discriminatory stereotypes among certain communities

that maintain that to educate a girl is a waste since she will be 'married away', but to educate a boy means to educate a nation.

Unlike in the past, discrimination based on sex or gender in South Africa is unlawful. In South Africa, the ability of boys and girls to attend school is close to equal, according to the Department of Education's 2003 report of their education statistics. Furthermore, it states that school-aged boys and girls have equal access to the school system. In practice this is far from the truth because schools have increasingly become places where children are likely to become victims of crime, including sexual violence, assault and robberies (Burrows, Van Niekerk & Laflamme, 2010). Generally, the findings are encouraging for all involved in guidance and counselling services for adolescents, and also for youth development programmes that focus on career development.

Domain: *My religious beliefs and convictions*

A significant relationship was established between the two variables. It became clear that there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as more important, in comparison to the male learners. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected. Therefore, it is clear that the female adolescents in the sample still have a vested interest in, and present a growing interest in religious issues, more than the males. The males did indeed evaluate this domain as relatively important, but the female learners evaluated it as significantly more important, in comparison to the males.

It seems likely that for many families, females are the ones who are more likely to be involved in religious institutions such as churches, than the males. This trend may suggest positive religious interest and support derived from such beliefs, for females in this sample.

Furthermore, in many religious families, particularly African families, adolescents are expected to participate in religious activities. It can also be said that similar conditions prevailed for the participants of the present study because the majority stated in the questionnaires that they were religious. Mdikana (2000) confirms what would be expected among African communities regarding gender differences in religious beliefs, and stated that females in African communities are the ones who play a more dominant role in religious matters than males.

Domain: *My political views and convictions*

It became clear that there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as more important, in comparison to the male learners. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected.

The two variables were not independent. The variable of gender did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *My political views and convictions*. There was a tendency for females to evaluate the domain as more important, compared to males. This indicates that the female adolescents in the sample are taking more interest than the male adolescents in political issues. This is an encouraging trend towards female mobilization and participation in politics. This is something which is relevant in South Africa as the promotion of gender equality and women's

leadership development across the board is sought. This result was unlike Alberts et al.'s 2003 study, which revealed no clear pattern for this domain when more males than females gave “very important” and “not important” responses; while more females than males gave “fairly important” responses. This indicates that the female adolescents in the sample are taking more interest than the male adolescents, in political issues.

Domain: Moral values

There was a significant interaction in terms of the independent variable of gender and the evaluation of this domain. The two variables are not independent. The variable of gender did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *Moral values*. Therefore the null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected.

This finding is an indication that both males and females in this study find moral values as important to them. However, there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as more important, in comparison to the male learners, suggesting that they are more interested than male adolescents in moral issues. This finding may signify a greater consciousness among females to moral rightness and fairness, and greater exposure to, and receptivity to such teaching, than males. This result concurs with Alberts et al.'s (2003) discovery that the female groups, in comparison to the male groups, regarded the domain, *Moral values* as a more important issue, suggesting that they are more interested than male adolescents in moral issues. This finding may signify a greater exposure to moral education and consciousness among females to moral rightness and fairness than males, and this is commendable. Since the national

call towards moral regeneration was made in South Africa, there has been much debate and discussion about refocusing on moral education and the principle of 'ubuntu.' This may have had a positive influence on the young people in this sample.

Domain: *Leisure and recreational activities*

There was a significant difference between the empirical frequency distribution (of all the empirical frequencies: for male and female jointly) and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected. This finding was contradictory and inconclusive as to which direction the tendency was leaning: males are more concentrated in the VI and NI response options, but the females more condensed in the FI option.

Since recreation may mean different things to male and female adolescents, it would be revealing to find out to what this trend may be attributed to, and whether the genders considered sport as a recreational activity or not. What seems probable, though, is that these adolescents may not have limited their understanding of leisure only to include sport, but a range of creative activities that they use during their leisure time. This is so, considering that for some adolescents sport facilities are not readily available, except perhaps at their schools.

Domain: Friendship with members of the same sex

This finding means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. The two variables were not independent. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain is rejected. It became clear that there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as relatively more important in comparison to the male learners. Therefore, it is clear that the female adolescents in the sample seem to evaluate same-sex friendships as relatively more important than males.

This finding may be explained by the fact that males may have interpreted same sex friendship as homosexual friendships, thus changing their perceptions of same sex friendships. This result is like Alberts et al.'s 2003 study, which revealed that more females than males regarded this domain as more important. Therefore, it is clear that the female adolescents in the sample still have vested interest in relationships with their same-sex peers, and that peers' friendships are rather important to them.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*

This result suggests that there was a significant interaction in terms of the independent variable of gender and the evaluation of this domain. The two variables were not independent. The variable of gender did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected. There was a clear

tendency for the males to evaluate this domain as more important than the females. The males are by far superior in VI (27.7% against 17.9%) and also the females have a stronger representation in NI. So there is a clear pattern with the males evaluating the domain as more important, while the females were more condensed in the FI and NI options.

This result is in line with Alberts et al.'s 2003 study, which revealed more males than females regarding this domain as more important. This finding may also indicate cultural differences in dealing with opposite sex relationships.

Domain: *What kind of person would I want a permanent relationship with?*

This finding means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. It became clear that there was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as relatively more important than the male learners. The two variables were not independent. The null hypothesis regarding this domain was rejected.

Therefore the variable of gender did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *What kind of person would I want a permanent relationship with?* There was a noted tendency for females to evaluate the domain as relatively more important than the males. This is not surprising, as traditionally females are socialized to think that marriage is desirable for them and that it is honourable to be married and be permanently united to her husband, her children and indeed the husbands' family as well - her in-laws (Mdikana, 2000). Furthermore, in African families, girls are prepared for permanent relationships such as a marriage, from as young as possible

(Mathunyane, 1992). Therefore it seems to make sense that more females would think more about, and evaluate this domain as relatively more important than the males. Also it could be that female adolescents are more aware of the pitfalls of marriage and permanent relationships, and are sensitive to these issues.

Domain: *What kind of person I want to marry one day*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (gender variable and the evaluation of the domain of *What kind of person I want to marry one day*) This trend may suggest that both gender groups consider this domain as relevant and may be questioning themselves about what kind of person they want to marry. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

This finding was similar to the results obtained by Alberts et al. (2003). In Mdikana's (2000) study, about 45% of the female participants who were intending to marry showed that they had a marriage partners in mind, compared to 55% who did not have any. This may reinforce the understanding that more females than males are thinking consciously about marriage and marriage partners because of societal influences, usually from parents. However, Stevens & Lockhart (1997) have pointed out that there is a new tendency towards making one's own decisions about the choice of a person to marry, therefore characterising the weakening influence of parents in influencing this decision.

Furthermore, Mdikana's (2000) investigation reported that about 60% of the Xhosa-speaking African female adolescents and 75% of their male counterparts indicated that they would like to get married in the future. Marriage is a major decision that is characterized by social recognition. It should be noted, though, that there is a rising trend that supports cohabitation rather than marriage and this calls for further investigation.

There also seems to be concern about the negative reports of the high rate of divorces, extra-marital affairs and widespread violence against women by men. The female adolescents in this study may also be more aware of the pitfalls of marriage because of the vulnerable position of women. This could be a motivating factor for female and male adolescents' thinking about marriage. Marriage today has been seen as a major expense because there is a move towards expensive splashy weddings, rather than the more modest traditional wedding ceremonies. It could be that the adolescents in this present study are considering the implications of marriage. Hence, both gender groups consider this domain as relevant and meaningful to them.

Domain: *How I should act as husband or wife*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (gender variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should act as husband or wife*) The variables of gender and the evaluation of this domain were independent. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was not rejected. Therefore both genders evaluated this domain as very important to them.

The advent of women's empowerment and rights movement, and the promotion of gender equality amidst the widespread violence against women in South Africa, may shed more light on how the young people in this sample think of future husband or wife relations. This result may suggest that the participants in this sample are becoming aware of gender role issues, and that they may be moving consciously away from traditional stereotypical thinking about husband and wife relations. In line with this view, Mdikana (2000), in a previous South African study, found more awareness of gender role issues among Xhosa speaking adolescents from both genders, and strong indications of a drive away from outdated gender labeling, towards a framework of gender equality. Regarding the impact of gender, the more liberal attitudes expressed by the girls, regardless of social environment, may indicate their desire for equality with men at home, at work, and in society. The present findings may suggest that women adopt liberal attitudes at a young age, which develop with time, as indicated in other studies (Kulik, 1997).

In Alberts et al.'s (2003), a conflicting gender pattern was found for this domain, where the Eastern Cape Xhosa-speaking African female group evaluated this domain as more important than did the males; while the English-speaking male group evaluated this domain as more important than did the females. South Africa is well known for the high proportions of violence against women, perpetrated by boys and men. There is growing concern about male dominance and expressions of masculinity (Vetton, 1995). This trend may suggest that more adolescents are questioning themselves about what kind of partners they would want to marry, and this is encouraging to these adolescents. Therefore it may seem understandable that the adolescents in this study would find this domain as relevant to them.

Domain: *Sexual Matters*

There was a tendency for the males in this sample to evaluate it as more important than the females did, and this may suggest a greater interest placed by males in this sample on sexual issues, and may suggest that males are aware of, and seem to think more about this domain. This finding means that a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected.

Pettifor et al. (2004) reported in a nationally representative survey in 2003 among South African 15 to 19 year-old (n = 5,977) youth an HIV infection rate of 2.5 per cent among males (n = 2,155) and 7.3 per cent among females (n = 3,822). This finding suggests that the HIV infection rate was higher among female adolescents than among male adolescents. Moreover, urban females seemed to take more initiative at first sexual intercourse than rural females do. We also know, based on adolescent psychology, that young people, particularly males, are discovering their sexuality and that there might be some ambivalence about revealing what sex means to young people in a school setting, even if it is part of a research project. One would expect that this domain would be evaluated as meaningful to adolescents generally, since the majority of HIV infected cases are sexually transmitted cases. However, there were considerable proportions of both gender groups that evaluated this domain as “not important” with 36.6% for females and 24.7% for males. This suggests that the direction of the trend is not overwhelming and that many males still consider this domain not relevant to them.

This result is similar to Alberts et al.'s 2003 study, which revealed more males than females from the Eastern Cape cultural group evaluating this domain as more important.

Domain: *How I should deal with family matters and relationships*

The variable of gender did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *How I should deal with family matters and relationships*. There was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as more important, in comparison to the male learners. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected.

It seems that the female adolescents in the sample tended to place more importance than male adolescents on family matters and relationships, but the males also evaluated it as important. Traditionally females are expected to be more involved in dealing with family life and issues than males (Mdikana, 2000). This finding is unlike the results obtained by Alberts et al.'s 2003 study when these authors found that this domain proved to be more important to males adolescents than to the female adolescents. Many South African family households are female headed because of the societal trends, and the prevalent father absence in many families and this finding may reflect this prevalent and typical trend, with females having to be more involved in family life and to generate solutions for the family.

Domain: *How I should deal with community matters*

The female adolescents in the sample evaluated community matters as relatively more important, compared to the males, and this may signify a positive involvement and interest in community issues. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected.

This finding is unexpected because traditionally male adolescents are characterised by a stronger communal orientation than the females. However, with the growing absence of a male in many homes, females seem to be rising up and taking more interest in community issues.

This result coincides with Alberts et al.'s 2003 study, which revealed that more females than males regarded this domain as more important. This finding may be related to a greater interest and awareness, exposure and response by females, compared to males, to community issues and an awareness of challenging socioeconomic needs. This finding is evidenced by the fact that generally more females than males respond to, and honour, invitations when called to community meetings and campaigns, while the men, particularly in more urban and semi-urban context, expect to hear from the women as to what the meeting was about. This trend is the opposite of what is traditionally expected of men, that they would want to concern themselves with meetings that have to do with community building. Generally, from attending community meetings, one finds that men seem to be less interested in community issues than women, based on the small number of men in these meetings.

Domain: *How I should deal with persons of different cultures*

There was a significant interaction in how the two gender groups evaluated this domain, meaning that the variables are dependent. There was a tendency among the female learners to evaluate this domain as more important in comparison to the male learners. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain is rejected.

Significantly more females in this sample seem to be concerned and interested in the question *How I should deal with persons of different cultures*, and this is remarkable. This domain seems less meaningful to the male adolescents, and this is worrying, considering that many foreigners from African nations have been killed recently, and violence and intolerance against them still continues in some communities. This result is similar to Alberts et al.'s 2003 study, which revealed more females than males from the Eastern Cape Xhosa-speaking group regarding this domain as more important. This domain appears to be relevant to both gender groups and could be fruitfully used in future research on identity formation.

5.4 Evaluation of life domains by cultural groups (hypothesis 3)

The discussion relating to the relationship between the variable of cultural group and the evaluation of the 14 life domains is presented as follows:

Domain: *My future career*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables, cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My future career*. The null hypothesis in relation to this finding was not rejected.

The data patterns of evaluation seemed to suggest that all three cultural groups consider that the domain *My future career* is quite important to them. This is an encouraging trend to the custodians of young people's education as it shows that young people consider their career development as paramount, irrespective of cultural grouping. This finding is similar to the results obtained by Alberts et al. (2003). This may be due to the often emphasized role of education and work in pursuing a better life. Parents and educators are generally the key major influences for adolescents' educational pursuits and this influence may be indicated here, with this finding. This finding reveals that the young people in the study evaluated the domain of *My future career* as important to them and meaningful in the light of Erickson's view that adolescents have to resolve the identity crisis in relation to career in order for them to formulate a mature identity (Erikson, 1964).

Domain: *My religious beliefs and convictions*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables, cultural variable

and the evaluation of the domain of *My religious beliefs and convictions*. The null hypothesis in relation to this finding was not rejected.

This domain seems relevant to all three cultural groups, and all three evaluated this domain as relatively important to them. This finding was in harmony with the results obtained by Alberts et al. (2003). This finding is understandable against the background that religion is an important activity within both Coloured and African cultural communities. Religious education and involvement are usually encouraged in both cultures, and the schools also often encourage prayers during assembly, and these adolescents seem to be receptive to this influence.

Domain: *My political views and convictions*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables, cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My political views and convictions*. Therefore, the null hypothesis in regard to this domain was not rejected.

Since all three cultural groups evaluated this domain as important, it seems that for the young people in this sample, political issues are relatively important and that interest in the political process may be rising again. Political issues seemed to be one of the relatively important domains out of the 14 life domains included in this study. The findings are expected due to the fact that political interest and involvement is often hailed by the media as growing among the youth generally. It was expected that African youth in particular might still experience political

issues as of high priority, since it was also reported that the 2009 National Election that brought President Zuma to power saw greater numbers of young people participating in the elections. Also, in some circles, the resurgence of young voters is linked to the successful campaign staged by Barack Obama in the US election in 2008. It could be that the election of America's first Black president may have kindled interest in voting among previously apathetic young people, to believe that democracy can work. Even so, the increase in political interest noted may be evident among older youth rather than the younger, some of whom do not yet have voting rights.

Domain: *Moral values*

For this domain, a significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. The null hypothesis was rejected for this domain.

It became clear that there was a tendency among Indian and African groups to evaluate this domain as relatively more important than the Coloured cultural group, with none of the Indian group represented in the "not important" option. Due to the small representative sample of the Indian group, a bigger sample would have given a more accurate picture. Even so, there was a notable recognition of moral values even for the Coloured cultural group. This may indicate a greater awareness of moral values among these adolescents in this sample, a finding which may give testimony to the widespread call for 'moral regeneration' in South Africa.

This result may be related to the influence of the Christian church and family, by teaching values such as justice, fairness and honesty among these adolescents who have simultaneously

regarded religious matters as important to them. Mdikana (2000) has noted that African adolescents generally highly value the influence of family and church in their lives, particularly when they are younger. They are taught about community values of sharing, responsibility, justice and righteousness. In some families and religious communities, these values are not only encouraged and expected but enforced through strict discipline. It may be argued, though, that these adolescents accept the parental values unquestioningly, a factor which usually leads them to assume an immature and self-righteous identity formation. It can be concluded that moral values are one of the important areas in the lives of the young people in the study, a finding which is congruent with the results obtained by Albert et al. (2003).

Domain: *Leisure and recreational activities*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables, cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *Leisure and recreational activities*. The null hypothesis was not rejected for this domain. It would seem that all the adolescents in this sample are exposed to some form of leisure activity since they are in schools where sport and play are encouraged and this would explain the interest shown by these young people in leisure activities. Therefore all three cultural groups regard this area as relatively important to them. This needs to be commended as it stimulates both their physical and social well being.

This result is unlike Alberts et al.'s 2003 study, which revealed more Afrikaans and English-speaking subgroups regarding this area as more important than the Xhosa-speaking subgroup.

This finding can possibly be explained by referring to the growing realization of the importance of leisure and recreation among the African and Coloured subgroups. Also, this finding may speak about the often neglected reality of the creativity in leisure and recreational activities that adolescents from the Coloured and African settings show, as demonstrated by the outdoor games that they play.

It could also be that the definition and interpretation of leisure by the African and Coloured adolescents in this study was expanded and not just limited to sport.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*

The independent variable cultural group did have an effect on the evaluation of the domain *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected.

There was an inconclusive pattern of evaluation between the three cultural groups. It seems that while this result revealed significant differences between the cultural groups, the pattern of evaluation between them was unclear. The Coloureds and Indians tended to opt for the VI option and the African group were stronger in the FI option, that is, stronger on a more moderate response.

This finding was not in agreement with the findings obtained by Alberts et al. (2003). According to these researchers, the Afrikaans-speaking group regarded this domain as significantly more

important than the Xhosa-speaking group. From the findings this domain proved to be an important area among the adolescents where the study was conducted. It could be that the value of same-sex friendships among the adolescents in this sample, particularly African adolescents, is increasing.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*

The pattern of evaluation between the three cultural groups differed significantly in relation to the domain, *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*, and to the sample as a whole. The null hypothesis regarding this domain was rejected.

There was a tendency among the Indian learners to evaluate this domain as relatively more important, in comparison to the African and Coloured learners. This tendency may suggest a greater freedom to explore such relationships among the Indian group, while among African and Coloured families, the tendency is for opposite sex friendships to be discouraged as they are considered as sexual and as a distraction from more important matters, such as focusing on academic achievement. Such families fear that such friendships often lead to unplanned sexual engagement and teenage pregnancy and jeopardize adolescents' future pursuits. Consequently, when African adolescents have opposite sex friendships, they are viewed with suspicion, so they attempt to hide these relationships from parents and older people. This trend is changing though, especially in urban areas where it is more acceptable for males and females to have opposite sex friendships.

Yet, this result shows that for both African and Coloured adolescents this domain was also relevant to them. One can conclude that the domain *Friendships with members of the opposite sex* is an important area of their lives. This study conflicts with the findings from Alberts et al.'s (2003) study where it was reported that this domain was relatively more important to the Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking adolescents and less important to the Xhosa-speaking adolescents.

Domain: *What kind of person do I want a permanent relationship with?*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *What kind of person do I want a permanent relationship with?*) The emerging pattern from this domain was that this domain was relevant to all cultural groups. However, many adolescents still evaluated it as “not important.” This trend may signify that while this domain is meaningful to the adolescents in this sample, there are some who find it not relevant, probably because they have not given it sufficient thought or consideration yet.

Domain: *What kind of person would I want to marry one day?*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables, cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *What kind of person would I want to marry one day?* The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was not rejected.

All three cultural groups seem to evaluate the domain *What kind of person would I want to marry one day?* as an important area of their lives. Mathunyane (1992) claims that for African adolescents, the parents, especially the mother, have tremendous influence in the choice of a spouse. It is not unreasonable to think then that African adolescents would be concerned and interested in this domain. Again, authors, Desmond and Desmond (2006) estimated that only 48% of fathers in South Africa are present in the homes of children under the age of 18, compared with 80% of mothers. However, due to what Mdikana (2000) calls changing socio-economic conditions, personal experiences and observations in the community, some girls are only aware of the pressures of marriage as indicated by abusive and untrustworthy men, and decide not to marry.

This view is supported by about 40% of the female participants in Mdikana's 2000 study, who indicated that they would not like to get married in the future. For this present study some adolescents evaluated this domain as "not important" with: African= 12.5%, Coloured= 10.3% and Indian= 20%. Mdikana (2000) reported further that those who choose not to marry did so because of bad experiences at home with strong charges against the men they knew, who they described as "liars." This revealed a distrust of men generally (Vetton, 1995) and could represent some of the adolescents in this present study, yet to many this domain is still quite important to them.

However, the present finding may reveal that girls opt to marry because they believe that marriage could be different from the marriages they are normally exposed to.

Domain: *How I should act as husband or wife*

A significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. The null hypothesis in relation to this finding was rejected. There was a tendency among the Coloured and African cultural groups to evaluate this domain as relevant as and relatively more important to them than to the Indian sub-group, who seemed to choose the other extreme. It seems that the Coloured subgroup in this sample do consider this domain as relatively important to them. This is a positive trend towards marital relationship building among the adolescents in this sample, during a time when marriages are increasingly disintegrating.

There was a tendency among the cultural groups for all three groups to evaluate this domain as relevant and important to them. It seems that the adolescents in this sample do consider this domain as relatively important to them. This is a positive trend among these adolescents and seems to show that they are interested in future marital relationships during a time when marriages are increasingly disintegrating. The primary prevention of violence programmes offered in schools also encourage boys and young men to prevent violence against women and girls, and this may have positive spin-offs in encouraging learners to be interested in this domain.

In South Africa, the question of how to act as a wife or a husband cannot be thought about in isolation from the gender inequalities that prevail. The reality is that young people are also affected by the scale of violence that is such an everyday reality for many women and girls in far too many homes and families. For example, a study by Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle

(2009) found that 27.6% of the men interviewed had raped, while 4.6% had done so in the previous year. Patterson, DeBaryshe and Ramsey (1989) acknowledge the negative influence that a family characterised by parental conflict has on children, especially on the boys.

Therefore, for many adolescents, marriage has not been modelled as attractive. Many boys and young have been socialized and steeped in a patriarchal paradigm that promotes sexism. While many have taken the challenge to be boys and men of courage and dare to partner with women as allies in fighting violence against women and girls, still others continue to promote the sense of male-superiority. Consequently the question of what it means to be a man is highly debated, and in recent years, a call from women's groups for a redefinition of masculinity has been made.

These developments and the role of adolescents in violence prevention may have had a positive influence in bringing greater awareness and interest in the domain, *How I should act as husband or wife* among the adolescents in this study.

Domain: *Sexual matters.*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *Sexual matters.*) The null hypothesis concerning this domain was not rejected. While it was clear that for all the adolescents in this sample, this domain was relevant, the patterns of evaluation were unclear. In comparison to the other domains, this one yielded a peculiar result. It possibly indicates that this is an exceptional area in the lives of young people, with parents and society reacting in unpredictable and often emotional

ways to it. While all three cultural groups consider this domain as “very important” and “fairly important” by moderate proportions, yet many consider this domain as “not important” also. In view of widespread indications that a relatively large percentage of South African adolescents are sexually active, that adolescents became sexually active at increasingly younger ages (Peltzer, 2006), and in view of the current focus on the prevention of HIV and AIDS, the fact that 29.7% (African), 35.2% (Coloured) and 23.3% (Indian) adolescents consider this domain as “not important” is rather unusual and concerning.

However it is encouraging to see a pattern of all adolescents in this sample, irrespective of cultural group, considering sexual matters as meaningful to them, especially when many young people in South Africa are acquiring and dying from sexually transmitted diseases from all cultures. There is evidence that most infections occur during adolescence and early adulthood stages of life (UNAIDS, 2002). This finding may suggest that the adolescents in this sample are taking an interest and showing concern about their sexuality. Ackermann’s (1990) study among Afrikaans speaking adolescents seem to be in agreement with this finding.

Domain: *How I should deal with family matters and relationships.*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should deal with family matters and relationships.*)

The null hypothesis concerning this domain was not rejected. The family plays a vital role in the social life and in the decision making process among the group of school-going adolescents in

this present study. All the cultural groups evaluated this domain as quite important to them, and this may suggest interest by these young people in this domain. There seems to be renewed interest and hope from the young people in this sample in engaging with, and finding solutions to, family issues. Family life among South African cultural groups is challenged by disintegration due to family disjunction, and in many cases the young people either live with a single parent, usually a mother, a relative or a foster mother (Mdikana, 2000). The desire and need for close family ties may have influenced the adolescents to compensate for this common lack by evaluating this domain as important to them, and therefore expressing a need for closer family life bonds.

Domain: *How I should deal with community matters.*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should deal with community matters.*) The null hypothesis concerning this domain was not rejected.

It seems that the adolescents in this sample find community matters as relatively important to them, and this is commendable. There is a move by the non-governmental organizations working closely with communities, to engage young people in schools in community development issues. Community participation and problem solving is encouraged in schools, particularly through life skills, and this finding may be revealing these positive trends (Van Niekerk & Prins, 2001). Learners are generally exposed to community issues through school-based campaigns and their

involvement in community awareness campaigns in educating the community. Some of the campaigns are held in the schools through partnerships between community structures and community organizations, to address issues such as violence against women and girls and drug abuse. The priority placed on community matters may furthermore be related to an acute awareness of socioeconomic needs, alleviation of poverty, a need for proper housing and other physical and health facilities. A reason for the importance placed on this domain by the cultural groups could be that they have a deeper understanding of the issues affecting their communities, because they learn about it at school and also through community-based campaigns offered by stakeholders such as the police, community-based and non-governmental organizations and government.

Domain: *How I should deal with persons of different cultures.*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (cultural variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should deal with persons of different cultures.*) The null hypothesis concerning this domain was not rejected. All three cultural groups take particular interest and consider this domain as relatively important to them, which seems to demonstrate awareness by these adolescents about this issue. This is optimistic news in South Africa, considering that South Africans are still forging an understanding of tolerance in a new democracy, especially towards foreign African nationals.

5.5 Evaluation of life domains in terms of age group (hypothesis 4)

The discussion relating to the relationship between the variable of age group and the evaluation of the 14 life domains is presented as follows:

Domain: *My future career*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My future career*.) The null hypothesis regarding this domain was not rejected.

It is clear that as with the older age group, the younger age group evaluated this domain as quite meaningful in their lives and could be used fruitfully in future research on identity formation. It is surprising, and yet encouraging, seeing that just as with the older age group, the younger age group is very interested in their future careers.

Domain: *My religious beliefs and convictions*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables, (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My religious beliefs and convictions*). The null hypothesis regarding this domain was not rejected. This data revealed that the 16 years and younger age group considered this domain as relevant and relatively important to them, as much as the older

age group did. This result may suggest that the younger age group have also been exposed to and are also interested in religious activities. Since both age groups seem to evaluate this domain as important to their lives, this domain could be used fruitfully in future research on identity formation.

Domain: *My political views and convictions*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *My political views and convictions*.) This implies that the empirical frequencies for both age groups were basically similar (and similar to the theoretical frequencies), with similar proportions for the two age groups evaluating this domain. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was not rejected.

Again, the younger group has unexpectedly shown that this domain is also meaningful to them and seems to also take an interest in political issues as the older age group do, yet some young people from both age groups consider this domain as “not important” to them. Both age groups seem to evaluate this domain as important in their lives and could be used fruitfully in future research on identity formation.

Domain: *Moral values*

A significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. There was a clear pattern where the older group evaluated this domain more strongly. This is also expected because the older group would be cognitively more mature in comparison to the younger group; they would be, generally speaking, in a stronger position to weigh up moral questions. The null hypothesis regarding this domain was rejected.

Therefore the pattern of evaluation between the age groups was significantly dissimilar with the unexpected tendency for the younger age group to also evaluate this domain as quite important, and this is reassuring. The younger age group may be more open to parental and societal views than the older adolescents, some of whom may have begun to question these views held by parents and in their processes to develop an identity (Erikson, 1964). This may be explained by the perceived expectation to please adults and parents by being “morally upright or good,” that younger adolescents may have. Both age groups seem to evaluate this domain as important to their lives and this could be used fruitfully in future research on identity formation.

Domain: *Leisure and recreational activities*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *Leisure and recreational activities*.) The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was not rejected.

The emerging patterns clearly demonstrated that the younger group evaluated this domain as meaningful in their lives like the older group, yet some young people from both age groups consider this domain as “not important” to them. The younger age group is expected to tend towards sport and play activities because of the heightened interest in leisure activities during the childhood school years and early adolescent stages. Both age groups seem to evaluate this domain as important to their lives and this could be used fruitfully in future research on identity formation.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group*).

The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was not rejected.

Clearly the older age group considered this domain as important, just as the younger age group did, yet the pattern was inconclusive, as 21.8% of the younger group compared to 20.2% of the 17 years and older group considered this domain as “not important.” Since both age groups seem to evaluate this domain as important in their lives, this domain could be used fruitfully in future research on identity formation.

Domain: *Friendships with members of the opposite sex*

A significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. As a result, the null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected.

It is clear in relation to all three response options that the tendency is for the older group to evaluate this domain more strongly, and this is understandable, because the older adolescents would be more interested in opposite-sex relationships because of their higher levels of maturity. The data showed that the pattern of responding between the age groups tended to reveal more 17 years and older groups in the VI and FI response options, while the 16 years and younger groups were in the FI and NI options. What was expected about this finding was that the older age group respondents considered opposite sex friendships as relatively more important than the younger age group respondents. This domain could be used fruitfully in future research for both age groups.

Domain: *What kind of person do I want a permanent relationship with?*

A significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. The older group evaluated this domain as more important than the younger group, and this is understandable in the light of the greater physical, emotional and social maturity of the older adolescents. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was therefore rejected. This pattern

also revealed that this domain is relevant to the younger age group as well as the older group. Both age groups seem to evaluate this domain as relatively important to their lives and could be used effectively in future research on identity formation.

Domain: *What kind of person would I want to marry one day?*

A significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. The null hypothesis regarding this domain was rejected. What was expected about this finding is that older adolescents considered this domain more important to them than the younger age group. This finding is understandable because the older group is showing interest in the relationship with their future marital partner in the light of the greater emotional maturity of these adolescents. Life skills educational programmes at school and their families may have influenced the interest that is shown by these adolescents. It is evident that this domain could be used with both age groups in future identity development research.

Domain: *How I should act as husband or wife*

The sets of frequency distributions for the two age groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the age group division. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was therefore rejected. What was expected about this finding is that older adolescents considered this domain more important to them, compared to the younger age group, because it is expected that they would be considering issues about the

relationship between husband and wife. As the pattern revealed, the younger age group also considered this domain meaningful and this means that they were also interested in this domain. This seems unexpected and remarkable considering their age. Both age groups seem to evaluate this domain as relatively important to their lives, and this could be used fruitfully in future research on identity formation.

Domain: *Sexual matters.*

A significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. On further inspection of the sets of frequency distributions it is evident that the sets of frequency distributions for the two age groups differed on opposite sides of the calculated 'benchmark' for the sample as a whole, irrespective of the age group division. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected.

There was a tendency for the older age group to consider this domain as more important than the younger group, with 23.6% for the younger age group, compared to 32.9% for the older group and 27.4% as the 'benchmark' in terms of no significant relationship between the variables. The trend is in the direction of the older group evaluating this domain as more important across all three response options. What was expected about this finding was that older adolescents considered this domain as more important to them compared to the younger age group, because it is expected that they may be considering more issues concerning their sexuality. The older age

group may be exposed to life skills lessons in their schools that deal with their sexuality and how to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases.

Yet the pattern of evaluation was inconclusive, because a reasonable proportion of the respondents from the older age group also considered this domain as “not important” with 38% of the younger group compared to 22.9% of the older group. For example, in Peltzer’s (2006) study comparing the sexuality and sexual behavior among 16 to 17 year-old South African adolescents, the researcher found that the age of first sexual intercourse was lower among urban than that among rural adolescents. What was expected about this finding is that older adolescents considered this domain as more important to them compared to the younger age group, because it is expected that they may be considering issues about intimacy and marriage. Again we notice that the older age group have shown an interest in sexual issues and this may reveal that the young people are exposed to life skills lessons in their schools that deal with their sexuality and how to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases. Both age groups seem to evaluate this domain as important to them and therefore this could be used fruitfully in future research on identity formation.

Domain: *How I should deal with family matters and relationships*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should deal with family matters and relationships*.)

The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was not rejected. It is unpredicted and

inspirational to see that the younger age group also finds family issues and relationships important as do the older group, in spite of their younger age. Both age groups seem to evaluate this domain as important to their lives and this could be used fruitfully in future research on identity formation.

Domain: *How I should deal with community matters*

A significant difference was established between the empirical frequency distribution and the theoretical frequency distribution based on the theory of the independence of the two variables. The null hypothesis in relation to this domain was rejected.

Although both age groups considered this domain as relatively important to them, the direction of the trend is for the older age group to evaluate this domain more importantly, across FI and NI response options. The interest shown by the older age group in community issues is positive and needs to be encouraged. The interest shown by both age groups in community issues is positive and needs to be encouraged. Both age groups seem to evaluate this domain as relatively important to their lives and this could be used fruitfully in future research on identity formation.

Domain: *How I should deal with persons of different cultures*

The empirical frequency distribution did not differ significantly from the theoretical frequency distribution that is based on the theory of the independence of the two variables (age variable and the evaluation of the domain of *How I should deal with persons of different cultures.*) The

null hypothesis in relation to this domain was not rejected. Again the younger age group has shown that they are interested in this domain, a tendency that needs to be encouraged more in South Africa in the quest to promote tolerance and the culture of respect for human rights of all people. Both age groups seem to evaluate this domain as relatively important in their lives and this could be used fruitfully in future research on identity formation.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

What we can generally establish from these findings is that the selected life domains seem to be relevant to the lives of the adolescents in this sample and can be regarded as important to their identity formation. An important finding which emerged was that the cultural group, the gender group and the age group all played a significant role in adolescents' perceptions of the relative importance of the 14 life domains. This finding corresponds with that of Alberts et al. (2003).

6.2 General sample trends

Almost all the domain-specific items were regarded as relevant (Very important or Fairly important) by a notable or significant majority of participants. Six of the 14 items were regarded as "Very important" by at least 60% and more of the total research group. Lower "Very important" responses were generally accompanied by relatively high "Fairly important" responses. Alberts et al. (2003) found that four domains were regarded as very important by more than 70% of the total research group, namely, *My future career*, *Moral values*, *Family relationships*, and *Religious matters*. Twelve of the domains were regarded as "Very important" by at least 50% of the African subgroup and thirteen domains were regarded as "very important" by 40% of the Coloured subgroup. Moreover, Alberts et al. (2003) established that political and sexual matters were regarded as of least importance. "*Leisure and recreational activities*", "*Friendships with members of the same sex peer group*", "*My political views and convictions*" and "*Friendships with members of the opposite sex peer group*" were however, still regarded as

“Fairly important” by 56%, 53%, 58% and 52% of the total research group respectively in the present study.

6.3 Gender trends

This present study established that out of the 14 domains, for 11 domains there were significant interactions between the independent variable of gender and the patterns of evaluation of particular domains. It should also be noted that generally females in the sample were more inclined to evaluate domains (*Friendship with members of the same-sex peer group, What kind of person I want a permanent relationship with, and What kind of person I want to marry*) pertaining to interpersonal relationships as more important than the males did. But there were other domains that were evaluated as more important by the females. These are: *My religious beliefs and convictions, My political views and convictions, Moral values, Leisure and recreational activities, How I should deal with family matters and relationships, How I should deal with community matters and How I should deal with persons of different cultures*. According to Alberts et al. (2003) significant gender differences were also found in their study, with the nature of these differences varying. As with Alberts et al. (2003), in almost all cases, the females experienced the domain items involved as more important than the males did. The males tended to evaluate the domains, *Sexual matters and Friendships with the opposite sex* more significantly important than the females did.

6.4 Cultural group trends

Significant cultural group differences occurred in 4 of the 14 domain items. These domains were *Moral values, Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group, Friendships with members of*

the opposite-sex peer group, and How to act as husband or wife. *(Significant cultural group differences occurred in four of the 14 domain items. This is a repetition of the first line above) However, in Alberts et al. (2003) study, intercultural differences were evident in six domains. It seems that all the domains could be considered for inclusion for all the three cultural groups in future research on identity formation in South African context. In the study which was conducted by Alberts et al.,(2003) the domain community matters proved to be higher priorities among the Xhosa speaking subgroup than among other subgroups. These results were explained by the fact that African cultures, including the Xhosa cultures, are traditionally characterized by a stronger communal orientation, as opposed to the more individual approaches in Western cultures.

6.5 Age group trends

Significant differences in the patterns of evaluation of the life domains for the age groups were established in relation to six domains. It was common for the 16 years and younger age group to evaluate most domains as relevant as the older age group did. This trend was both unexpected and encouraging to see that just as with the older age group, the younger age group seems to be thinking about their future prospects.

Overall, an important finding emerging was that the cultural group, the gender group and the age group all play a significant role in adolescents' perceptions of the relative importance of the 14 life domains. This finding corresponds with that of Alberts et al. (2003).

6.6 Limitations of the study

The present research has limitations in that it regards identity theory primarily in terms of the identity status approach. Consequently, it is limited in its integration of the personal and social aspects of the individual adolescents in order to make identity useful in the applied fields. For instance, the identity statuses are assumed to operate in a number of content domains such as political, religious, career choices, and friendships, to name a few. Knowing that particular groups (for example, socio-cultural, socio-economic, gender, and language groups) do find specific life domains more meaningful than others and that it would be reasonable to select domains that are most relevant for inclusion in future identity research, is meaningful and relevant. It is also encouraging for the future of South African society, since it creates a positive standpoint from which South African adolescents and policy makers can begin to invest in domain areas most important to young people. This is important undoubtedly.

However, the practical value that can be applied from identity status-based studies are limited (Schwartz, 2005). Practical issues such as understanding how identity confusion and poor family and societal support for identity development relate to drug use and irresponsible sexual behavior exposing one to poor health outcomes could be more relevant for promoting positive living and health education. Some of the recommendations that can be used to address these limitations will be outlined in the following section.

6.7 Recommendations of the study

When counselling adolescents, there are many things to consider. The life domains of identity development that are relevant to high school adolescents in urban settlements are areas of life that are of particular importance to adolescents. Since many adolescents in South Africa tend towards life domain areas that include occupation, religion and relationships, among other domains, it is useful to consider them when working with these teenagers. This study has clearly shown this. Almost all the domain-specific items were regarded as relevant (very important or fairly important) by a significant majority of participants. Six of the 14 items were regarded as “very important” by at least 60% and more of the total research group. Since these positive values emerging through these domains are relevant to these adolescents in this study, this may possibly indicate that many South African adolescents share this positive point of reference to life. Therefore, it makes sense to include these domains in future research investigations and in using identity-related decision-making domains in making policy decisions on what issues are important and relevant to adolescents and which programmatic interventions need government investments.

It also seems fitting that the government, secondary school counselors and life orientation educators make enhancing learners' *Future career, Family matters, Kind of person to marry, Moral values, How to act as husband or wife and What kind of person I would want to have a permanent relationship with* a major component of comprehensive counseling programmes as these domains proved to be the most important for these adolescents. However, it should be noted that all fourteen of the domains were regarded as important (either as very important or

fairly important) by at least 68% of the participants. The domains that were regarded as least relevant were '*Leisure and recreational activities,*' '*Sexual matters,*' '*Friendships with members of the same sex peer group,*' '*My political views and convictions,*' and '*Friendships with members of the opposite sex peer group.*' It may be that more innovative means are required through partnerships between government departments (especially Departments of Social Development and Education), parents/caregivers and learners in ensuring that career, religious, family, relationship counseling is used to assist adolescents in overcoming internal and external barriers to choosing a career, a religious and sexual orientation, for example, and to assist in empowering these individuals to become assertive and to deal with dating and relationships, for example, through life-skills programmes. The gaps between secondary schools and tertiary institutions, not just universities must be addressed through exhibitions and career expos to encourage career exploration and development as this is meaningful to young people. Secondary school educators need to be trained to encourage career exploration among learners purposefully. There is more that the school governing bodies and parent educator associations can do to elicit a more positive outlook on such domains as '*Leisure and recreational activities,*' '*Sexual matters,*' '*Friendships with members of the same sex peer group,*' '*My political views and convictions,*' and '*Friendships with members of the opposite sex peer group.*' Some schools conduct workshops for learners, parents/caregivers and educators in order to tap into the potential rich sharing of knowledge and experience that can enhance adolescents' relationships with others, their family and educators. Practitioners can assist by conducting psycho-educational workshops and life skills sessions for parents/caregivers, educators and religious leaders about religious issues so as to facilitate the process of identity development. Again, counselling to address the issue of sexuality and dating

are of paramount importance to facilitate positive identity development. There is greater need to train and encourage problem solving and decision-making skills among young people to deal with life threatening risk behaviours concerning sexuality, xenophobia and violence against women and girls-related issues.

The present study could have been more useful if it was a longitudinal study. Longitudinal studies involve data collection at not just one point in time. Longitudinal studies are necessary to track the course of identity development over time in order to see clearly behaviour prior and after that lead to more versus less successful identity development (Schwartz, 2005).

The formation of one's identity has implications for mental health. Those adolescents who achieve a secure sense of themselves have higher self-esteem and tend to have better mental health overall. The adolescents' religious orientation, for example, plays an important role in their ethnic identity development and in their psychological adjustment (Tsou, 2002). This study suggests that identity may be a protective outcome against health risk behaviors such as sexual risk taking. Therefore, studies are needed to design interventions in which identity may be used to prevent or reduce substance use or sexual risk taking.

More research endeavours in identity research are required to include the poor and under-educated adolescents. The implications for identity development of such adolescents would benefit South African policy developers in order to examine identity processes and barriers in less socio-economic, poorly educated and those adolescents who drop out of school. According to Schwartz (2005), such information obtained may be helpful in proposing interventions in

which identity can be used to prevent or reduce adolescent high risk behaviours such as substance use and sexual risk. In South Africa, studies that would directly lead to applied policy interventions are critical since adolescents have among the highest HIV contraction rates (Peltzer, 2006). In effect then applied identity development research is needed to promote the health of individuals, families, and the public as a whole.

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Annexure 1:

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Sex:

Date of birth:

Age:

Grade Level:

Home language:

Ethnic Group:

Religious denomination:

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

This means that your answers to the statements will not be disclosed to anybody without your consent.

INSTRUCTIONS

On the next page I4 different areas of a person's life are mentioned. These areas are not of equal importance to everybody in all stages of their lives. We would like to find out how important each of these areas is to you at the present stage of your life.

If an area is very important to you at this stage, you would probably think about it **often**, ask questions and read about it and make decisions relating to it.

If an area is fairly important to you at this stage, you would **sometimes** think about it, ask questions and read about it and make decisions relating to it.

If it is not important to you at this stage, you would probably never (or seldom) think

about it, ask questions and read about the area or deal with it.

Indicate with a cross (X) next to each statement in the appropriate space (on the next page) how important this area is to you at this stage of your life.

If there is anything that you do not understand or if you are not sure what to do, please raise your hand.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Indicate with a cross (X) in the appropriate space how important each of the following areas is to you at this stage of your life.

	VERY IMPORTANT	FAIRLY IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
1. My future career			
2. My religious beliefs and convictions			
3. My political views and convictions			
4. Moral values			
5. Leisure and recreational activities			
6. Friendships with members of the same-sex peer group			
7. Friendships with members of the opposite sex			

8. What kind of person would I want a permanent relationship with?			
9. What kind of person would I want to marry one day?			
10. How I should act as husband or wife?			
11. Sexual matters			
12. How I should deal with family matters and relationships			
13. How I should deal with community matters, e.g. poverty, hygiene, resources (water, electricity)			
14. How I should deal with persons of different cultures/races in our S.A society			