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Research Report #8

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1. **Need.** Empirical identity studies have not focused on the subjective side of identity.
2. **Purpose.** To examine adult identity development. Two identity modes (Identity Observed and Management Identity) are constituted by specific characteristics and that these are based on developmental stages.
3. **Sample.** 15 high school seniors and 15 adults, all white, all female, all from one suburban town. Adults were well educated.
4. **Methods.** Questionnaire about two ideals for sense of self and two that were least important; individual interview focused on experience of self; participants completed Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status.
5. **Results.** Differences were found between the age groups.
6. **Conclusions.** Identity modes were confirmed based on age; later modes appear in later ages. One’s external actions and goals are no longer seen as irrelevant to one’s identity. Instead, this is where identity is realized! Also identity assumes forms in adulthood that are not present in late adolescence.
7. **Limitations.** Study only included women, was small, relied on self-reporting and was concerned with only one small geographic area. However, the study was exploratory so it makes a good start.
8. **Implications.** Further research is needed to see if these results are generalizable to different populations. Also further research into how context plays a role in identity development.