

Linkages Between the Psychosocial Stages of Identity and Intimacy and the Ego Strengths of Fidelity and Love

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According to Erik Erikson, fidelity and love are ego virtues or strengths that emerge from successful psychosocial stage resolutions of identity and intimacy. However, such proposed linkages have remained untested. To examine these assumptions, we conducted a study among 153 undergraduates (ages 18 through 22) from predominantly White, middle class backgrounds. Participants completed measures of identity and intimacy, fidelity and love, and masculinity and femininity. Fidelity and love served as dependent variables in regression analyses, and identity, intimacy, femininity, masculinity, and gender served as independent variables. Consistent with Eriksonian theory, advanced identity formation predicted fidelity for men and women. In respect to love, identity was the strongest predictor for men, and both intimacy and identity predicted love for women. Femininity and masculinity shared in the prediction of fidelity and love, but for women only. The role of sex roles in identity and intimacy is discussed.

Erikson's (1963, 1968) psychosocial theory is a well-known life-span approach involving the development of individuals within the context of the family, society, and culture. The eight psychosocial stages are the most broadly known components of his theory, but the ego virtues or strengths (Erikson, 1964, 1985) are less frequently cited. The ego strengths are argued to ascend over the life cycle in correspondence to successful psychosocial stage resolutions (i.e., hope from trust, will

from autonomy, purpose from initiative, competence from industry, fidelity from identity, love from intimacy, care from generativity, and wisdom from integrity). Although all ego strengths are regarded as present throughout the life span, the potential for ascendance of a particular ego strength becomes possible with successful resolution of the associated psychosocial stage (Erikson, 1985). Unfortunately, little empirical attention has been directed at the operationalization and measurement of the ego strengths, particularly in respect to their supposed emergence from the psychosocial stages.

The focus of this study is on two specific psychosocial stages—identity versus identity confusion and intimacy versus isolation—and their corresponding ego strengths of fidelity and love. Perhaps of all the psychosocial stages, identity and intimacy have received the most attention in the research literature in (a) their operationalization, (b) the development of measures, and (c) empirical clarification of their correlates and predictors. A next logical step is to establish the emergence of the ego strengths of fidelity and love in successful psychosocial resolutions of identity versus identity confusion and intimacy versus isolation. Theoretically, fidelity should emerge from advanced levels of identity, and love should emerge from advanced levels of intimacy. Evidence supporting these theoretical propositions would provide validation of these components of Erikson's theory. Furthermore, if these assertions are supported, fidelity and love could be included as indicators of successful accomplishments of later adolescent and young adult psychosocial stages.

Review of Literature

Identity and Fidelity

The formation of ego-identity involves the gradual examination, rejection, and integration of earlier identifications. Some indicators of a successful resolution of the identity crisis are reflected in an individual's high level of comfort with self, a sense of direction in life, a feeling of sameness and continuity of the self, and confidence that significant others will be confirming of the self (Erikson, 1968, 1980). In contrast, identity confusion is characterized by an inability to latch onto meaningful life choices and roles. Researchers have shown great interest in the operationalization and measurement of identity. Perhaps most notable is Marcia's (1966) delineation of the four identity statuses according to dimensions of exploration and commitment. The most mature status, achievement, is characterized by a successful exploration of identity choices and commitment to selected options. Adolescents in moratorium are currently in the process of exploration but are uncommitted. Foreclosure is premature commitment to identity in the absence of exploration. The least mature status, diffusion, is found in adolescents who have not explored or committed in respect to identity.

A successful resolution to the identity crisis (i.e., identity achievement) should be observed in conjunction with the presence of fidelity. The intent of adolescents to be loyal and committed to role choices, others, and ideologies is at the core of fidelity (Erikson, 1964, 1965), which affirms a sense of purpose in life and enhances feelings of belongingness (Erikson, 1964). Role repudiation is fidelity's antipathy and is observed in a reluctance to select and commit to choices (diffidence) or a tendency toward a negative identity (defiance). In analysis of the relationship between identity and fidelity among female Canadian university students, a measure of fidelity correlated negatively with ideological diffusion, ideological moratorium, and interpersonal moratorium (Markstrom, Sabino, Turner, & Berman, 1997). These findings were not surprising because both moratorium and diffusion are characterized by the absence of commitment, which is a central feature of fidelity. It also was shown that both ideological and interpersonal achievement were significantly positively correlated with fidelity (Markstrom et al., 1997).

Among high school students, Markstrom and Hunter (1999) conducted a longitudinal analysis to determine if ideological and ethnic forms of identity predicted fidelity one year later among African Americans and European Americans. Ideological identity was assessed by domains of occupation, religion, politics, and philosophical lifestyle according to the Extended Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status (Adams, Bennion, & Huh, 1989). The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992) was used to assess ethnic identity affirmation and belonging, ethnic behaviors, and ethnic achievement. Two standard multiple regressions were performed for each ethnic group with ethnic identity and ideological identity entered simultaneously. Significance was found in the regression on fidelity for African Americans, with ethnic identity making a significant contribution to the prediction of fidelity. Ideological identity did not predict fidelity for either ethnic group, which perhaps was due to a finding that most participants scored as identity diffused. It was suggested that not only was ethnic identity more salient for the African Americans, but African Americans were more advanced in ethnic identity formation than in ideological identity.

Intimacy and Love

Intimacy, the sixth psychosocial stage, is fostered through successful accomplishment of the identity crisis and the ascendance of its ego strength of fidelity. The ability to make and sustain interpersonal commitments is central to intimacy (Erikson, 1963). The young adult with an established identity is prepared and unafraid to fuse that identity with another. Intimacy's opposite, isolation, occurs when the young adult is fearful of risking his or her identity through the sharing of true intimacy (Erikson, 1964). Furthermore, the individual exhibits reluctance and apprehension toward intimacy's products of offspring and care. The interest of researchers in this psychosocial stage is reflected in the varying models of intimacy

that have been devised (e.g., Archer et al., 1989; Orlofsky, Marcia, & Lesser, 1973).

Love is the emergent ego strength of intimacy and is characterized by mutual and reciprocal commitments between equals. A strong identity can risk loving in this manner. It is a chosen love with others outside of the family (Erikson, 1964). The absence of adult love objects is observed in love's antipathy, exclusivity, which is closely related to reactivity that can emerge in adulthood (Erikson, 1985).

The Identity-Intimacy Connection

Although limited research has been conducted to determine if fidelity emerges from identity and if love is the product of intimacy, the association between identity and intimacy has been examined. The interest of researchers in studying identity and intimacy conjointly is perhaps reflective of the strong conceptual linkages between these stages. As noted, a strong identity predisposes the young adult toward intimacy and loving. In particular, Adams and Archer (1994) noted that the contributions of identity to social life are reflected in intimacy. We observe that an additional commonality between identity and intimacy is that their respective ego strengths (i.e., fidelity and love) share the trait of commitment. The notion that fidelity is observed in commitment to ideological institutions and philosophies predisposes the individual for the kind of interpersonal commitments associated with the ego strength of love. Consistent with this assertion is the finding that commitment, as observed in identity achievement, is positively correlated with fidelity and love among university students (Markstrom et al., 1997). Furthermore, they found that identity moratorium (a status characterized by lack of commitment in identity) was negatively correlated with fidelity and love.

The identity-intimacy connection has been studied in two major ways (Adams & Archer, 1994). The first consists of examination of the correlational relations between these two stages. The second approach involves short-term longitudinal designs in which the temporal association of identity and intimacy is assessed. In some research studies, measures of identity have been compared to indirect assessments of intimacy, such as measures of social relationships. In reviewing several of these studies, Adams and Archer observed that active forms of identity (i.e., the statuses of exploration, namely, moratorium and achievement) were associated with indicators of more successful social relationships. For example, Mallory (1989) found active identity to be associated with warm, companionate, and close relationships. It is interesting that these studies found the active status of moratorium associated with more desirable social relationships, whereas Markstrom et al. (1997) found moratorium negatively correlated to the ego strengths of fidelity and love. Moratorium is indicative of greater psychosocial maturity in the individual but, without the component of commitment, is not equivalent to the ego strengths of adolescence and young adulthood.

In studies that assessed direct measures of identity and intimacy, a consistent finding was that more advanced, active identity development was associated with higher levels of intimacy (e.g., Craig-Bray, Adams, & Dobson, 1988; Fitch & Adams, 1983; Hodgson & Fischer, 1979; Kacerguis & Adams, 1980; Orlofsky et al., 1973). Occupational identity was related to intimacy for both men and women (Fitch & Adams, 1983; Kacerguis & Adams, 1980). Fitch and Adams also found that women high in religious identity were higher in intimacy 1 year later. Overall, Fitch and Adams reported that the vast majority of identity achieved youths were classified in intimate relationships according to Orlofsky et al.'s scheme of intimacy. In summary, relations between identity and intimacy have been established in prior research. These reports provide a basis for continued examination of identity and intimacy in association with their ego strengths of fidelity and love. However, it also is necessary to explore the roles of gender and sex roles in this line of inquiry.

Gender and Sex Roles

A criticism levied against Erikson's theory is that it is centered on men's psychosocial development in the absence of satisfactory explanations for women's development. For instance, Patterson, Sochting, and Marcia (1992) offered the following summarization of Erikson's conceptions on women's identity: (a) interpersonal issues were at the core of identity issues for women; (b) a woman's identity at adolescence was somewhat of a temporary resolution that was completed with marriage and reproduction; and (c) sequencing of identity formation was less stage-specific for women and could overlap in resolutions of identity, intimacy, and generativity tasks. Variations of these views are present in an assertion that identity formation is a salient task for women, but it is best understood in a context of connection and relatedness to others (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1988). This topic was addressed by Dyk and Adams (1990) who found, in a short-term longitudinal study, that identity did precede intimacy. However, when sex roles and gender were examined, the predicted identity-intimacy connection held for all men, regardless of sex-role orientation, and for masculine-oriented but not feminine-oriented women.

In short, the high degree of interest, speculation, and research on the roles of gender and sex roles in the developmental ordering of identity and intimacy justify inclusion of these constructs in the present assessment of identity—fidelity and intimacy—love linkages. Prior research provides some guidance concerning how the study of fidelity and love in respect to their psychosocial stages should proceed. Empirical evidence appears to support Erikson's propositions that accomplishment in the task of identity formation contributes to the establishment of intimacy and that, for some women, identity and intimacy are fused. It is suggested, therefore, that similar Eriksonian propositions on the connections between identity—fidelity

and intimacy—love also might be empirically demonstrated. Because gender and sex roles have been shown to be meaningful variables in studies on identity and intimacy, these constructs were examined in the prediction of fidelity and love. Analyses were conducted separately by gender to assess potentially differing patterns in the emergence of fidelity and love. Consistent with Eriksonian theory and prior research, it was hypothesized that for men:

1. Fidelity would be predicted by identity.
2. Love would be predicted by intimacy.

In respect to women, it was hypothesized that:

3. Fidelity would be predicted by identity.
4. Love would be predicted by identity and intimacy.

The contributions of masculinity and femininity to the predictions were explored.

Methods

Sample

The sample consisted of 98 female and 55 male undergraduates from ages 18 through 22 attending a medium-sized university in the eastern United States. A number of undergraduate courses were randomly selected from all university course listings to have a broad range of disciplines represented in students' backgrounds. All students were White and born in the United States. Socioeconomic status was obtained in respect to parental education levels. The seven categories for education were: (a) not a high school graduate, (b) high school graduate, (c) some college or technical school, (d) college graduate, (e) some graduate school, (f) master's degree, and (g) PhD. The mean education levels were 3.2 for mothers and 3.3 for fathers, which represented the category of some college or technical school education.

Procedures

Arrangements were made with professors of randomly selected courses to allow project personnel access to classes. Most of these professors allowed about 10 min of class time to be devoted to the study. Research assistants visited the classes and explained that volunteers were needed to participate in a study on the psychological development of college students. Questionnaire packets were handed out to interested students, who were instructed to fill out the questionnaires on their own time and mail them back to the researchers through campus mail. The question-

naire packets included a background information sheet and the questionnaires discussed in the next section. The return rate of completed questionnaires was approximately 25%.

Instrumentation

PIES. The Psychosocial Inventory of Ego Strengths (PIES) is a 64-item self-report instrument in which Erikson's (1964, 1985) eight ego strengths—hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom—are assessed (Markstrom et al., 1997). Two themes were devised for each ego strength to tap both positive and negative components representative of an ego strength and its antipathy. Eight items, designed according to the themes, tapped each of the ego strengths. The 64 questions are answered on a 5-point modified Likert scale ranging from 5 (describes me well) to 1 (does not describe me well). Subscale scores are obtained by reverse-weighting negatively phrased items and summing items for each subscale. Scores are continuous, and higher scores are reflective of greater presence of ego strengths.

In this study, only the subscales of fidelity and love were examined. Markstrom et al. (1997) delineated the themes for fidelity as (a) preoccupation with and commitment to being true, genuine, honest, and faithful with oneself and others versus absence of inner conviction; and (b) demonstration of commitment through disciplined devotion, loyalty, or service to ideological sources versus role repudiation (diffidence and defiance). Examples of items from the fidelity subscale are "I don't pretend to be some things that I'm not" and "I have trouble accepting a particular purpose or role in life." The two themes of love consist of (a) chosen, mutual, reciprocal commitment to one another and to the relationship versus lack of chosen, mutual, reciprocal commitments, and (b) togetherness with individuality maintained versus enmeshment or loss of individual identity. Examples of items from the love subscale are "I don't think I have really loved anyone outside of my family," and "When I love someone, I can accept that they need to pursue some interests without me."

In a psychometric examination of the PIES among an English Canadian university sample (Markstrom et al., 1997), the fidelity and love subscales were shown to have convergent validity with (a) achievement in the ideological identity (occupation, politics, religion, and philosophical lifestyle) and interpersonal (sex roles, friendship, dating, and recreation) subscales of the Extended Objective Measure of Ego-Identity Status (EOMEIS; Adams et al., 1989), (b) the Purpose in Life Test (Crumbaugh, 1968), and (c) internality in the Locus of Control Scale (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973) and (d) the Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). Discriminant validity was shown for fidelity in respect to the ideological diffusion and interpersonal diffusion and moratorium subscales of the EOMEIS and the Hopelessness Scale (Beck, Steer, Kovacs, & Garrison, 1985). For love, discriminant validity was

shown in comparison to the interpersonal moratorium subscale of the EOMEIS. In the same report, among the sample in this investigation, interpersonal identity was not assessed, but according to ideological identity as measured by the EOMEIS, fidelity and love had discriminant validity with ideological moratorium and the personal distress component of an empathy measure (Interpersonal Reactivity Index; Davis, 1980). Reliability of the fidelity and love subscales was shown for both samples. In this investigation, internal consistency assessed according to Cronbach's alphas was .76 for fidelity and .65 for love.

EPSI. Whereas the PIES was used to assess the ego strengths of fidelity and love, the Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (EPSI; Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981) was used to examine the psychosocial stages of identity and intimacy. The EPSI is an assessment of Erikson's first six psychosocial stages (trust to intimacy). This study targeted identity and intimacy subscales for examination. Each subscale reflects a successful and unsuccessful resolution of the psychosocial crises corresponding to each stage. The instrument consists of 12 items per subscale, and respondents answer each item according to a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (does not describe me well) to 5 (describes me well). A continuous score reflects the degree to which a psychosocial stage resolution occurred, with higher scores representing more positive outcomes.

Rosenthal et al. (1981) reported Cronbach's alpha to be .71 for identity and .63 for intimacy. In this study, Cronbach's alphas were .89 for identity and .81 for intimacy.

BSRI. The short version of the Bem Sex Role Inventory—Short Version (BSRI) consists of 10 masculine, 10 feminine, and 10 neutral self-report items that are answered on a modified Likert-type scale (Bem, 1974, 1977). Respondents indicate the degree to which each of 30 characteristics describe the self according to a 7-point scale ranging from 7 (always or almost always) to 1 (never or almost never). Whereas some researchers prefer to establish four discrete sex-role classifications with the BSRI, both continuous and classification variables were examined in this study. In the continuous procedures, items were scored to create a total masculinity score and a total femininity score. Prior research has shown the internal consistency of the short version of the BSRI to range from .84 to .87. Test-retest reliability equaled .85 or higher. For this study, Cronbach's alphas were .85 for masculinity and .92 for femininity.

Results

Correlational Analyses

Several significant correlations emerged between the variables and are shown in Table 1. Age was shown to be unrelated to the dependent variables of fidelity and love and, therefore, was removed from any further analyses.

TABLE 1
Correlations Between all Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Dependent								
1. Fidelity	1.0	.49*	.72*	.43*	.05	.09	.24*	.31*
2. Love		1.0	.51*	.54*	.04	.23*	.34*	.13
Independent								
3. Identity			1.0	.60*	.13	.08	.29*	.37*
4. Intimacy				1.0	.19*	.31*	.55*	.21*
5. Age					1.0	-.01	.03	.02
6. Gender						1.0	.45*	-.26*
7. Femininity							1.0	-.05
8. Masculinity								1.0

Note. N = 153. Male is coded as 1, and Female is coded as 2. * $p < .05$.

To obtain more refined assessments of the identity–fidelity and intimacy–love relations, partial correlations were performed (see Table 2). Potential contributions from femininity and masculinity were controlled. Additionally, intimacy was controlled for the identity–fidelity correlation and identity was controlled for the intimacy–love correlation. For both genders, significant correlations emerged in the proposed identity–fidelity and intimacy–love connections. An examination of the correlations by gender revealed that identity and fidelity were strongly correlated for both genders. However, intimacy and love were significantly correlated for women only and not for men. To further clarify these relations and to answer the hypotheses, a series of regressions were performed.

TABLE 2
Partial Correlations Between Identity–Fidelity and Intimacy–Love

	Identity–Fidelity		Intimacy–Love	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Both Genders ^a	.61	.000	.27	.000
Male ^b	.65	.000	.14	.160
Female ^c	.58	.000	.30	.000

Note. Identity–fidelity controlled for femininity, masculinity, and intimacy. Intimacy–love controlled for femininity, masculinity, and identity.

^aN = 153. ^bn = 55. ^cn = 98.

Regression Analysis

As a preliminary analysis, *t*-test comparisons were performed for the six continuous dependent and independent variables by gender. As shown in Table 3, women scored significantly higher than men in love, intimacy, and femininity, and men scored significantly higher than women in masculinity. The two groups did not significantly differ in their scores on fidelity and identity.

TABLE 3

T tests for Fidelity, Love, Identity, Intimacy, Femininity, and Masculinity by Gender

	Males		Females		<i>t</i> value
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Fidelity	31.2	4.8	32.1	4.7	-1.11
Love	31.5	4.7	33.6	4.1	-2.95*
Identity	45.6	8.7	47.0	8.5	-1.01
Intimacy	43.6	7.4	48.5	7.3	-3.98**
Femininity	46.4	9.0	54.9	7.9	-6.07**
Masclnity	47.6	6.8	42.9	9.1	3.68**

^aDegrees of freedom = 151

p* < .01. *p* < .001.

Stepwise regression and a combination of hierarchical and forward selection regressions constituted the primary statistical analyses. The regression analyses were conducted separately for gender. Given the fact that many of the variables were correlated, the risk of multicollinearity required consideration. The risk was minimal for the regressions because there is only cause for concern when a bivariate correlation exceeds .70 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Additionally, the computation of tolerance in SPSS (the statistical package used for the analyses) protects against multicollinearity. The regressions were performed separately for the genders to determine which of the independent variables (femininity, masculinity, identity, or intimacy) would be predictive of fidelity and of love.

Regressions on fidelity. In stepwise regressions for men and women, identity was the only independent variable predictive of fidelity (see Table 4, Analysis 1). For men, identity accounted for 48% of the variance in fidelity; this figure was 54% for women (*ps* < .0001). No further variables made significant contributions to the prediction of fidelity. Hypotheses 1 and 3 were supported from the findings of the stepwise regressions.

Hierarchical regressions were performed to determine if identity would still be a strong predictor of fidelity if the contributions of femininity and masculinity were first assessed (see Table 4, Analysis 2). Femininity and masculinity were forced in-

TABLE 4
Summary of Regressions for Variables Predicting Fidelity.

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>t</i> value
Analysis 1—Stepwise regressions					
Step 1: Identity					
Male ^a	.38	.06	.70	.48	7.04****
Female ^b	.40	.04	.73	.54	10.56****
Analysis 2—Hierarchical—forward regressions					
Step 1: Femininity					
Male ^c	-.06	.05	-.10	.01	-1.02
Female ^d	.08	.04	.13	.01	1.73
Step 1: Masculinity					
Male ^c	-.01	.08	-.02	.00	-.15
Female ^d	.07	.04	.13	.01	1.73
Step 2: Identity					
Male ^e	.40	.06	.72	.42	6.54****
Female ^f	.35	.04	.63	.40	7.79****

^a $R^2 = .48, p < .0001$. ^b $R^2 = .54, p < .0001$. ^c $R^2 = .07, p < .0001$. ^d $R^2 = .28, p < .0001$. ^e $\Delta R^2 = .42, p < .0001$. ^f $\Delta R^2 = .28, p < .0001$.

**** $p < .0001$.

to the equation prior to the other independent variables. Then, forward selection was used to determine any contributions of identity and intimacy to the prediction of fidelity. For men, R^2 , associated with the forced entry of femininity and masculinity, was .07 and nonsignificant at Step 1. At Step 2, identity was entered through forward selection and the change in R^2 was .42 ($p < .0001$). The sr^2 is obtained by squaring the partial correlation, and it represents the unique contribution to R^2 for each independent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). The computation of sr^2 was .01 for femininity, .00 for masculinity, and .42 for identity. Because the total R^2 for Analysis 2 for men was .49, 6% of the variance was shared between the independent variables.

The entry of femininity and masculinity in the analysis for women was significant, with R^2 equaling .28 ($p < .0001$). In the forward selection component, identity was entered at the second step for women and the change in R^2 was .28 ($p < .0001$). In assessing the values of R^2 , it is apparent that 14% of the total R^2 was shared between the independent variables. Whereas femininity and masculinity did make a significant contribution to R^2 for women in the prediction of fidelity, the

only significant beta was that for identity. Intimacy did not enter either equation for men or women as a significant predictor of fidelity. The results of the hierarchical regression for men confirmed those of the stepwise regression. For women, femininity and masculinity shared in the prediction of fidelity along with identity. Nonetheless, the significant beta for identity demonstrated the strength of this variable as a predictor of fidelity for women as well.

Regressions on love. As with fidelity, stepwise regressions were first performed to determine contributions to love from the independent variables of femininity, masculinity, identity, and intimacy. As shown in Table 5, Analysis 1, identi-

TABLE 5
Summary of Regressions for Variables Predicting Love.

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>t</i> value
Analysis 1—Stepwise regressions					
Step 1: Identity					
Male ^a	.31	.06	.58	.33	5.13**
Step 1: Intimacy					
Female ^b	.20	.06	.36	.09	3.48**
Step 2: Identity					
Female ^c	.13	.05	.27	.05	2.60*
Analysis 2—Hierarchical-forward regressions					
Step 1: Femininity					
Male ^d	.08	.06	.16	.03	1.43
Female ^e	.02	.05	.04	.00	.42
Step 1: Masculinity					
Male ^d	-.02	.09	-.03	.00	-.29
Female ^e	.00	.04	.01	.00	.06
Step 2: Identity					
Male ^f	.30	.07	.57	.26	4.58**
Step 2: Intimacy					
Female ^g	.19	.06	.34	.07	3.07**
Step 3: Identity					
Female ^h	.12	.05	.26	.04	2.31*

^a*R*² = .33, *p* < .0001. ^b*R*² = .26, *p* < .0001. ^c ΔR^2 = .05, *p* < .05. ^d*R*² = .05, ns. ^e*R*² = .13, *p* < .01.

^f ΔR^2 = .26, *p* < .0001. ^g ΔR^2 = .14, *p* < .0001. ^h ΔR^2 = .04, *p* < .05.

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

ty was the only variable predictive of intimacy for men, $R^2 = .33, p < .0001$. Hence, Hypothesis 2, in which love was expected to predict intimacy, was not supported. For women, intimacy was the first variable selected, and it accounted for 26% of the variance in love ($p < .0001$). Identity was entered at Step 2 and accounted for a change of .05 in R^2 ($p < .05$). Hypothesis 4 was supported in that both intimacy and identity were predictive of love for women.

It was meaningful to again assess the contributions of femininity and masculinity, in this case, to love. Hence, hierarchical regressions were performed for men and for women with femininity and masculinity entered together at the first step, and forward selection used with the two remaining independent variables of identity and intimacy (see Table 5, Analysis 2). For men, femininity and masculinity made a nonsignificant contribution in predicting 9% of the variance of love. Then, identity was entered through forward selection at the second step, $R^2 = .26, p < .0001$. The sr^2 values were .03 for femininity, .00 for masculinity, and .26 for identity; hence, 6% of the variability in predicting love was shared between the independent variables.

The findings were somewhat different for women, as shown in Analysis 2. The forced entry of femininity and masculinity at the first step yielded an R^2 value of .13 ($p < .01$). Intimacy was entered by forward selection at Step 2 ($\Delta R^2 = .14, p < .0001$), and identity at Step 3 ($\Delta R^2 = .04, p < .05$). Since sr^2 was .00 for both masculinity and femininity, they did not make unique contributions to R^2 . That is, of the total R^2 value of .31, .20 was shared between the independent variables. Intimacy made the strongest single contribution (.07).

Due to the fact that femininity and masculinity were significant for women but not for men in the regressions, a closer look at the sex roles seemed warranted. Utilizing the median split procedure, men and women were classified into the four sex-role orientations. The chi-square test was significant, $X^2(3, N = 153) = 35.32, p < .0001$. In examining the standardized residuals of the gender by sex-role crosstabulation, there were more women in the feminine orientation and more men in the masculine orientation. Of the men, 33% were undifferentiated, 2% were feminine, 43% were masculine, and 22% were androgynous. Among women, 20% were undifferentiated, 36% were feminine, 12% were masculine, and 32% were androgynous.

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to provide empirical support for Erikson's propositions on the emergence of fidelity from identity and love from intimacy. In respect to fidelity, it was predicted in Hypotheses 1 and 3 that identity would be the predictor, and this was supported for both men and women. Identity accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in fidelity. Additionally, the only significant beta was that for the independent variable of identity. Furthermore, in examination of the partial correlations, identity and fidelity remained strongly correlated for

both genders when controlling for influences from femininity, masculinity, and intimacy. Therefore, the hypothesized identity–fidelity linkage appeared to be fairly robust.

Nonetheless, the fact should not be ignored that, in the hierarchical regressions, femininity and masculinity accounted for some of the variance in fidelity, especially for women. Hence, for women, heightened femininity and masculinity were predictive of fidelity, but primarily in terms of shared prediction with identity (14% with total R^2 being .56). It was not entirely surprising that the two sex roles shared in the prediction of fidelity because higher scores in femininity and masculinity are indicative of androgyny, which has been associated with advanced identity formation (Grotevant & Thorbecke, 1982; Tzuriel, 1984). Some investigators have included sex roles as an indicator of interpersonal identity. Furthermore, close to one-third of the women were classified as androgynous.

What is less clear from the findings, however, is why sex roles did not have a stronger role in predicting fidelity scores of men. Consider that a smaller number of men than women were classified as androgynous (22% vs. 32%) and more men than women were undifferentiated (33% vs. 20%). Due to low levels of femininity and masculinity in the undifferentiated, the function of sex roles in fidelity and love become mute points. The converse can be argued for androgyny, in which both sex roles are highly meaningful. Despite these sex-role distinctions, the two genders were not significantly different on their t-test scores of identity and fidelity. This fact is consistent with Archer's (1994) observation that men and women are similar in identity formation in respect to processes of exploration and commitment and timing of identity activity. Hence, the findings may be more reflective of a greater susceptibility of women to sex-role influences. Indeed, Archer observed that "females have been found to have engaged in more sophisticated identity activity to include the areas of sexuality, friendship, and marriage, and career prioritizing" (p. 4). The first three areas reflect more feminine sex-typed interests.

Identity and intimacy were significant predictors of love for women, which supported Hypothesis 4. This finding not only supports the conception of a fusion between identity and intimacy for women, but is consistent with Erikson's epigenetic theory in which it is stated that earlier psychosocial stage resolutions play roles in later stages and ego strengths. In addition, femininity and masculinity made significant contributions to love among the female sample when entered in the first step of the hierarchical regression. However, as can be observed through their non-significant betas and low sr^2 values, these contributions were shared with the other independent variables. Intimacy followed by identity yielded the highest betas in the prediction of love for women. The partial correlational analysis provided additional clarification of these findings. Intimacy and love were significantly correlated for women when controlling for influences from femininity, masculinity, and identity. However, it was shown most strongly that the four independent variables shared in the prediction of love for women.

Hypotheses 2 stated that love would be predicted by intimacy for men. This hypothesis was not supported by the data. Indeed, identity, not intimacy, was the only significant predictor of love for men, even when the influences from femininity and masculinity were first considered. Furthermore, intimacy and love were shown to not be related for men in the partial correlations in which femininity, masculinity, and identity were controlled. The fact that intimacy was not a predictor of love for men may be indicative of the fact that men scored significantly lower than women in femininity. Perhaps intimacy and love, as assessed in the EPSI and PIES, respectively, present more stereotypically feminine items. Examples of intimacy items from the EPSI include reverse-weighted statements such as "I get embarrassed when someone begins to tell me personal things," or "I keep what I really think and feel to myself." Examples of items from the PIES include "I have experienced feelings of love with someone outside of my family," and "When I love someone, I can accept that they need to pursue some interests without me." In short, perhaps neither measure taps forms of intimacy and love that are reflective of male development.

If items from the intimacy and love subscales are more female sex-typed, there is correspondence with the t-test findings that women scored significantly higher than men on intimacy, love, and femininity. Furthermore, 64% of the women were classified in the sex roles indicative of high femininity (i.e., femininity or androgyny), and 23% of men were in these classifications.

However, that identity did predict intimacy for men is still consistent with Erikson's theory because earlier psychosocial stage resolutions should not only have bearing on their associated ego strengths, but should be related to the emergence of later psychosocial stages. As suggested earlier in this article, fidelity and love share the trait of commitment. The commitments that men make in identity may predispose them toward intimacy.

The finding that identity and intimacy predicted love for women and identity predicted love for men is consistent with assertions by social scientists such as Gilligan (1982) and Josselson (1988); who observed that women's identity is established in the context of connection and relationships. Independent and interdependent constructs of the self, as discussed by Markus & Kitayama (1991), also shed light on this discussion. An independent view of self is characteristic of Western culture and involves a construction and conception of the self according to attributes that emphasize uniqueness and autonomy. The formation of identity and intimacy among men may follow a more independent construction that is reinforced in Western society as well as by the masculine sex role. In contrast, the interdependent view of self incorporates relatedness and involvement with important others as critical components in the identity formation process. This view is more prevalent among some non-Western societies and is consistent with contemporary views on female psychology. An interdependent construction of the self aids in understanding the linkage between identity and intimacy for women, particularly in

respect to the prediction of love. The findings for men on the prediction of fidelity and love suggest the strength of identity, in the absence of sex roles and intimacy, for emergence of ego strengths of fidelity and love.

Implications for Research in the Future

The study's scope was limited due to the emphasis on only two of the eight psychosocial stages. Continued research is necessary not only on identity–fidelity and intimacy–love linkages, but also on other psychosocial stages and their associated ego strengths. It would be of additional interest to examine contributions of earlier psychosocial stages to the emergence of fidelity and love. Such a research focus would allow for more specific examination of Erikson's epigenetic principle.

The 18- through 22-year-old sample was developmentally appropriate for the examination of identity. However, the participants may not have been as advanced in intimacy and, subsequently, in the ego strength of love. The generalizability of the findings was limited because of the White, middle-class college student sample. Certainly, linkages between psychosocial stages and ego strengths should be examined among noncollege youth, young adults beyond the college years, those from lower income backgrounds, and people of various ethnic backgrounds.

The topic of sex roles in adolescence and in respect to psychosocial stages and ego strengths requires further investigation. In particular, the gender differences in sex roles that were apparent in this study were surprising and require further exploration. An additional peculiarity raised in this study was the fact that identity, not intimacy, predicted love for men. This finding was unexpected and raises questions about the differences in the development and meaning of love for men and women.

A final recommendation relates to a shortcoming of this study, namely, that temporal associations could only be speculative because of the absence of a longitudinal assessment. A stronger design would incorporate more than one point of testing over critical points in development in which identity–fidelity and intimacy–love linkages are most meaningful.

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