



## The Effect Of Autonomous Learning Strategy On Students' Identity Status

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### Abstrak

Status identitas mahasiswa menggaris bawahi pada upaya mahasiswa berkomitmen dan berkesplorasi dalam menyelesaikan berbagai tugas dan tanggungjawab belajarnya sehingga dirasa perlu mempertimbangkan strategi belajar yang mendorong mahasiswa untuk bereksplorasi dan berkomitmen. Karena itu, tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji pengaruh strategi belajar otonomi terhadap status identitas mahasiswa dengan menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan desain *pre-test-post-test* yang melibatkan sampel berjumlah 23 orang ( $M = 19.39$ ;  $SD = 1.52$ ). Pengumpulan data status identitas menggunakan kuisisioner status identitas yang dikembangkan oleh Marcia terdiri dari 40 pernyataan, masing-masing status identitas terdiri dari 10 pernyataan. Analisis data menggunakan t-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa secara statistik tidak ada pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap status identitas mahasiswa sebelum dan setelah diberikan perlakuan strategi belajar otonomi. Data statistik menunjukkan bahwa nilai sig. lebih besar dari 0,05 ( $> 0.715$ ). Dengan demikian, strategi belajar otonomi perlu dipertimbangkan untuk diujicobakan kepada siswa pada satuan pendidikan yang lebih rendah atau jika dilakukan pada tingkat universitas maka pengajar perlu menciptakan crisis dalam pembelajaran. Selain itu, pendekatan kualitatif perlu dipertimbangkan dalam penelitian serupa.

**Kata Kunci:** Strategi belajar otonomi, status identitas, *achievement*.

### Abstract

*The college students' identity status underlines their efforts to commit and explore in completing various tasks and learning responsibilities, so that it is necessary to consider learning strategies that encourage students to explore and be committed. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the effect of autonomous learning strategies on students' identity status using quantitative methods with a pre-test-post-test design involving a sample of 23 people ( $M = 19.39$ ;  $SD = 1.52$ ). The data collection of identity status using the identity status questionnaire developed by Marcia consists of 40 statements, each identity status consisting of 10 statements. Data analysis used t-test. The results showed that statistically, there was no significant effect on students' identity status before and after being treated using the autonomous learning strategy. Statistical data shows that the sig. value was greater than 0.05 ( $> 0.715$ ). Thus, the autonomous learning strategy needs to be considered to be tested on students in lower education levels, or if it is carried out at the university level, the teacher needs to create a crisis in the learning. Besides, a qualitative approach needs to be considered in similar studies.*

**Keywords:** *Autonomous learning strategy, identity status, achievement.*

## INTRODUCTION

Identity status is identity formation (Marcia in Tlonaen, Dharma, & Mustofa, 2018), starting from the highest identity; identity achievement to the lowest the diffusion identity. It has two essential parts; commitment and exploration (Marcia in Luyckx, Schwartz, Goossens, Beyers, & Missotten, 2011). In the learning process, students are expected to have a commitment that refers to the choice someone has made and to commit to the choices (Meeus, 2011; Kasinath, 2013), and that embodied through their effort (Blegur, 2020) and exploration that refers to the consideration of various alternative (Meeus, 2011). Marcia (Tlonaen, Dharma, & Mustofa, 2018) classified the level of individual commitment and exploration into four statuses. Identity achievement, the highest status of identity formation, refers to those with high commitment and high exploration. The moratorium identity refers to those with low commitment and high exploration. Foreclosure identity is those with high commitment and low exploration. The lowest identity status is diffusion identity that refers to those with low commitment and low exploration. What we expect as a teacher is that our students reach the highest status that is achievement identity. However, during the learning process, most teachers complained about students' commitment and exploration. Therefore, the identity status should be improved by applying an appropriate learning strategy.

Teaching strategy is defined as the way or methods that the teachers apply in the classroom to achieve the learning goals. A teaching strategy is a general plan for a lesson containing the structure, instructional objectives, and planned outline required to implement the strategy (Stone & Morris in Issac, 2010). Teaching strategies are also teacher behavior that embodies in the classroom, such as teaching strategy development, providing the right stimulus for timely responses, drilling for learned responses, increasing responses with extra activities, and so forth (Issac, 2010). Autonomy learning strategy is one of the teaching strategies that has been applied in the English language classroom nowadays and also becomes a trend in English language teaching. Autonomy learning is a learning system in which students are actively involved in the learning process while teachers play a role as supervisors (Masouleh & Jooneghani, 2012) and guide the students more autonomous in their learning (Benson, 2013; Ceylan, 2015). In short, students are the decision-makers, planners, and evaluators of their own learning. Benson (Doğan & Mirici, 2017) suggested the five principles in fostering autonomy learning in the classroom.; 1) be actively involved in the students' learning; 2) provide a range of learning options and resources; 3) offer choices and decisions making opportunity; 4) support the learners; 5) encourage reflection. These five principles become the basis for implementing autonomous learning in this study.

Research on the application of learning strategies to improve identity status was not found yet. Pellerone (2013) investigated the relationship among identity development, decision making, coping strategies on academic performance. Further, Porfeli, Lee, Vondracek, & Weigold (2011) examined the development and evaluated a vocational identity status assessment (VISA) by exploring the career, commitment, and reconsideration of high school university students. The two studies did not apply a learning strategy to investigate the identity status. Also, the focus and objectives of the research are very different. Furthermore, the previous research related to autonomous learning strategies did not make identity status a variable to be studied. Tran (2020) applied learner autonomy strategy (which can be interchangeable with autonomous learning) in learning English vocabulary, then he explored students' attitudes towards learner autonomy strategy. While Boonma & Swatevacharkul (2020) applied the autonomous learning strategy in the public speaking class and then examined the effect on students' autonomy. There was no learning strategy applied as the treatment to investigate students' identity status development. Researchers believe that students' identity status can be improved as long as the treatment is applied well. The researchers were highly motivated to examine the effect of applying the autonomous learning strategy on students' identity statuses (commitment and exploration) to develop their identity status, which is believed to have not yet reached the highest status.

## METHOD

This research used a quantitative approach with *one group pre test-post test*. The study conducted a pre-test before the treatment and a post-test after the treatment. To collect the data, the researcher used identity status questionnaires developed by Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky (1993). The questionnaire consists of 40 statements constructed from 7 domain areas; occupation, religion, philosophical lifestyle, friendship, dating, sex roles, or recreation. The seven domains embodied four identity statuses. The format response used 5 Likert scales from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Each identity status consists of 10 questions. The data analysis was by using a t-test. If the significance value is higher than 0.05, then there is no effect on the autonomy learning strategy on students' identity status. Data management and analysis performed using SPSS 16.0.

The participant were 23 third semester students of English Education study program, Artha Wacana Christian University. The research procedures were: 1) translating the questionnaires into Indonesian; 3) conducting the pre-test by distributing questionnaire directly to the samples; 4) applying autonomous learning for three months. In this stage, researchers apply the five principles in the classroom; 5) completing the post-test; 6) tabulating research data from pre-test and post-test, processing the data obtained using SPSS; 7) drawing a conclusion from the results; 8) reporting the research results.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Pre-Test Description

We used a pre-test and post-test research design so that before giving a learning treatment using an autonomy strategy, the student identity status data were first taken using a questionnaire (see table 1). This data can be used as a comparison to the successful implementation of the autonomy learning strategy.

Table 1. Pre-Test Data

	<b>Achievement identity</b>	<b>Moratorium identity</b>	<b>Foreclosure identity</b>	<b>Diffusion identity</b>	<b>Total</b>
Frequency	17	3	1	2	23
Percentage	73.91	13.04	4.34	8.69	100
Mean			133.04		
Std. deviation			15.71		

Table 1 shows that the trend of student identity status is in a suitable category, in which there are only 2 (8.69%) out of 23 have low commitment and exploration. They still show graphs of involvement in various tasks and low learning responsibilities, so that in completing their tasks and responsibilities, they are unstable and at the same time unwilling to search for various tasks, such as asking peers and lecturers in completing their assignments independently. On the contrary, most students (73.91%) show high learning commitment and exploration, so the pre-test data shows that students have high learning commitment and exploration to complete their assignments and responsibilities.

### Post-Test Description

The data was taken after we treated the research samples. Treatment, applying the autonomy strategy, was implemented during one semester of learning, and the mechanism for data collection in the pre-test was

also done in the post-test. The instrument used was the same, so we just duplicated the questionnaire and distributed it to the research sample through a google form.

Table 2. Post-Test Data

	<b>Achievement identity</b>	<b>Moratorium identity</b>	<b>Foreclosure identity</b>	<b>Diffusion identity</b>	<b>Total</b>
Frequency	17	5	1	0	23
Percentage	73.91	21.73	4.34	0	100
Mean			131.69		
Std. deviation			12.31		

Statistically, students still have a high achievement identity. 17 (73.91%) students out of 23 students have high commitment and exploration in learning activities. Two different identities from the pre-test data were the identity moratorium, which increased by 8.69%, while the diffusion identity also decreased to 8.69%. Also, data table 2 explains an increase in student exploration activities, they have succeeded in carrying out explorations in learning activities, but unfortunately, they do not have a high commitment to complete their learning tasks and responsibilities.

### Paired Sample T-Test

One of the requirements for carrying out the t-test is doing the normality test. The normality test is done to assess the distribution of data in the pre-test and post-test groups for student identity status variable. If the data is normally distributed, then testing can be continued.

Tabel3. Normality Test Data

	<b>Kolmogorov-Smirnov<sup>a</sup></b>		<b>Shapiro-Wilk</b>	
	Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.
Pre-test	0.110	0.200*	0.972	0.733
Post-test	0.141	0.200	0.975	0.800

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance

a. Lilliefors significance correction

Table 3 shows that the normality test on the student identity status variable in the pre-test, both Kolmogorov-Smirnov is 0.200 and Shapiro-Wilk is 0.733, while the post-test, Kolmogorov-Smirnov is 0.200 and Shapiro-Wilk is 0.800. The two test results prove that the student identity status variable is usually distributed because it is greater than the significance value (0.05). As a result, this study fulfills the requirements for hypothesis testing. After passing the normality test, we then tested the hypothesis using the paired samples t-test. This decision is because this study uses the same samples but with different treatments. The results of hypothesis testing are shown in table 4.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing (Paired Samples T-Test)

	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Pre-test-post-test	0.370	22	0.715	Insignificant

The results of the t-test found that the treatment of autonomy learning strategies does not have a significant effect on the students' identity status, in which the sig value is greater than 0.05 ( $> 0.715$ ). The descriptive evidence of the effect is only on the sub-variable identity moratorium, which is 8.69%, meaning that there are only two increases from 23 students.

Identity status is marked by crisis and individual commitment (Marcia in Kasinath, 2013) in determining specific problems. Students' identity status has been following a positive trend so that the treatment given provides a learning strategy that does not contribute significantly to finding its recognition in research. The autonomy learning strategy has not become the most significant determinant variable in developing student identity status. Students should experience a crisis because crisis forces someone to decide and try (Erikson in Kasinath, 2013; Tlonaen, Dharma, & Mustofa, 2018) to start exploring and making commitments. Autonomy learning strategies provide a great opportunity for students to decide for themselves, from proposing resource books, discussion materials to conducting peer teaching and answering various questions through discussion. Benson's five principles allow students to freely explore their own learning (Doğan & Mirici, 2017). However, applying autonomous learning does not mean teachers do not have responsibility or let them walk alone in their learning process. Benson (2012) stated that ELT teachers could foster students' autonomy because autonomy is a learning process. Benson (2012) added that fostering autonomy learning is a mutual responsibility to ensure learning occurs.

If we view the arguments by Sari, Tarsono, & Kurniadewi (2016), then individuals who have achieved their identity will become more independent and pleasant individuals and will make it easier to carry out their next developmental tasks; on the other hand, if the individual has not been able to achieve their identity, they will become individuals with no a solid stance, confused and tend to merge with their group identity because they do not have a permanent identity. Students will only explore if they encounter a crisis in their learning life. In this research case, the autonomy learning the lecturers applied to the students was that when they do not experience a crisis because everything is determined by themselves. Even in the evaluation process, students did it independently.

Students already achieved the highest identity status (73.91%), identity achievement. Therefore, lecturers should provide various learning methods to encourage students to accept challenges, which then make them feel a crisis in certain materials. However, the autonomy learning strategy has not created a learning crisis to grow students' curiosity, which is manifested in the form of exploration and commitment. They do not feel that there is a crisis. It is not because they can, but because the learning experience they have passed is already included in their "knowledge framework" so that when lecturers allowed determining the material, they preferred "light" materials to facilitate the solution. Thus, it can be concluded that the autonomy learning strategy promotes a comfortable and relaxed learning situation. It will be difficult for students to develop their identity status because what they need is a crisis, while at the time, they did not experience a crisis in selecting materials or even the learning experiences they went through.

Self-identity is a required component that shows an individual's identity. Individuals who succeed in shaping their identity will help them take the right role in their lives, while individuals who fail to form their identity will be confused by their role in life (Ramdhanu, Sunarya, & Nurhudaya, 2019). The problem is that students who do not have a crisis will not experience an identity process through exploration and commitment. For this reason, lecturers engineered various strategies to create a sense of crisis in students to develop academic identity status from a process without exploration and commitment leading to an intense process of exploration and commitment to learning activities.

We do not conclude that the autonomy learning strategy is not satisfying, but in this study, the learning strategy cannot bridge the learning crisis in learning methods and learning materials. The absence of a student

crisis causes no effort to explore and commit to success or completion in various learning activities. This learning strategy may be more relevant to elementary grade children because it emphasizes “freedom” in the learning process. If the lecturers want to modify it to develop student identity status, they must prepare critical materials to guide students through challenging learning experiences. Also, use more performative expression media so that students can get used to dealing with their crises. Besides, the qualitative approach should be considered in exploring the development of identity status. James Marcia not only developed a questionnaire but also developed interview questions to explore identity status. Therefore, commitment and exploration can be observed through the efforts of students in their learning responsibilities.

## CONCLUSION

The results showed that the autonomy learning strategy did not affect students' identity status. It does not mean that the autonomy learning strategy cannot be applied, but it needs to be modified by creating a crisis to experience a crisis in their learning because this crisis is what forms commitment and exploration. Students can commit and explore their learning in the applied autonomy learning strategy, but they do not experience a crisis. When they are allowed to select materials, plan assignments, do peer teaching, and self-evaluate, they tend to find easy ways to solve problems quickly. For instance, asking friends, finding out from google, and copying and pasting answers from the internet. Therefore, this strategy may be more suitable for lower education, such as in elementary, junior, and senior high schools. We suggest that educators are able to create a crisis in fostering autonomy learning. Autonomy learning strategy can be applied well if it is slightly modified in learning. If lecturers want to apply this learning strategy in a higher university, then qualitative research should be considered. By exploring the process deeply, the researchers can get more detailed data instead of asking them to fill out an identity status questionnaire, and the lecturers naturally observe the students' actions. Autonomy learning needs more than three months to be applied in the classroom and to investigate identity status.

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