



Psychosocial Development Research in Adolescence: a Scoping Review

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Abstract

Erikson's psychosocial development is a well-known and sound framework for adolescent development. However, despite its importance in scientific literature, the scarcity of literature reviews on Erikson's theory on adolescence calls for an up-to-date systematization. Therefore, this study's objectives are to understand the extent and nature of published research on Erikson's psychosocial development in adolescence (10–19 years) in the last decade (2011–2020) and identify directions for meaningful research and intervention. A scoping review was conducted following Arksey and O'Malley's framework, PRISMA-ScR guidelines, and a previous protocol, including a comprehensive search in eight databases. From 932 initial studies, 58 studies were selected. These studies highlighted the burgeoning research on Erikson's approach, with a more significant representation of North American and European studies. The focus of most studies was on identity formation, presenting cross-cultural evidence of its importance in psychosocial development. Most of the studies used quantitative designs presenting a high number of different measures. Regarding topics and variables, studies emphasized the critical role of identity in adolescents' development and well-being and the relevance of supporting settings in psychosocial development. However, shortcomings were found regarding the study of online and school as privileged developmental settings for adolescents. Suggestions included the need to consider the process of identity formation in the context of lifespan development and invest in supporting adolescents' identity formation. Overall, conclusions point out Erikson's relevance in understanding adolescents' current challenges while offering valuable research and intervention directions to enhance adolescent growth potential.

Keywords Adolescent development · Systematic literature review · Identity formation · Erik Erikson

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Introduction

Adolescence, the second decade of life, is also the second window of opportunity to influence developmental trajectories, promoting health, well-being, full potential development, and positive contribution to society (UNICEF, 2018). For this reason, adolescence is a pivotal phase of the life course that requires not only the basic conditions to survive but the best opportunities to thrive (e.g., Alfvén et al., 2019; Patton et al., 2016; UNICEF, 2018; WHO, 2019). These opportunities are intrinsically connected to education as a human right, which encompasses the mission of each person's personality and full potential development (United Nations, 1989, Art. 29), with particular attention to school as a privileged developmental setting (United Nations, 2001).

To better understand that mission, Erikson's psychosocial development approach was convened as a key theory of human development that still challenges researchers, practitioners, and educators. Firstly, its understanding of development as a life-long continuum of opportunities for growth, reconstruction, and positive change (Newman & Newman, 2015; Sprinthall & Collins, 2011) challenges research to go beyond sickness and to strive for a new and dynamic meaning for *being alive* and *vital personality* (Erikson, 1968/1994b, p. 91). This suggestion seems to anticipate positive psychology's focus on the qualities, strengths, and virtues that enhance thriving (Newman & Newman, 2015; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Secondly, psychosocial development has its cornerstone on the dynamic and complementary interplay between biological, psychological, and social dimensions (Erikson, 1968/1994b; Erikson & Erikson, 1998). Therefore, its study implies overcoming disciplinary reifying restrictions or isolated dimensions (Newman & Newman, 2015). Thirdly, the theory presents a roadmap for development, with eight stages built around main developmental tasks and challenges from birth to old age. More than a rigid timetable as some authors present it (e.g., Lerner, 2002), Erikson's framework should be read from a non-deterministic and interactionist perspective (Caldeira & Veiga, 2013; Sprinthall & Collins, 2011). This perspective assumes that the emphasis of psychosocial development's stages should be set on the relation between the person and the social world, which accounts for development and the differences between persons and cultures (Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Newman & Newman, 2015). Similar attention toward bidirectional relation person context, and resulting developmental plasticity, is suggested in positive youth development approaches (Burkhard et al., 2020; Lerner et al., 2005; Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007).

For the above reasons, the psychosocial approach, grounded on Erikson's care for human growth and fulfillment (Erikson, 1968/1994b), is an influential, enduring, positive, and comprehensive framework, which continues to inspire abundant research and intervention (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017; Marcia, 2015; Zhang, 2015). Nevertheless, 70 years have passed since the publication of *Childhood and Society* (Erikson, 1950/1993), and children and adolescents' process of growing has been undergoing fast-paced change (Dahl et al., 2018; Patton et al., 2016). This reality calls for a better understanding of how research on Erikson's psychosocial development currently addresses these changes and their effects on adolescent

development, thus contributing to enhance their optimum development and thriving. This call for understanding led the authors to conduct a prior and exploratory search of existing literature reviews published in the last decade, focusing on adolescents' broad psychosocial development, using Google, Scopus, and Web of Science (Dec. 2020). The search rendered 362 literature reviews after removing duplicates. Four critical ideas of this exploratory search not only justified the need for a new and more comprehensive study, but also guided its options and design.

The first idea was the small number of psychosocial development reviews grounded on Erikson's theory, focusing on adolescence and school setting, peer-reviewed, and published in the last decade. Only eight literature reviews fulfilled all the selection criteria (Chávez, 2016; Dunkel & Harbke, 2017; Knight et al., 2014; Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Meeus, 2011, 2016; Ragelienė, 2016; Tsang et al., 2012). The most recent of these eight literature reviews was from 2017, and six were from Europe or North America. These findings heightened the question regarding the presence of Erikson's theory in recent research on adolescent development. They also raised the question regarding research's social and cultural comprehensiveness (Chávez, 2016), especially in a time of increased connection beyond geographical borders (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017).

The second idea of the exploratory search was the focus on identity, which was the main subject of five of the eight reviews. This emphasis on identity is not surprising. Erikson defended that personal identity, the "style of one's individuality" (Erikson, 1968/1994b, p. 50), was the core striving of adolescent development (Rosenthal et al., 1981; Zacarés & Iborra, 2015). However, in the small set of five literature reviews on personal identity, different theoretical and empirical approaches were found, highlighting three main approaches. The first is identity resolution, centered on Erikson's crisis between identity synthesis and identity confusion (Claes et al., 2014; Hatano et al., 2018). The second is identity exploration and commitment (Waterman, 2015), based on James Marcia's identity status paradigm and complemented, in the last decades, with newer models aiming to deepen the processes and domains of identity development (Hatano et al., 2018; Waterman, 2015). Looking at these new and extended models, Waterman (2015) highlights two: the five dimension models of identity formation, including exploration in breadth, in-depth exploration, ruminative exploration, commitment making, and identification with commitment (Bogaerts et al., 2019), and the three dimension models of identity formation, including commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment (Crocetti et al., 2011; Meeus, 2011). An appealing feature of this last model, also known as Meeus-Crocetti model, is the study of identity development across different identity domains (Crocetti, 2017; Crocetti et al., 2011), including the educational and interpersonal domains, particularly important in adolescence (Hatano et al., 2020). Finally, the third approach is known as identity styles, and it is anchored on Berzonsky's identification of adolescents' social-cognitive strategies to manage self-relevant information (Crocetti et al., 2014). Finally, in what concerns other identity types, one literature review calls attention to the growth of studies focusing on ethnic identity and its association with academic achievement (Meeus, 2011).

The third idea was the wide range of different methodological approaches (Erikson, 1968/1994b; Ragelienė, 2016). Erikson's research, mostly grounded on his clinical experience and logic, soon demanded empirical validation (Rosenthal et al., 1981; Santrock, 2011), which engaged many researchers using qualitative and quantitative approaches (Newman & Newman, 2015). Regarding quantitative studies, one review pointed to the need for more longitudinal approaches on psychosocial development (Chávez, 2016), while one meta-analysis showed that longitudinal studies have increased in the first decade of the twenty first century (Meeus, 2011). On the subject of measures of psychosocial development, studies conveyed evidence of researchers' efforts to assess identity (Meeus, 2011, 2016) and include different psychosocial stages (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017). Other authors reinforce the significance of this strive for instruments with good psychometric properties for adolescent samples that aim to assess psychosocial development and not only its isolated stages (Markstrom et al., 1997; Newman & Newman, 2015; Rosenthal et al., 1981).

The fourth idea was the broad and scattered set of topics and variables. Reviews encompass evidence of psychosocial development and identity's critical role in adolescent's health and well-being (Meeus, 2011, 2016; Tsang et al., 2012); the relationship with personality features and psychological strengths (Chávez, 2016; Ragelienė, 2016; Tsang et al., 2012); and the role of parents (Chávez, 2016; Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Meeus, 2016; Tsang et al., 2012), peers (Meeus, 2016; Ragelienė, 2016), intergenerational voluntary interaction (Knight et al., 2014), and school safety (Tsang et al., 2012). One meta-analysis presented evidence to defend a general factor of psychosocial development (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017), and different suggestions were found regarding identity understanding and promotion (Tsang et al., 2012). Finally, some authors defended that the importance of Erikson's theory for adolescents' development is related to present-day challenges, namely, technological advances and Internet possibilities (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017; Tsang et al., 2012).

Current Study

The exploratory analysis of existing literature reviews on Erikson's theory has confirmed a systematization shortcoming. It also confirmed the need for a present-day understanding of the extent and nature of the research on Erikson's psychosocial development in adolescence. Aiming to fill in the gap, a rigorous and comprehensive *scoping review* was conducted. The scoping review is a recent methodology for literature review with an increasing presence in health and education research (O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015; Pham et al., 2014). Oriented by a research problem, the scoping review thoroughly searches, selects, and synthesizes knowledge with the purpose of mapping "key concepts, types of evidence, and gaps in research related to a defined area or field" (Colquhoun et al., 2014, pp. 1292–1294). It differs from a systematic review by presenting a research problem that aims for a wider breadth of coverage, but not for exhaustiveness, nor the quality assessment of the studies (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010; Tricco et al., 2018).

The present study aims to review and summarize the piecemeal research on Erikson's psychosocial development, with the following research problem: what are the main features of the research on Erikson's psychosocial development in adolescence produced over the last decade (2011–2020)? Five overarching study questions were derived from the research problem: (Q1) What is the extent of the research? (Q2) What conceptual definitions are used? (Q3) What designs and measures are used? (Q4) What are the main topics and variables studied? (Q5) What implications for research and intervention can be suggested?

Method

This scoping review was conducted following Arksey and O'Malley's (2005; Levac et al., 2010) five-stage framework and PRISMA-ScR standards checklist (Tricco et al., 2018). In addition, a scoping review protocol was developed and is available as supplementary material (Appendix 1) in the online version of the article. Other relevant references in the structuring of this review were a study about the use of scoping review methodology in research (Pham et al., 2014) and a scoping review about educational strategies in higher education (O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015).

Identifying Relevant Studies

The information sources for this review included eight bibliographic databases: (1) Academic Search Complete, (2) Education Source, (3) Eric—Educational Resources Information Center, (4) PsycARTICLES, (5) PsycINFO, (6) Scielo, (7) Scopus, and (8) Web of Science (WoS). The search started in January 2021, and the last search was done on the 22nd of February 2021. The search strategy was based on a previous and exploratory search of existing literature reviews (December) and the discussion between researchers (January). Aiming to answer to the research problem balancing comprehensiveness and feasibility (Levac et al., 2010), the search focus was on the term “Erikson” and not on “psychosocial development.” To assess the adequacy of the search strategy, we selected a small set of authors and articles considered unavoidable to identify amid the results. An example of the final search string is presented in Table 1.

Study Selection

The selection was an iterative process (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010) that engaged researchers in a permanent discussion and decision-making. Table 2 presents the eligibility criteria. About adolescence definition, the study followed WHO and UNICEF's recommendation to consider the life period between 10 and 19 years (e.g., Patton et al., 2016; Sawyer et al., 2018; UNICEF, 2018; WHO, 2019).

The sources of evidence were selected using Microsoft Office Excel in three phases: (i) organization - the records were imported to a table, organized by authors,

Table 1 Final search strategy used in Web of Science database

Topic	Erikson AND (adolescen* OR "early adolescen*" OR youth OR identity)
Refined by	
Language	English OR Spanish OR Portuguese
Document types	Articles OR Review Articles
Research areas	Psychology OR Education Educational Research OR Religion OR Family Studies
Timespan	2010/2021

Note: results from 2010 and 2021 were not included in the study

Table 2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
+ Peer review	- Not scientific journals
+ Published between 2011 and 2020	- To be published
+ Quantitative or qualitative research	- Theoretical articles
+ English, Spanish, or Portuguese	- Other languages
+ Erikson's theory	- Broader approaches or specific clinical/health condition
+ Adolescence or adolescents (10–19)	- Children, young adults, adults, or elders

and duplicates were removed; (ii) screening - the titles, keywords, and abstracts were analyzed, allowing the exclusion of the records not complying with the eligibility criteria; and (iii) eligibility - a deeper analysis of each study was conducted to decide on its selection according to the eligibility criteria.

Charting the Data

Like the eligibility process, data charting was an iterative process of understanding the categories that will define the information to be sought, extracted, and charted (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). This process was done for each study question, implying the permanent engagement and discussion between researchers. For the first three study questions, researchers previously defined the categories and refined them along the review process. For the fourth and fifth study questions, researchers built the categories upon the information extracted from each study, aiming to identify a set of common clusters to organize and present the results meaningfully. More than full coverage of all the topics of the studies, this process aimed to underpin their main features for each study question. The categories were defined using concepts from APA thesaurus (APA, 2021) or APA dictionary (APA, 2020), thus allowing more meaningful conceptual clusters. Data extraction was done using a characterization tool, filled in excel. The tool is presented as supplementary material (Appendix 2) in the online version of the article.

Collating, Summarizing, and Reporting Results

This phase of the work is visible in the presentation of results and their discussion. The Results section begins with a clear indication of the studies/ sources of evidence selection process, using the flow diagram suggested by PRISMA (Tricco et al., 2018) and a brief list of each study included. Because of the large number of studies involved, two options were taken. The first was to use O’Flaherty and Phillips’s (2015) suggestion to number each study and to use this number to mention or quote the study in the text. The second option was to use Pham’s et al. (2014) suggestion of presenting more detailed information of each study as supplementary information (Appendix 3), available in the online version of the article.

The presentation of the results also includes a summary table with a synthesis of the main results for each study question, followed by a narrative synthesis using the same order (Levac et al., 2010). The Discussion section follows, using the study question order and ending with the study’s main implications and limitations. A final section of Conclusion is presented.

Results

The initial search on the eight databases rendered 930 studies. After duplicates removal, screening, and eligibility assessment, 58 studies entered the final selection. This process is presented in Fig. 1 using the PRISMA flow diagram (Tricco et al., 2018). The studies included in the final selection are shown in Table 3, organized by authors and with a numerical reference used throughout the text.

Research Extent

Answering the first study question (Q1), the selection points to an increase in the number of studies from 2011–2015 (22 studies) to 2016–2020 (36 studies). Regarding the origin of the studies, 80% of the studies were from western provenance, with a slight difference between North America (25 studies) and Europe (21 studies). In the European studies, a substantive contribution of Belgium and Netherlands was found, related to research teams highly active in identity development study. The other regions account for a small percentage of the selection (3 or 4 studies). South America was represented with only one study from Brazil on the identity of adolescents living in institutional shelters (5). These results are visible in Table 4, which summarizes the results for all the study questions.

Conceptual Approaches

The focus of 78% of the studies in this research was identity. Nevertheless, because identity summons different conceptual approaches, it is essential to

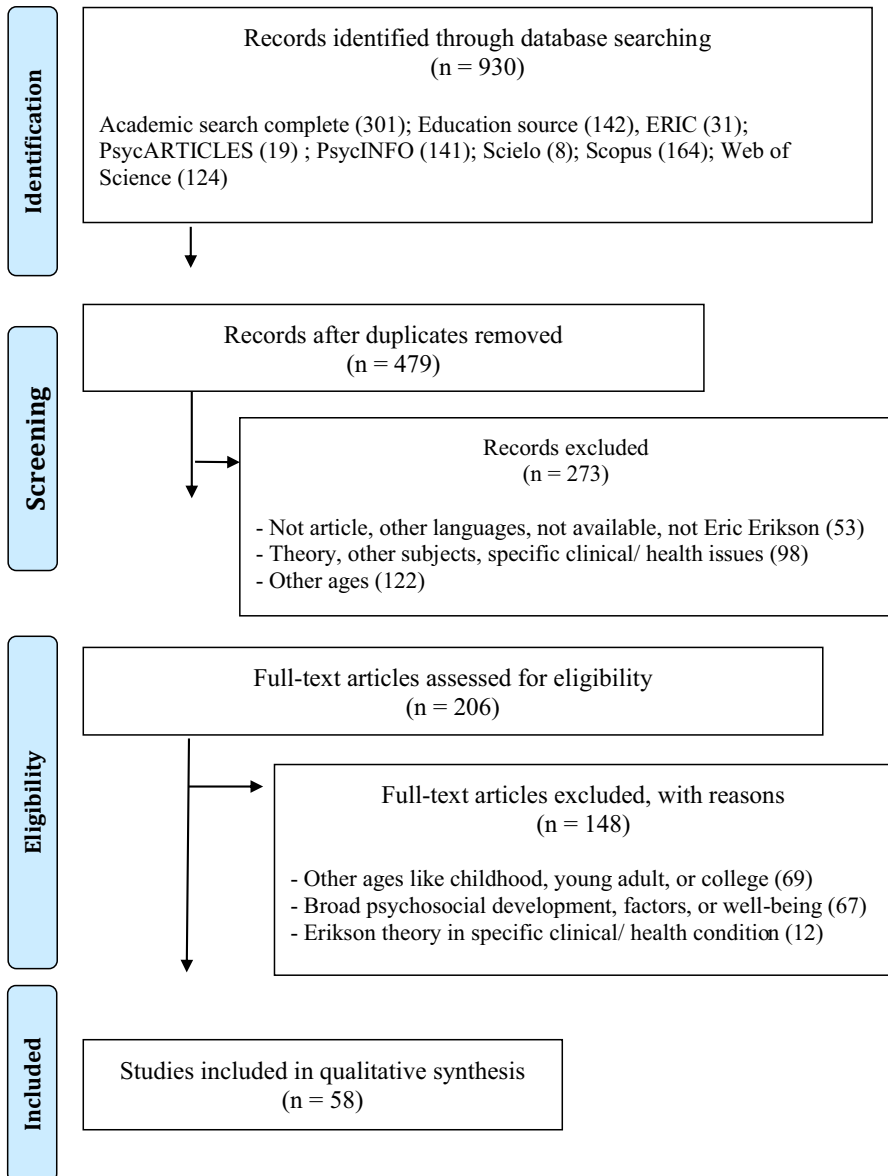


Fig. 1 PRISMA flowchart of study selection process

understand which conceptual lenses were used. For this purpose, three main categories were suggested. The first category, named *general identity issues*, includes studies addressing more general questions regarding identity and accounts for 20% of the references. The second category, called *identity formation*, includes the studies addressing identity development throughout adolescence and accounts for 46% of the references. Finally, the third category is named *specific identities* and includes

Table 3 Studies included and numerical reference

Ref	Authors and date	Ref	Authors and date
1	Alberts & Bennett, 2017	30	Hatton, 2012
2	Becht et al., 2016	31	Hill & Burrow, 2012
3	Becht et al., 2017	32	Ja & Jose, 2017
4	Bogaerts et al., 2019	33	Jones et al., 2014
5	Brito et al., 2017	34	Lawford et al., 2020
6	Brittian & Lerner, 2013	35	Lawford et al., 2018
7	Brown et al., 2017	36	Lee & Beckert, 2012
8	Busey and Russell III, 2016	37	Lisha et al., 2014
9	Chávez, 2016	38	Luyckx et al., 2015
10	Claes et al., 2014	39	MacPherson et al., 2016
11	Cuzzocrea, 2019	40	Makhubela, 2012
12	Czyzowska & Mikołajewska, 2014	41	Matusov & Smith, 2012
13	Dimitrova et al., 2019	42	McLean & Pasupathi, 2012
14	Driessens, 2015	43	Meca et al., 2019
15	Dunkel & Harbke, 2017	44	Meca et al., 2017
16	Eichas et al., 2018	45	Mercer et al., 2017
17	Eichas et al., 2017	46	Nelson et al., 2018
18	Furman & Collibee, 2014	47	Okonkwo, 2013
19	Gandhi et al., 2016b	48	Oshri et al., 2014
20	Gandhi et al., 2016a	49	Pratt et al., 2013
21	Gandhi et al., 2016c	50	Ragelienė, 2016
22	Gandhi et al., 2017	51	Solobutina, 2020
23	Gandhi et al., 2019	52	Steensma et al., 2013
24	Gfellner & Armstrong, 2012	53	Timler et al., 2020
25	Ghavami et al., 2011	54	Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018
26	Grigsby et al., 2018	55	van Halen et al., 2020
27	Gu et al., 2020	56	Verschueren et al., 2018
28	Hatano et al., 2018	57	Waterman, 2015
29	Hatano et al., 2020	58	Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2012

Note: complete presentation of each study can be found in Appendix 2 on the online version of the article

the studies focusing on specific elements valued in personal identity formation and accounts for 12% of the references. Table 5 presents the distribution of the studies in these three categories related to identity.

The general identity issues category includes important broad themes regarding identity. The first theme is identity's central role in adolescent psychosocial development and well-being in western samples (e.g., 16, 29, 54, 55) and non-western samples, where interesting contextual specificities are presented (1, 13, 29, 36, 47). Another theme is the value of studying identity in the lifespan context, encompassing earlier stages of development, and considering identity development throughout life (9, 15). Other studies acknowledge the role of the context

Table 4 Main features of included studies

Question	Main categories	No	Total	
Year (Q1)	2011–2015	22		
	2016–2020	36	58	
Country (Q1)	Africa	3		
	Asia	4		
	Australia/Oceania	4		
	Europe (9 BE + 6 NE + 8 other)	21		
	North America (20 USA + 5 CA)	25		
	South America	1	58	
Main concept ¹ (Q2)	General identity issues	16		
	Identity formation	35		
	Ethnic, gender, and occupational identity	9		
	Psychosocial development	10		
	Intimacy and generativity	4		
	Other, ego strengths	2		
	Other, gifted students	1	77	
Study design (Q3)	Cross-sectional	19		
	Literature reviews	6		
	Longitudinal	23		
	Mix methods	2		
	Qualitative	6		
	Quasi-experimental	2	58	
Measures ¹ (Q3)	EPSI, identity subscale	21		
	Other scales (used only one time)	14		
	U-MICS Utrecht M. identity commitments scale	4		
	EOM-EIS ego identity status	3		
	LGS, Loyola generativity scale	3		
	ISI, identity style inventory	2		
	PIES, psychosocial inventory of ego strengths	2	49	
Topic ¹ (Q4)	Biological development	3		
	Psychological development	Adolescent characteristics	15	
		Adolescent health	25	
		Community	12	
		Parents	6	
		Peers	11	
	School	8		
	Intervention	5		
	Methodology	7	92	

Notes: ¹some of the studies have more than one reference

in adolescents' development, including the relation with peers (39, 50), and the need to consider change and novelty, visible in the study of urban configurations like tagging cliques (7) or the study of online settings (30). Apart from this last reference, whose subject is drama education and the online environment, no other study was found that addressed online settings or social media. Still, in the

Table 5 Identity conceptual approach

Conceptual approach		No
General identity issues		16
Identity formation	Identity resolution	22
	Identity exploration and commitment	12
	Identity styles	1
Ethnic, gender, and occupational identity	Ethnic identity	7
	Gender identity	1
	Occupational identity	1

context of this category, a single study was found focusing on Erikson's moratoria (11).

In the category identity formation, three different conceptual approaches were found. The most represented approach was *identity resolution* (22 studies), which focuses on the tension between identity synthesis and identity confusion. Most of the studies in this approach point to the distinction between identity synthesis and identity confusion, whose differences are visible in adolescent development and well-being outcomes. Regarding other approaches, *identity exploration and commitment* is the primary approach of 12 studies, and *identity styles* appear in just one study (12). Finally, in the category addressing specific identities, *ethnic identity* is the guiding approach of seven studies from North America (8, 24, 25, 26, 44, 48, 54), while *gender identity* and *occupational and vocational identity* are approached in a single study each (52, 9).

Besides identity, there are four other categories of conceptual approaches. The first is *psychosocial development* (13% of the studies). In this category, five studies discussed the importance of understanding development as permanent growth. Some of them remind us of Erikson's epigenetic continuum and the value of the association between stages and each stage-specific tasks and challenges across development (9, 15, 18, 37, 42). Despite this, only one literature review on occupational and vocational identity (9) approached adolescent's identity integrating pre-adolescent stages. In the same category, another important conceptual focus was the biological dimension of development (33, 46, 53) and the social dimension, including family, school, and peers (14, 32). The last three categories of conceptual approaches included the study of *other stages* in adolescence, like intimacy or generativity (34, 35, 49, 58), the study of Erikson's *ego strengths* (6, 24), and a single study focusing on the gifted students (51).

Designs and Measures

Erikson's psychosocial development research presents a high number of studies with quantitative designs (72%), with a slight difference between longitudinal (40%) and cross-sectional studies (33%). Qualitative studies (10%) and literature reviews (10%) were also found in a smaller number, followed by studies using mixed methods (4%) and by two studies using quasi-experimental designs (4%).

Regarding measures, twenty different instruments were found. The Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (EPSI) (Rosenthal et al., 1981) must be highlighted as the instrument used in more studies (43%). However, caution is required regarding this result because, with one exception (58), only the identity subscale of the instrument was used. A second important finding was the number of scales used exclusively in one study (28.57%). The measures used in two or more studies were different versions of the Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale (U-MICS) (2, 3, 29, 45); the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOM-EIS) (5, 33, 36); the Identity Style Inventory (ISI) (12, 34); the Psychosocial Inventory of Ego Strengths (PIES) (24, 36); and the Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS) (34, 35, 49) present in three of the studies.

Main Topics and Variables

From the review of all the studies, a set of categories was created to present the main topics and variables. These topics were distributed in three complementary dimensions of psychosocial development: biological, psychological, and social (Erikson, 1968/1994b; Erikson & Erikson, 1998). Table 6 presents the three dimensions, the main topics, the variables found, and the number of studies addressing them. Because the same study may examine more than one variable, some studies appear in the table more than once.

The *biological dimension* is the dimension with fewer studies. Nevertheless, these studies illustrate the importance of the physical component in identity development (33, 46, 53). The *psychological dimension*, which addresses the person's mental functions, attributes, or states (APA, 2021), includes two topics. The first is *adolescent characteristics*, which groups the studies on adolescents' features, traits, or qualities (APA, 2021). Besides attachment (35), results highlight the relation between identity and personality traits, including the "big five" (31), reactivity and regulation (21), sociotropy and autonomy (19), differentiation of self (50), and self-concept (55). Other results express the relations between identity and a set of psychological factors or strengths related to adolescents' personality, health, or well-being (APA, 2020), such as fidelity (6), life goals (17), purpose in life (31), trust (20, 32), resilience and cognitive autonomy (36), optimism and self-esteem (44), and empathy (50). A single study was found focusing on the need to attend to the specific needs of gifted adolescent development (51).

The second topic in the psychological dimension was *adolescent health*, addressing the adolescent state of complete well-being (WHO, 1948) and all related behaviors, services, activities, and other factors that promote well-being (APA, 2021). This topic is undoubtedly the one that concentrates more studies, which speaks loudly of the importance of identity formation (identity synthesis, identity confusion, identity status, or identity maturity) as pivotal in adolescent health, development, and well-being. This topic includes a set of studies with the subject of well-being, including subjective well-being (29), psychological well-being (25), and the relation between identity resolution and identity exploration (4). It also includes a set of studies focused on risk factors that may affect identity formation, including

Table 6 Topics, variables, and study count

Topics	Variables and number of studies	Total
Biological	Body esteem + 1, physical maturity + 1, motor competence + 1	3
Psychological	Attachment + 1, personality traits + 5, psychological factors (strengths) + 8, gifted + 1	40
	Well-being + 3, risk factors + 4, protective factors + 11, adjustment + 4, positive youth development (PYD) + 3	
Social	Cultural change + 6, opportunities and constraints + 3, prosocial behavior + 2, religion + 1	37
	Parenting + 1, mother child relation + 2, shelters + 1, exposure to violence + 1, emotional abuse + 1	
	Belonging + 1, negative identity + 2, relationship quality + 7, precocious romance + 1	
	Educational domain + 3, after-school programs + 1, school adjustment + 4	
Intervention	Ethnic identity + 1, drama learning online + 1, PYD + 3	5
Methodology	Assessment + 2, general factor + 1, measurement + 4	7

the state of “lostness” (32), confusion (44), gender identity issues (52), or self-definition problems (55). Another set of studies brought forward identity as a protective factor regarding nonsuicidal self-injury (10, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 38), substance use (26, 48), and eating disorders (56), and also, psychological and mental adjustment, namely, anxiety (2, 28) and depression symptoms (10, 28, 43). Another interesting result was the study of identity in the framework of positive youth development (PYD) (6, 16, 17).

Social dimension variables were organized according to different settings of the adolescent ecosystem, thus including community, family, peers, and school. In general, the set of studies in the social dimension draws attention to the importance of the context in adolescent development and how context-specific challenges, expectations, possibilities, and constraints may promote or hinder identity. Looking at the *community* topic, some studies tackle the question of cultural change, approaching issues affecting many immigrant adolescents or adolescents with immigrant families (24, 25, 26, 48), and adolescents in cultures whose values are in accelerated change (e.g., 1, 47). Still looking at the community topic, studies also point to specific opportunities like extracurricular activities (14) and support for occupational identity (9), or to their absence, of which a study (11) discussing how youth prospects may transform Erikson’s moratoria into a kind of waithood, is a good example. Other studies focus on the relation between development–identity and prosocial behavior, understood as contribution to the community (6, 49). Another study shows how religion is related to a more mature and adaptive identity style (12). Looking at the *family* topic, a first result is that almost all the studies focused on parents–adolescent relations, highlighting parenting practices (49) and the relation adolescent–mother (20, 23). Three studies focus on challenging family situations and their impact on adolescent development, like growing up in shelters (5), exposure to violence (40), and emotional abuse (27). Looking at *peers* topic, one study focuses on the relation between identity and group belonging (50), and several studies value the association between identity formation and positive relationships with peers (20, 23, 28, 34, 39, 50) including dating goals (58). Two studies focused on issues related to the formation of negative identities, including the urban cliques (7) and delinquency (45). One study brought up the romantic involvement subject and the impact of early romantic relationships on adolescents’ development (18). Looking at the *school* topic, the first finding is that none of the studies specifically addresses school. Some studies refer to the educational domain of identity development (2, 3, 29); others present results regarding the relation between development–identity and school adjustment (8, 9), including student connectedness (32), student engagement, and student achievement (54). Apart from one study analyzing immigrant adolescents’ lack of interest in social studies class (8), which included some concrete pedagogical features, and another study examining after-school activities (14), no other study specifically addresses school as a psychosocial developmental setting. In addition to this dim investment in studying the relationship between development and the school setting, there is a blatant absence in this selection of studies regarding technology, online settings, and social media in adolescence.

In the *intervention topic*, only four studies were found. One intervention focused on drama learning online (30). Another intervention, aiming to promote ethnic-racial

identity, presented promising results regarding psychosocial functioning, including school adjustment (54). The most striking result on intervention oriented to enhance identity is the concept of cascade effects, that is, the evidence that the promotion of psychosocial resources like identity has positive effects in other personal and social adolescent resources, which affect others' resources, and so on (16, 17, 54). In the *methodology topic*, our attention was drawn to the possibility and interest of combining identity statuses and identity narrative approaches in the study of identity (3, 42), as well as to the concern with identity measurement psychometry (13, 37, 57) and conceptual definition (41). Finally, in this topic, one literature review analyzed the data from Erikson's psychosocial development measures, confirming not only the strong association between stages but a "general factor" of psychosocial development (15).

Research and Intervention Suggestions

About *research*, some common limitations were found regarding sample issues such as size or composition (19 studies), instruments or measures issues (10 studies), and the value of longitudinal research to study development (10 studies). Beyond these general limitations, Table 7 presents more specific suggestions regarding psychosocial development research. Some of these suggestions are more related to methodological issues, including the advantage of complementing self-report assessment with more objective information (4, 10, 20, 27, 38, 54, 56) or combining identity status with identity narrative (42). Other suggestions include the widening of the geographical and cultural scope of research (4, 56, 29) or the deepening of the relation between development and different developmental settings (2, 4), with particular regard to contexts marked by change, technology innovations, social media, and online communication (30). Finally, some suggestions valued the need for a more integrated understanding of identity in lifespan development, that is, considering identity along with other psychosocial stages of infancy and adult life (9, 34, 35, 49).

Because the subject of most of the studies was identity, the results regarding *intervention* also focus primarily on identity. Table 6 presents five different ideas conveyed by the different studies. The first idea highlights the importance of

Table 7 Suggestions for research and intervention

Research	Intervention
1. Self-report measures with other assessment strategies and experimental designs	1. Personal identity (resolution, exploration, or style) matters for adolescents and society
2. Identity status and identity narrative	2. Identity is preventive and fosters the ability to cope with challenges
3. Go beyond western views and samples	3. Opportunities for exploration and rich, supportive settings
4. Deepen psychosocial development in online and school settings	4. Identification with social/cultural group and connection to the larger society
5. Potential of studying identity development in the lifespan and the relation between stages	5. Identity cascade effect

personal identity for adolescent development and well-being. In this sense, not only the role played by identity synthesis and confusion is amplified (e.g., 43), but also exploration processes (45) and different identity styles (12) are valued, with benefits for adolescents and also for society well-being (6, 46, 48). The second idea considers identity's preventive power (10, 38, 20, 21, 22, 46, 56) and its value in promoting self-discovery and coping with contexts and life challenges (5, 17, 47). The third idea is the need for opportunities for active identity development through self-construction and self-discovery (43), including the importance of investing in contexts like school community (33), school and educators' cultural responsiveness (8), extracurricular opportunities (14), and online contexts (30), among others. A fourth idea arises from studies with adolescents from minority groups that defend the importance of identifying with their own cultural or social group background (24, 25, 44, 54) and, concurrently, with the larger society (25). Finally, the fifth suggestion appears from the evidence that personal identity development fosters other personal and social resources in a cascade effect (16, 33, 34, 54).

Discussion

Our research problem aimed to identify the main features of research on Erikson's psychosocial development in adolescence over the last decade. This section discusses results for each study question (Q1 to Q5), ending with the main implications and limitations of the study.

Erikson's Inspired Research Growth

Starting with the extent of the research (Q1), the studies show a growing trend throughout the decade. These results stress the actuality of Erikson's *way of looking at things* (Erikson, 1950/1993, p. 403), acknowledged in some studies included in the review (e.g., 31, 42, 6 15, 32) but also in the work of other authors (Marcia, 2015; Newman & Newman, 2015; Zhang, 2015). About the western affiliation of most of the studies, although in part due to the methodological search and selection options, it is consistent with the predominance of North America and Western Europe in psychological research (García-Martínez et al., 2012; O'Gorman et al., 2012) and in identity research (Schwartz et al., 2012). This reality is a challenge to give voice to researchers from other geographies, fostering a deeper understanding of human psychology (Arnett, 2008) and psychosocial development (Chávez, 2016; Hatano et al., 2020), moreover at the present time of heightened international contact (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017).

Identity in the Center of Research

About the conceptual approaches (Q2), most of the studies focused on identity. This finding is coherent with the centrality of identity in adolescent psychosocial development, not only the basis for feeling alive in the "social jungle of human existence"

(Erikson, 1968/1994b, p. 130) but also the key to a healthy adult life (Kroger, 2018). Among different conceptual approaches, results highlighted three main approaches: identity resolution, identity exploration and commitment, and identity styles. Although studies focused differently on these three approaches, one study shows the relation between identity resolution and identity exploration and commitment (4). This study indicates that adolescents achieving a certain level of identity synthesis engage in more proactive identity exploration. Returning to different identity approaches; most of the studies opted for the identity resolution approach, the one closest to Erikson's identity crisis definition, which includes identity synthesis (or coherence in some studies) and identity confusion. In this approach, many studies defend that identity synthesis and identity confusion are two distinct realities, with specific outcomes in adolescent development and well-being (e.g., 10, 32, 43, 44). These results align with Erikson's claim that identity synthesis and identity confusion contribute differently to a personal sense of identity (Erikson, 1968/1994b). Other authors explain this claim by showing that identity synthesis enhances adolescent positive and meaningful action, while in contrast, identity confusion enhances the perception of the inability to stick to one's view of oneself, to integrate the different roles, or to make good decisions (Newman & Newman, 2015). The fewer number of studies using other identity approaches besides identity resolution deserves a note. This result may be explained by the search strategy option that used "Erikson" as the key search term, thus hindering the selection of studies where "Erikson" is referred to only in the main text body. Maybe, for this reason, our selection did not fully grasp the research vitality of approaches such as identity exploration and commitment (e.g., Meeus, 2011) or identity styles (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2014).

Two other findings considering conceptual approaches are noteworthy. The first raises the question of the criticism toward psychosocial theory because of its cultural limitations (Newman & Newman, 2015). In this review, non-western studies in South Africa (1), Brazil (5), Japan (29), Taiwan (36), and Nigeria (47) validate the cross-cultural importance of personal identity in psychosocial development, stressing contextual and cultural specificities. These results align with Schwartz et al. (2012) review of different studies that validate the cross-cultural importance of identity while suggesting differences between western and non-western countries. The second finding is about the specific identities that are integrated into personal identity. Among the selected studies, ethnic identity appears as an essential subject, calling attention to the role of ethnic heritage and cultural values in identity (Meeus, 2011; Newman & Newman, 2015; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Zacarés & Iborra, 2015) and the needs and challenges of adolescents from immigrants or minority groups concerning identity development (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Schwartz et al., 2012). In addition, ethnic identity, as sexual identity and occupational identity, is strongly present in Erikson's identity theory (1968/1994b). However, in this review, besides the ethnic identity expressivity, mainly in North American studies, only one study was found for gender identity (52) and another for occupational and vocational identity (9).

Another significant theme in the conceptual approach question is psychosocial development as a continuum throughout the lifespan, where the identity crisis should not be understood as an isolated stage (9, 15, 37, 46). For Erikson (1968/1994b), the

advantage of a human development theory is the possibility to understand and study the “wherefrom” and “whereto” of development as permanent growth (p. 24). The idea of identity formation as an isolated happening prompted Erikson’s impatience with “the faddish equation, (...) of the term identity with the question ‘Who am I?’” (1968/1994b, p. 314). We can find the expression of who one is, who one wishes to be, and what one wishes to do with life (Schwartz et al., 2012) in the concept of *wholeness*. For Erikson (1968/1994b), wholeness expresses an inner sense of identity that entails and realigns (a) the former identifications of childhood with a new way of envisaging the future and (b) the perception of oneself with the perception of other’s assessments and expectations (pp. 86–87). This dynamic interplay between previous development and future envisagement and between oneself and significant others explains each person’s lifelong permanent revision and growth. It also explains why pre-adolescent stages matter for identity and why identity matters to all other stages, including adult life (Kroger, 2018).

The interconnection between stages is well explained in Erikson’s epigenetic principle (1950/1993, 1968/1994b, 1959/1994a), which assumes (a) all parts of the development should be considered in relation to all others and (b) all of them exist in some form before its decisive and critical time of ascendance. Illustrating the idea, several studies in the selection focused on intimacy (34, 58) and generativity (34, 35, 49) in adolescence). Another study from the sample (15), aiming to review Erikson’s psychosocial development assessment, analyzed 62 correlation matrices of 50 different samples. Evidence supported the strong association between stages, as well as the existence of a psychosocial development general factor, as if all stages were built on one another to form a “functional whole” (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017, p. 59). What implications should these findings have for psychosocial development and identity research? Among the studies included in this research, although some studies raised the question (e.g., 42), only one literature review on occupational and vocational identity suggested an analysis of identity that included pre-adolescent stages (9).

Methodological Challenges

Results about the designs and measures of the studies in this selection (Q3) showed a predominance of quantitative studies divided between longitudinal and cross-sectional designs. The option for longitudinal studies is highly valued in the study of development (e.g., 4), allowing a deeper understanding of changes and how identity “emerge and become consolidated over time” (Newman & Newman, 2015, 81). Regarding the measurement of Erikson’s psychosocial development, a high number of studies used the Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (Rosenthal et al., 1981), an instrument built to assess the six first stages of psychosocial development from trust to intimacy. However, the studies only included the identity subscale, comprising six items that assess identity synthesis (positive items) and six items that assess identity confusion (negative items). Other scattered instruments were found, most of them used only in one or two studies. This reality may express some dispersion concerning methodological and assessment issues. Amid the results regarding

methodological issues, three challenges seem to be noteworthy. The first appears as a plea for complementarity between quantitative and qualitative methods in psychosocial development and identity study, in which the narrative approach has a special place (Bazuin-Yoder, 2011; McLean & Pasupathi, 2012). The second is the challenge to overcome the fragilities of self-assessment questionnaires (Waterman, 2015) and the importance of measures oriented to integrate the different stages in lifespan development (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017; Rosenthal et al., 1981). The third challenge refers to the need for measures with good psychometric qualities (Newman & Newman, 2015).

Psychosocial Development and Supporting Settings

About topics and variables (Q4), the results present a diverse and rich set of subjects covering many aspects of psychosocial development. From the analysis of the results, we identified four main issues for the discussion: (i) prominence of identity in adolescent development and well-being; (ii) social environment opportunities and limitations; (iii) psychosocial developmental settings; and (iv) psychosocial development and positive youth development (PYD).

The prominence and strength of identity in adolescent development and well-being are the most meaningful result of this research when considering the number of studies. This finding is in line with Erikson's (1968/1994b) intuition of identity not as "high privilege" or "lofty ideals" but as a "psychological necessity" (p. 132). Other authors also underline the importance of identity for adolescent and future adult development and well-being (e.g., Kroger, 2018; Meeus, 2011, 2016; Newman & Newman, 2015; Ragelienė, 2016; Tsang et al., 2012; Zacarés & Iborra, 2015). Results express eloquently the association between identity and subjective and psychological well-being, anxiety, depressive symptoms, delinquency, nonsuicidal self-injury, eating disorders, substance use, delinquency, and school adjustment. The importance of identity encompasses personal well-being, but because identity promotes adolescent prosocial behavior and contribution (6, 49), it also encompasses community and social well-being, which is consistent with other studies (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2014).

The second issue considers the social environment and its opportunities and limitations. Because development does not happen in a vacuum (2, 4), social environment or ethos (Erikson & Erikson, 1998), with its social, economic, and historical factors (Erikson, 1959/1994a), is a keystone of psychosocial development that influence "pattern, pace, and direction" of development (Newman & Newman, 2015, p. 8), which other authors support (e.g., Chávez, 2016; Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Zacarés & Iborra, 2015). Psychosocial development entails the encounter between adolescents' "increasing capacities" and their culture's "opportunities and limitations" (Erikson, 1968/1994b, p. 93). Several studies focused on social realities that hinder identity or promote identity confusion or negative identity. Besides contextual distress such as exposure to violence, emotional abuse, and institutional shelters, an expressive theme is the visibility of cultural change and its challenges, affecting many minority groups or immigrant adolescents and adolescents in cultures facing

accelerated change. In this context, different studies highlight the role of ethnic identity. Along with the importance of occupational, sexual, and ideological dimensions of identity (Caldeira & Veiga, 2013), Erikson stressed the importance of ethnic identity (1959/1994a, 1968/1994b). In the present research, results from the studies focusing on ethnic identity showed that identification with the ethnic culture of origin, over bicultural or fluid identifications, is positively related with identity development (1, 24, 25, 26, 47, 48) and negatively associated with a “state of lostness” (32). These results may be better explained by Erikson’s (1968/1994b) understanding of identity as a pressing psychological need that cannot be accomplished by a weak or impoverished sense of being “not-quite-somebody” (p. 176). In the same direction, one of the studies analyzed one intervention to enhance adolescents’ ethnic-racial identity (54) and presented evidence that ethnic-racial identity is related to adolescents’ identity synthesis, higher self-esteem, lower depressive symptoms, and better grades. These results are consistent with other studies on immigrant identity formation that favor the integration of cultural heritage and mainstream culture versus assimilation, separation, or marginalization (Bazuin-Yoder, 2011). These results also complement the extant research by heightening the role of a positive and valued ethnic identity (e.g., Meeus, 2011; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014).

One common feature of the studies in our sample focusing on ethnic identity is their North American origin. Does it mean that ethnic identity lessons are exclusive for North American youth? The “intriguing picture” of ethnic differences on identity formation must convey differences between ethnic groups, identity domains, and countries (Crocetti et al., 2011). Nevertheless, lessons considering ethnic identity, especially the lesson of empowering adolescents to discover, connect and identify with their origin heritage and culture, versus tepid biculturalism or forced integration, may be progressively more meaningful in our increasingly diverse societies (Schwartz et al., 2012).

The third issue addresses psychosocial developmental settings. Erikson (1968/1994b) points out the role of context in psychosocial development, which demands “concepts and studies to understand the mutual complementation of ego synthesis and social organization” (Erikson, 1968/1994b, p. 53). This need is more striking when settings, culture, and social relations face so many changes and even more pressing when we address online communication and social media with its promises and threats (Kay, 2018). However, only one study in this research selection addressed online environments (30). The absence of this subject, although unexpected considering prior literature (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017; Tsang et al., 2012) and the growing concern regarding the role of social media in adolescent well-being (Shankleman et al., 2021), is consistent with other reviews that call attention to the fragility of theoretical frameworks and the scarcity of studies about the relation between identity, social media, and online contexts (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011; Wängqvist & Frisé, 2016). In the balance between promising prospects of online settings for adolescent’s identity, relations, and development (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014; Wängqvist & Frisé, 2016), and specific challenges regarding the time spent, activity, and addiction (Keles et al., 2020; Shankleman et al., 2021), Erikson’s *way of looking at things* could propel innovative insights for research and intervention (Kay, 2018; Tsang et al., 2012).

Although covering research on Erikson's psychosocial development on adolescence in the last decade, the selected studies narrowly account for the role of developmental relations or settings in adolescents' development, including community, family, peers, or schools. The results express a clear need for research in all these types of relations or settings, a finding which is confirmed in other literature reviews (e.g., Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Ragelienė, 2016). The paramount importance of social environments in children and adolescents' health and development (Koepke & Denissen, 2012), particularly in school settings, is well documented (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Twum-Antwi et al., 2020). For this reason, the sparse presence of the school in the cluster of studies included in this research was unexpected. Educational issues are brought up in nine studies. Still, while most studies emphasized the positive association between development–identity and broad school adjustment outcomes, like achievement or connectedness, only one study focuses on the school setting and pedagogical features (8). The school's potential to provide rich bases for a positive and firm sense of inner identity is suggested in some studies (e.g., 32) and in many literature reviews (Cross & Cross, 2017; McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Symonds & Galton, 2014; Twum-Antwi et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020), both for the lasting benefits of academic learning and foundational social experiences, but also for the possibility of intentionally *boosting* school support, relations, experiences, and opportunities (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Sprinthall & Collins, 2011; Carvalho, 2019). Moreover, the main goal of the right to education and, therefore, the school's primary mission is students' personality development (Dahl et al., 2018; Patton et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2019; UNICEF, 2018). This mission requires new concepts and approaches, especially today, when the student population is increasingly diverse regarding backgrounds, socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, and abilities, including gifted or high abilities adolescent students (Cross & Cross, 2017). Although Erikson's framework is commonly suggested as a guide to support the psychosocial development of gifted adolescent students (Cross, 2001; Cross & Cross, 2017), only one article was found in this selection focusing on this subject (51). The article compared the positive identity of “intellectually gifted” and “sport talented” adolescents, with better results to the former.

The fourth and last issue focuses on the relation, featured in some studies, between Erikson's psychosocial development and the framework of positive youth development or PYD. This relation is present in a study about the relation between Erikson's concept of fidelity and adolescent contribution to the community (6). Another two studies highlight the association between PYD-based intervention and psychosocial development, including identity (16, 17). Consistent with results presented in other studies not included in the selection (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2014; Carvalho & Veiga, 2020), this association may offer promising avenues for research and intervention (Tsang et al., 2012).

Studying and Promoting Identity

Moving to the last study question (Q5), three challenges can be stressed regarding *research*. The first is to broaden the cultural scope beyond Europe and North

America to understand better personal identity (Newman & Newman, 2015; Schwartz et al., 2012; Zacarés & Iborra, 2015). The second is a more significant investment in the study of privileged developmental settings, including online settings for their novelty (Shapiro & Margolin, 2014; Tsang et al., 2012; Valkenburg & Peter, 2011) and school settings for their importance (McLaughlin & Clarke, 2010; Symonds & Galton, 2014; Twum-Antwi et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). The third challenge is to integrate identity in psychosocial development across the lifespan (Chávez, 2016; Dunkel & Harbke, 2017).

Regarding *intervention*, identity formation is highlighted in adolescent development, health, and well-being, appearing as an essential and promising focus of intervention (e.g., 44), which is supported by other authors (Knight et al., 2014; Tsang et al., 2012). Some studies emphasize this idea through the concept of a cascade effect, supporting that the intervention to enhance psychosocial development (e.g., trust and identity) initiates a dynamic of personal and social resources enrichment (16, 32, 54). Selected studies reinforced this idea when presenting evidence of the relation between identity and psychological strengths such as fidelity, life goals, purpose in life, trust, resilience, cognitive autonomy, optimism, self-esteem, and empathy.

Implications and Limitations

The present research was based on a rigorously planned selection of studies that allowed a comprehensive overview of the existing research on Erikson's psychosocial development in adolescence over the last decade. To our knowledge, this is the only updated and comprehensive mapping of published research explicitly on Erikson's psychosocial development theory. For this reason, results allow the discussion about what exists, what is needed, what is challenging, and what is worthwhile regarding research and intervention.

Nevertheless, some limitations must be considered. The first is that a scoping review aims for coverage but not for exhaustiveness. Therefore, findings must be considered with caution. This limitation is visible in the range of the studies, excessively centered in western studies and publications. In future studies, increased attention should be given to different databases and journals to include a more diverse representation of studies, namely, from South America. One solution to tackle this limitation is to complement the option for published, peer-reviewed articles with other sources of information known as *gray literature* (O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). Another feature that narrowed the results was the focus on Erikson's approach. Though it may stress the need for researchers to invest in a better presentation of their theoretical filiation, this option left out studies that, although inspired by Erikson's theory, do not mention it in the title, abstract, or keywords, thus hampering their search in databases. Because Erikson's inspired research was the focus of this study, other studies are needed to deepen and systematize the piecemeal scientific literature on specific psychosocial concepts like identity and its different approaches, including identity exploration and commitment, and identity styles. Another limitation, due to time and budget constraints, was the decision not to include research

focused on young adult development and its challenges, which would promote a richer understanding of identity development in early and middle adolescence. A last general limitation, felt during the research process, was the need to include more researchers, which would have enriched the analysis and reduced the risk of biased options more effectively.

Conclusion

This research aimed to understand and systematize piecemeal research based on Erikson's theory. When looking at the results, two conclusions appear. The first conclusion highlights that Erikson's *way of looking at things* continues to inspire a dynamic and burgeoning research activity. Research shows that not only is Erikson "in fashion" (Zhang, 2015), but research on his theory is accelerating (Dunkel & Harbke, 2017), providing a rich and diverse set of studies covering many of Erikson's psychosocial development issues. They also strengthen the importance of Erikson's psychosocial concepts for adolescents' present-day development, health, and well-being, emphasizing the pivotal role of adolescent identity formation, the central theme of most studies in this selection.

The second conclusion highlights the conviction that researchers, practitioners, and educators can enhance adolescents' "high growth potential" (Erikson, 1968/1994b, p. 163). The studies in this selection reinforce this possibility, pointing to the importance of developmental settings like family, friends and peers, school, and community in adolescents' psychosocial development. However, the dispersed and small number of studies addressing these settings facing accelerated change and new challenges exposes the need for more profound and systematic research. Besides this general stance, the dim presence of studies focusing on online and school settings appears as a current research and intervention challenge. A final emerging theme, present in the selected studies and related to enhance adolescents' high growth potential, is the need to study identity in lifespan development, thus avoiding static notions and keeping (some) fidelity toward Erikson's view of development as a permanent and dynamic process of human growth.

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Author Contribution NC and FV worked on the protocol and methodological design of the review. NC carried out the research, analyzed the studies, and presented the initial text for the results and their discussion. FV oversaw the conceptualization, research, and analysis of the studies. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Declarations

Conflict of Interest The authors declare no competing interests.

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