

DOROTA CZYŻOWSKA
KAMILA MIKOŁAJEWSKA

Institute of Psychology
Jagiellonian University

RELIGIOSITY AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONSTRUCTION OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

According to Erikson (1964, 1965), developing our individual approach to religion is a very important part of our mature and integrated identity development. The aim of the present study was to determine the connection between religiosity and identity development in adolescence. 300 students of Cracow's high and junior high schools (including Catholic schools) filled in Polish versions of Huber's Centrality of Religiosity Scale and Berzonsky's Identity Style Inventory. The results confirmed the expected connection between identity styles and religiosity constructs defined as a system located in the personality of the individual. Indicators of religion correlated most positively with the normative and informational styles and negatively with the diffuse/avoidant style. Attaching weight to religion and giving it an important role in life was associated with having a more mature and adaptive identity style. Lack of interest in religion occurred in people whose identity was fragmented and nonintegrated. Some differences were noted between students of Catholic and non-Catholic schools.

Keywords: adolescence, identity style, religiosity.

INTRODUCTION

Erik H. Erikson (1968, 2004) believed the main and most important task of adolescence to be the formation of an integrated sense of personal identity. Growing up is the time when a young person must answer the questions of who they are, what they aim at, and what their place in the world is. On the one hand, identity formation, which occupies the central position in Erikson's developmen-

tal schema, constitutes a summary and synthesis of the previous stages of an individual's development; on the other, it creates foundations for resolving further crises and for the person's further development. In Erikson's opinion, it is a particularly important and at the same time particularly difficult time in the life of an adolescent, and how he or she copes with the crisis inherent in this time to a large extent determines their further development and course of life.

An interesting continuation and extension of Erikson's thought on identity crisis and the effects of its resolution is the proposal offered by James Marcia (1966, 1967, 1980), who, by introducing the concept of identity statuses, proposed to consider the process of identity formation and development in reference to the orthogonal dimensions of exploration and commitment. Exploration refers to the degree to which an individual has examined the values he or she adopts, to his or her beliefs and goals, and to the degree of exploration of various social roles. Commitment stands for the degree of stability of the set of beliefs, values, and goals that one holds; it denotes undertaking specific roles and the performance of specific tasks. By means of these two dimensions it is possible to describe four identity statuses: achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion. The most developmentally advanced status is identity achievement: after a period of looking for and trying out various solutions, an individual commits themselves to the performance of clearly defined tasks and takes on specific roles. Identity moratorium means being aware of multiple possibilities and constantly searching without committing oneself to specific tasks. Not taking up exploration, adherence to values acquired in childhood, and building self-concept on the basis of ready patterns leads to identity foreclosure. Identity diffusion, which is a less developmentally advanced status, results from a lack of exploration and a lack of commitment to specific tasks and goals in life.

An important element of the identity formation process is the young person's working out their own hierarchy of values, and the virtue that a positive resolution of this crisis may bring is faithfulness to oneself and to one's ideals. This is because, to Erikson, the period of adolescence means "looking for men and ideas to have faith in, in whose service it would seem worth while to prove oneself trustworthy" (Erikson, 1968, as cited in: Opoczyńska, 1999, p. 129). It is expected that, in the process of examining and exploring his or her identity, an adolescent will develop a viewpoint on political, professional, philosophical, and religious issues (Erikson, 1958, 1964, 1965), since ideological identity constitutes an important element in the formation of personal identity. In this context, it seems legitimate to ask whether identity develops in relation to the individual's religious beliefs and whether personal crises experienced in the course of identity

formation are accompanied by a growth of interest in matters of religion and by religious commitment.

Gordon Allport (1960, 1988), who emphasized that "there are as many varieties of religious experience as there are mortals with religious inclinations in the world" (Allport, 1988, p. 115), distinguished two basic religious orientations: intrinsic and extrinsic. According to Allport, intrinsic religious orientation gives meaning to all aspects of life, functioning as the main motive of the individual's decisions and actions, and is fully integrated with his or her life; religion functions as a purpose here. Extrinsic religious orientation, by contrast, plays an instrumental role, providing the individual with a sense of comfort, security, or social rewards, and is used as a means for the achievement of specific goals. The latter orientation may be subdivided into personal – which means that religion serves individual personal goals (comfort, consolation, satisfaction) – and social, meaning one that serves the achievement of social goals (making friends, social prestige) (Kirkpatrick, 1989). Commenting on the intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations distinguished by Allport (1960), Michael Maclean, Lawrence Walker, and Kyle Matsuba (2004) believe that they may be treated as integrated and nonintegrated religious identity, respectively. Allport himself (1988) believed the adolescence period to be a time of important developmental changes in the religious feeling, a time when the young person transforms their religious attitudes and "makes them his or her own personality equipment" (Allport, 1988, p. 120), which means working out a personal attitude towards religion and towards matters connected with it.

Daniel Batson (1976; Batson, Shoenrade, & Ventis 1993), who claims that Allport reduced a complex conceptualization of mature religious experience to single-purpose commitment to religion, attempts to distinguish the third orientation – quest religious orientation. Its characteristic features are readiness to confront problems without reducing their complexity, readiness for doubts, and openness to change. Based on research in which it was found that seminary students scored higher on quest orientation than other students (Batson & Shoenrade, 1991), it has been suggested that this orientation may reflect the process of searching for and moving towards a more mature form of religiousness, shaped in the "workshop of doubt" but eventually leading to deep commitment and faith strengthening.

If religious orientation is regarded as an individual's attitude towards religion, it seems there are reasons to believe that it may be related to the young person's way of resolving identity crisis. As was shown in the study by David Watson and colleagues (1998), identity commitment is indeed positively corre-

lated with intrinsic religiosity and negatively with extrinsic and quest religiosity. However, in other studies (Foster & LaForce, 1999) it was participants with identity diffusion, not exploring various possibilities and not committed to specific activities, who scored much higher than individuals with identity achievement – in terms of both intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations. Thus, the obtained results turn out to be ambiguous and do not allow us to answer the question of whether a given identity status is related to a particular religious orientation.

The few studies in which attempts were made to investigate the relations between the degree of religious commitment and the way of coping with the conflicts experienced by an individual in the process of searching for his or her own identity did not yield unambiguous results, either.

While some studies indicated higher religiosity in individuals with higher commitment (identity achievement and foreclosure) (Markstrom-Adams, Hofstra, & Dougher, 1994; Tzuriel, 1984; Verhoeven & Hutsebaut, 1995), others (Markstrom-Adams, 1999) found no relation between dimensions of ideological identity (i.e., that aspect of personal identity which is related to religious, political, or philosophical issues) and indicators of religious commitment. The results of still other studies showed that individuals with identity diffusion and moratorium are characterized by immature religiosity (Markstrom-Adams & Smith, 1996). Studies where reference was made to the dimensions of identity distinguished by Marcia (1987) revealed a positive correlation between identity commitment and the degree of religious commitment (Markstrom-Adams, 1999) as well as absence of relation between exploration and religious commitment (Parker, 1985).

Although the identity status paradigm proposed by Marcia proved useful in empirical research on identity (Berzonsky & Adams, 1999; Marcia, 1980; Waterman, 1982), it has been criticized for treating identity statuses as dispositional and static variables (Cote & Levine, 1987, 1988; van Hoof, 1999). It seems that such an approach to identity may not fully capture the essence of its functioning and development. An attempt at a conceptualization of individual differences in identity development, to a greater extent process-oriented, was made by Michael Berzonsky (1990, 2008), who proposed to distinguish three identity styles. According to him, identity styles determine the ways of processing information and coping with the problems that appear in identity crisis and may be considered as forms of social cognition or as cognitive theories of the self through which an adolescent perceives reality and creates its image. Identity style determines the strategy that an individual adopts in solving important problems in life, including

problems concerning his or her own identity, and points to the coping mechanisms that an individual applies when difficulties occur. Information-oriented individuals cope with identity issues and personal decisions by actively searching, processing, and using information that is important in the context of identity development. When they encounter information that does not conform to their self-concept, these people are ready to revise and reorganize their self-perception. Individuals with a normative style focus on expectations and prescriptions supported by significant others (parents or other authorities) or by reference groups (e.g., particular religious traditions or the Church). They rigidly adhere to the existing identity structures, accommodating all information relevant to identity and rejecting that which could threaten the already developed self-concept. Diffuse-avoidant individuals are characterized by a delay in making decisions concerning personal problems and their own identity. According to Berzonsky (1990), this identity style testifies to fragmentary, loosely related and poorly integrated identity structures. Research has shown that individuals with identity achievement and moratorium mainly use the informational identity style, those with identity foreclosure use the normative style, and those with identity diffusion use the diffuse-avoidant style (Berman, Schwarz, Kurtines, & Berman, 2001; Berzonsky, 1992a; Berzonsky & Kuk 2000).

An attempt to determine the relationship between religiosity and identity crisis resolution, defined by means of Berzonsky's identity styles, was made by Belgian researchers: Bart Duriez, Bart Soenens, and Wim Beyers (2004). Their aim was to integrate Berzonsky's theory with David Wulff's (1991) multidimensional model of religiosity. At the outset of their study, they expected that individuals with an informational style, who actively search for and evaluate information in order to achieve personal integration of identity elements, would display personal and symbolic interpretation of the religious phenomenon. In the case of normatively oriented people, who rely on and adjust to the regulations and standards of significant others and reference groups, a reverse relationship was expected. Given that for a majority of Flemish/Belgian society the Catholic Christian tradition is very important and that the Catholic religion may be considered part of the cultural legacy, the authors expected that normatively oriented individuals would incline towards literal acceptance of the regulations and dogmas of the Catholic Church. Individuals with a diffuse-avoidant style should also display an inclination towards literal adoption of religious contents, but for different reasons than normative people. According to Duriez, Soenens, and Beyers (2004), this may result from the desire to avoid the effort connected with investi-

gating and working out a personal attitude to a variety of important life issues, including religion.

The results of the study confirmed the researchers' expectations and demonstrated that individuals in late adolescence using an informational style have a tendency to interpret religious contents in a personal and symbolic way. This confirms the thesis that information-oriented adolescents critically relate to religious contents, evaluate them and examine whether they correspond with their personal definition of the self (Berzonsky, 1990). It was also found that individuals with a diffuse-avoidant style interpret religious contents literally, which supports the assumption that they may be thus avoiding difficult inquiries concerning religious matters and personal commitment to the formation of their own attitude towards these matters. The results of correlation analysis also showed that adolescents using a normative style are more religious than individuals with other identity styles, with the reservation that in this case religiosity was defined by attachment to religious tradition. The result is consistent with Berzonsky's description of this style. Adolescents with a normative identity style are inclined to rely on the regulations and standards of significant others, reference groups, authority, and tradition.

The issue of interrelations between an individual's identity development and attitude towards religion as well as religious commitment is undoubtedly important and worth exploring more closely. So far, there have been relatively few studies devoted to this problem (cf. Duriez, Soenens, & Beyers, 2004; Leak, 2009), and the obtained results turned out to be ambiguous. Further studies in this area are therefore needed that will allow to define the interrelations between an individual's attitude towards religion and religious commitment on the one hand and his or her ways of coping with identity crisis and the formation of personal identity on the other.

THE AIM AND THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

The aim of the presented research was to determine the relationship between young people's formation of personal identity and their religiosity. At the outset, the following question was posed: is there a relationship between religiosity and the identity style developed by young people? We followed Berzonsky (1990, 2008) in assuming that identity style determines the strategy of solving important problems in life and the kinds of coping mechanisms applied by an individual.

As mentioned before, there are three possible styles and, related to them, three strategies of coping with problems concerning one's own identity as well as with important problems in life: informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant.

When studying religiosity, we drew on the theory and method developed by Stefan Huber. Huber (2003) – who, in developing his own theory, attempts a synthesis of Allport's (1960) functional autonomy theory with Rodney Stark's and a Charles Glock's (1968) concept of multidimensional structure of religiosity – considers religiosity as a system of constructs associated with religion that may occupy different positions in an individual's personality system. The more often they are activated – that is, the more often an individual refers to issues connected with religion – the higher the probability that they will occupy the central position in that individual's personality system and play an important role in deliberating various problems and making decisions. Together with the increase in the centrality of religious constructs, their autonomy – which is connected with intrinsic religious motivation – increases as well. The autonomous functioning of the system of religious constructs means that they are not limited by any system of superior constructs. According to Huber, when the system of religious constructs occupies a subordinate position in an individual's personality system, we are dealing with heteronomous religiosity and extrinsic religious motivation. Heteronomous (or marginal) religiosity means that a person attaches little weight to matters connected with religion.

At the outset of the study, we wanted to determine the relationship between the centrality of religiosity and the identity styles developed by individuals – that is, to check if there is a relationship between the weight attached to religion and related matters by young people and the strategy they apply for solving identity-related problems as well as the coping mechanisms they use. We expected that the informational style – which means openness to new information, cognitive complexity, and flexible commitment – might be associated with the autonomous type of religiosity, meaning the centrality of religious constructs in personality, as well as with the individual's interest in religion and related matters. On the one hand, these expectations were based on Erikson's theory, according to which developing an attitude towards religion and related matters constitutes an important element in the formation of a fully integrated and mature personal identity; on the other, they were based on research results pointing to a relationship of religiosity and religious commitment with identity commitment (Markstrom-Adams, Hofstra, & Dougher, 1994; Tzuriel, 1984; Verhoeven & Hutsebaut, 1995; Markstrom-Adams, 1999).

We predicted that the normative style, based on conformism and imitation, meaning reliance on authorities and significant others as well as fulfillment of social expectations, would also be associated with interest in religion and with the central position of religious constructs in the personality of individuals. This expectation rested on the fact that Polish society mainly consists of believers, the Catholic Church plays an important role in social life, and its teaching has a strong influence on the views and the way of thinking of a considerable part of society. Consequently, individuals who rely on authorities to a great extent in building their identity and who try to fulfill social expectations will treat matters connected with religion as important in their lives. We assumed that the diffuse-avoidant style, symbolizing delay and avoidant action, would co-occur with low interest in religious issues and would thus be associated with marginal religiosity. This expectation rested on the fact that individuals with this identity style do not make the effort to work out a personal attitude to various issues important in life, do not make decisions that are important for their course of life and for building their own identity, and do not commit themselves to the realization of specific values, to the performance of specific tasks, or to the attainment of life goals, which makes it legitimate to suppose that their religious commitment will be rather low, too.

What allows to formulate predictions of this kind is also the results of the studies conducted so far, pointing to the religious immaturity of individuals with identity moratorium and diffusion (Markstrom-Adams & Smith, 1996) as well as to a link between identity commitment and the degree of religious commitment (Markstrom-Adams, 1999).

Interested in the relationship between religiosity and adolescents' building their own identity, we wanted to increase the probability of recruiting participants with different levels of religious commitment. For this reason, we decided that the study should include young people attending both Catholic and non-Catholic schools. We expected that students of Catholic schools might show a greater interest in religious issues, that religion might be more important to them, and that religious constructs might occupy a highly central place in their personality structure compared to the students of other schools. We decided that, on the one hand, attaching considerable weight to religion and high religious commitment, both in the students themselves and in their parents, might have influenced their decision to enter a Catholic school – and that, on the other hand, Catholic school education might result in higher religious commitment, a more mature religiosity, and a greater interest in religious issues, thus contributing to an increase in the centrality of religious structures in personality by means of

their frequent actualization. The additional questions we posed at the outset of our research were the following: Do young people attending Catholic schools show a greater interest in religious issues than those attending non-Catholic schools and do religious constructs occupy a more central place in their personality structure?, and: Does the relationship between religiosity and identity style differ between the students of Catholic schools and those of non-Catholic schools?

The variables taken into account in the analyses also included gender and age, and hence the next research question: Do the relations between religiosity and identity style differ between girls and boys or between young adolescents (junior high school students) and older ones (high school students)?

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

The participants were 300 students of Krakow's post-elementary schools, aged 14-18 ($M = 15.74$, $SD = 1.56$). The group consisted of 168 girls (56% of the participants) and 132 boys (44% of the participants). Junior high school students (162 individuals, $M = 14.58$ years, $SD = 1.08$) constituted 54% of the participants, and the remaining 46% were high school students (138 individuals, $M = 17.10$ years, $SD = 0.71$). The participants included 158 students of Catholic schools (52.67%), of whom 109 attended Catholic junior high schools (67% of the examined junior high school students) and 49 attended Catholic high schools (35% of the examined high school students). Gender distribution in the groups was as follows: girls and boys constituted, respectively, 58.5% and 41.5% of the examined students of non-Catholic junior high schools, 57.8% and 42.2% of the students of Catholic junior high schools, 56.2% and 43.8% of the students of non-Catholic high schools, and 49% and 51% of the students of Catholic high schools.

The study was conducted on a group basis in the school premises. Participation was voluntary. Students first filled in the Identity Style Inventory and then the Centrality of Religiosity Scale. The time of filling in the questionnaires was unlimited and the questionnaires were coded, which was supposed to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

Measures

Two questionnaires were used in the study: Berzonsky's Identity Style Inventory (ISI-3) as adapted into Polish by Alicja Senejko (2007; 2010) and Huber's Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS-15) as adapted into Polish by Beata Zarzycka (2007).

The Identity Style Inventory consists of 40 statements concerning beliefs, attitudes, and ways of coping in various situations. Participants indicate, on a rating scale (from 1 – *not at all like me* to 5 – *very much like me*), to what extent each statement represents them. The answers are the basis for calculating the indicators of three identity styles – the informational style, the normative style, and the diffuse-avoidant style – as well as the commitment indicator. The reliability of ISI-3 measured using Cronbach's α , computed in several studies on a sample of Polish adolescents, was the following: from $\alpha = .61$ to $\alpha = .74$ for the informational style, from $\alpha = .58$ to $\alpha = .74$ for the normative style, from $\alpha = .68$ to $\alpha = .81$ for the diffuse-avoidant style, and from $\alpha = .62$ to $\alpha = .78$ for commitment (Senejko, 2010a, 2010b). The reliability coefficients obtained by the authors of the present study were the following, respectively: $\alpha = .67$ for the informational and normative styles, $\alpha = .62$ for the diffuse-avoidant style, and $\alpha = .61$ for commitment.

The Centrality of Religiosity Scale is a tool for measuring the centrality of religiosity, meaning the autonomy of religious constructs in the structure of an individual's all personal constructs. In addition, the scale makes it possible to rate the centrality of the five dimensions of religiosity that Huber took from Stark and Glock (1968): Intellect (purely cognitive, understood as *interest in religious issues*), Ideology (*religious beliefs*, expressing the subjectively perceived probability of the existence of transcendent reality), Experience (*religious experience*, understood as a sense of divine presence and intervention in the participant's life), as well as Private Practice (*prayer*) and Public Practice (*worship*), referring, respectively, to establishing contact with transcendent reality and to the social rooting of religiosity and participation in religious services.¹ Each of the above dimensions has been operationalized by means of three questions focusing on frequency (e.g., *How often do you usually pray?*) and subjective importance

¹ [Translator's note: The italicized terms (interest in religious issues, religious beliefs, religious experience, prayer, worship) faithfully reflect the names of subscales of the Polish version of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale, being an adaptation of the original German version. In English-language texts presenting the CRS-15, the subscales of this measure are referred to using Huber's respective terms for the dimensions of religiosity: Intellect, Ideology, Experience, Private Practice, and Public Practice.]

(e.g., *How important is personal prayer for you?*) Answers are given on a 5-point rating scale. In the case of questions about importance, the possible answers are: *not at all*, *not very much*, *moderately*, *quite a bit*, and *very much so*, and frequency can be indicated by choosing one of the following expressions: *never*, *rarely*, *occasionally*, *often*, and *very often*, which is tantamount to scoring between 1 and 5 points. In the case of two test items, the number of answers to choose from has been extended to 7 and 9, respectively. At the stage of computing the scores, however, they are transformed into five-point scales.

The sum total of points scored in all of the five dimensions constitutes the overall result: a measure of the centrality of religiosity. The overall result may also be expressed using a nominal scale. Depending on the number of points scored, we speak of marginal religiosity (15-30 points), heteronomous religiosity (31-59 points), or autonomous religiosity (60-75 points).

The research carried out by the author of the Polish adaptation of Huber's measure showed a satisfactory reliability and validity of the CRS-15. Her analyses made it legitimate to conclude that the scale ensures good measurement of religiosity, being a useful instrument with psychometric properties comparable to the original version (Zarzycka, 2007)². The reliability computed by the authors of the present research was the following, respectively: $\alpha = .83$ for the Intellect subscale, $\alpha = .87$ for the Ideology subscale, $\alpha = .90$ for the Private Practice subscale, $\alpha = .85$ for the Religious Experience subscale, and $\alpha = .76$ for the Public Practice subscale.

Results

At the outset of our research, whose aim was to determine the relationship between religiosity on the one hand and the way of resolving the crisis of identity and the strategy of making decisions important to identity on the other, in order to increase the diversity of results concerning the centrality of religiosity, we decided to examine young people attending Catholic as well as non-Catholic schools. It was expected that students attending Catholic schools would show higher religious commitment and that religious constructs would occupy a more central position in them than in other students. We began analyzing the collected data by comparing the mean scores that students of Catholic and non-Catholic schools obtained on the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (Table 1).

² For detailed information on the Polish adaptation of CRS-15 as well as the scale's reliability and validity coefficients, the reader is referred to B. Zarzycka's paper (2007) entitled "Skala Centralności Religijności" ["The Centrality of Religiosity Scale"].

Table 1

Scores Obtained by Participants on Each Subscale of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale According to School Type and Gender

	Scores for the whole group <i>N</i> = 300	Scores for the group of girls <i>N</i> = 168	Scores for the group of boys <i>N</i> = 132	Scores for the group of JHS students <i>N</i> = 162	Scores for the group of HS students <i>N</i> = 138	Scores for the group of NCATH students <i>N</i> = 142	Scores for the group of CATH students <i>N</i> = 158
Intellect	8.00 <i>SD</i> = 2.80	8.02 <i>SD</i> = 2.61	7.98 <i>SD</i> = 3.02	7.56 <i>SD</i> = 2.75	8.53 <i>SD</i> = 2.77	7.53 <i>SD</i> = 2.56	8.43 <i>SD</i> = 2.93
Ideology	12.05 <i>SD</i> = 3.09	12.28 <i>SD</i> = 2.82	11.76 <i>SD</i> = 3.38	11.93 <i>SD</i> = 3.10	12.20 <i>SD</i> = 3.07	11.43 <i>SD</i> = 3.25	12.61 <i>SD</i> = 2.83
Private Practice	10.36 <i>SD</i> = 3.60	10.81 <i>SD</i> = 3.40	9.77 <i>SD</i> = 3.78	10.61 <i>SD</i> = 3.50	10.05 <i>SD</i> = 3.71	9.54 <i>SD</i> = 3.62	11.09 <i>SD</i> = 3.43
Experience	8.33 <i>SD</i> = 3.17	8.64 <i>SD</i> = 3.08	7.92 <i>SD</i> = 3.24	8.40 <i>SD</i> = 3.23	8.25 <i>SD</i> = 3.11	7.68 <i>SD</i> = 2.99	8.91 <i>SD</i> = 3.22
Public Practice	10.38 <i>SD</i> = 3.28	10.71 <i>SD</i> = 3.15	9.95 <i>SD</i> = 3.42	10.70 <i>SD</i> = 3.09	9.99 <i>SD</i> = 3.47	9.5 <i>SD</i> = 3.49	11.16 <i>SD</i> = 2.88
Centrality	49.11 <i>SD</i> = 13.19	50.46 <i>SD</i> = 12.49	47.39 <i>SD</i> = 13.9	49.19 <i>SD</i> = 13.033	49.01 <i>SD</i> = 13.43	45.68 <i>SD</i> = 13.23	52.2 <i>SD</i> = 12.41

Note. Bold type has been used to indicate the pairs of means whose differences are significant at $p < .05$.

As expected, the scores of students attending Catholic schools turned out to be significantly higher than those of the remaining students – this refers to all the indicators that the measure provides. The effects of between-group comparisons are as follows: $U = 8104.50$, $Z = 4.15$, and $p < .001$, $r = .24$ for the Centrality of Religiosity Scale; $U = 9365.0$, $Z = 2.47$, and $p < .05$, $r = .14$ for the Intellect subscale; $U = 8566.0$, $Z = 3.53$, and $p < .001$, $r = .20$ for the Ideology subscale; $U = 8385.0$, $Z = 3.78$, and $p < .001$, $r = .22$ for the Private Practice subscale; $U = 8728.0$, $Z = 3.32$, and $p < .01$, $r = .19$ for the Religious Experience subscale; $U = 8131.5$, $Z = 4.11$, and $p < .001$, $r = .24$ for the Public Practice subscale.

Next, we compared the results that the analyzed groups obtained in the Identity Style Inventory (Table 2). Significant differences were found only in the case of the informational style ($U = 9638.5$, $Z = -2.05$, and $p < .05$, $r = .12$). The mean value of this indicator was 31.81 for the group of students attending non-Catholic schools and 33.2 for the group of students attending Catholic schools.

We also compared the means obtained on the Centrality of Religiosity Scale and in the Identity Style Inventory for gender and age differences. Gender differences were found only for the Private Practice subscale, on which girls scored 10.81 points and boys scored 9.77 ($U = 9362.0$, $Z = 2.31$, $p < .05$, $r = .13$); they were not found for identity styles. The comparison of scores obtained by students of junior high and high schools revealed further significant differences (Tables 1 and 2). They were found for the informational style – the respective means being: 31.86 and 33.29 ($U = 9369.5$, $Z = -2.05$, $p < .05$, $r = .12$) – and for the Intellect subscale (interest in religious issues), where the means were, respectively, 7.56 and 8.53 ($U = 8870.5$, $Z = -3.08$, $p < .01$, $r = .18$).

Table 2

Scores Obtained by Participants on Each Subscale of the Identity Style Inventory According to School Type and Gender

	Scores for the whole group $N = 300$	Scores for the group of girls $N = 168$	Scores for the group of boys $N = 132$	Scores for the group of JHS students $N = 162$	Scores for the group of HS students $N = 138$	Scores for the group of NCATH students $N = 142$	Scores for the group of CATH students $N = 158$
Informational style	32.52 $SD = 5.73$	32.33 $SD = 5.35$	32.77 $SD = 6.19$	31.86 $SD = 5.31$	33.29 $SD = 6.12$	31.81 $SD = 5.58$	33.28 $SD = 5.80$
Normative style	32.99 $SD = 6.16$	32.9 $SD = 5.58$	33.1 $SD = 6.85$	32.28 $SD = 6.43$	33.82 $SD = 5.74$	33.58 $SD = 5.40$	32.46 $SD = 6.75$
Diffuse-avoidant style	27.75 $SD = 6.05$	27.42 $SD = 5.93$	28.16 $SD = 6.19$	27.94 $SD = 6.12$	27.52 $SD = 5.98$	27.83 $SD = 5.91$	27.67 $SD = 6.18$
Commitment	34.58 $SD = 5.69$	34.05 $SD = 5.81$	35.25 $SD = 5.49$	34.06 $SD = 5.24$	35.19 $SD = 6.14$	34.31 $SD = 5.75$	34.82 $SD = 5.65$

Note. Bold type has been used to indicate the pairs of means whose differences are significant at $p < .05$.

Next, we investigated how the relationship between the centrality of religiosity and the results obtained by participants on each religiosity subscale were related to the identity styles. The analyses carried out for the entire group of participants showed that the sizes of all correlation relationships reached statistical significance and that their values, except those obtained for the diffuse-avoidant style, were positive (Table 3). With few exceptions, these tendencies were also found in analyses covering each subgroup of participants. The results that did not reach statistical significance concerned only particular relationships with the

diffuse-avoidant style. In the group of boys (Table 4) this style had a statistically significant relationship only with the scores obtained on the subscales of Ideology ($r = -.18, p < .05$) and Public Practice ($r = -.19, p < .05$), while in the group of junior high school students (Table 3) – with those obtained on the Private Practice ($r = -.16, p < .05$) and Public Practice subscales ($r = -.17, p < .05$) as well as on the Centrality of Religiosity Scale ($r = -.19, p < .05$). A similar situation occurred in the case of students of Catholic schools, where the diffuse-avoidant style correlated significantly and negatively with the indicators of Intellect (interest in religious issues) ($r = -.17, p < .05$), Private Practice ($r = -.24, p < .05$), Religious Experience ($r = -.26, p < .05$), Public Practice ($r = -.21, p < .05$), and the Centrality of Religiosity ($r = -.28, p < .05$), as well as in the case of participants attending non-Catholic schools, where the identity style in question correlated negatively only with the indicators of Intellect ($r = -.17, p < .05$), Ideology (religious beliefs) ($r = -.23, p < .05$), Public Practice ($r = -.19, p < .05$), and Centrality ($r = -.19, p < .05$) (Table 5). In the last group, additionally, no significant relationship was found between commitment and Private Practice.

Table 3

The Relationship Between Religiosity and Identity Styles (Spearman's Rank Order Correlation) According to School Level

	Identity Styles											
	Informational			Normative			Diffuse-avoidant			Commitment		
	All N=300	JHS N=162	HS N=138	All N=300	JHS N=162	HS N=138	All N=300	JHS N=162	HS N=138	All N=300	JHS N=162	HS N=138
Intellect	.35***	.29***	.42***	.20***	.18*	.23**	-.17**	-.13	-.20*	.27***	.25**	.28**
Ideology	.31***	.25**	.37***	.31***	.24**	.40***	-.18**	-.12	-.27**	.37***	.33***	.41***
Private Practice	.24***	.21**	.30***	.26***	.20**	.36***	-.18**	-.16*	-.23**	.22***	.26**	.19*
Experience	.30***	.18*	.45***	.25***	.17*	.36***	-.17**	-.14	-.21*	.27***	.32***	.22*
Public Practice	.29***	.24**	.38***	.34***	.21**	.52***	-.20**	-.17*	-.25**	.23***	.22**	.27**
Centrality	.36***	.27***	.46***	.33***	.23**	.46***	-.23***	-.19*	-.27**	.33***	.33***	.32***

Note. Bold type indicates results significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 4
The Relationship Between Religiosity and Identity Styles (Spearman's Rank Order Correlation) According to Gender

	Identity Styles							
	Informational		Normative		Diffuse-avoidant		Commitment	
	F N = 168	M N = 132	F N = 168	M N = 132	F N = 168	M N = 132	F N = 168	M N = 132
Intellect	.32***	.39***	.17**	.25**	-.29***	-.02	.28***	.27**
Ideology	.27***	.34***	.28***	.36***	-.18*	-.18*	.42***	.33***
Private Practice	.28***	.22*	.24**	.33***	-.20**	-.13	.28***	.17*
Experience	.30***	.32***	.23**	.30**	-.20**	-.10	.35***	.21*
Public Practice	.27***	.33***	.31***	.40***	-.19*	-.19*	.23**	.26**
Centrality	.34***	.39***	.31***	.39***	-.27***	-.15	.38***	.30**

Note. Bold type indicates results significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 5
The Relationship Between Religiosity and Identity Styles (Spearman's Rank Order Correlation) According to School Type

	Identity Styles							
	Informational		Normative		Diffuse-avoidant		Commitment	
	NCATH N = 142	CATH N = 158	NCATH N = 142	CATH N = 158	NCATH N = 142	CATH N = 158	NCATH N = 142	CATH N = 158
Intellect	.29***	.38***	.21*	.22**	-.17*	-.17*	.27**	.27**
Ideology	.26**	.30***	.28**	.39***	-.23**	-.15	.28**	.44***
Private Practice	.22**	.21**	.24**	.33***	-.11	-.24**	.11	.28***
Experience	.35***	.23**	.26**	.28***	-.08	-.26**	.19*	.33***
Public Practice	.31***	.25**	.40***	.35***	-.19*	-.21**	.24**	.20**
Centrality	.35***	.32***	.35***	.37***	-.19*	-.28**	.27**	.36***

Note. Bold type indicates results significant at * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

The analyses (Kruskal-Wallis *ANOVA* of ranks and the Mann-Whitney *U* test with correction for multiple comparisons) showed that students with autonomous religiosity scored higher on the informational style than individuals with heteronomous ($U = 5376.5$, $Z = 4.28$, and $p < .001$, $r = .26$) and marginal religiosity ($U = 517.0$, $Z = 4.48$, and $p < .001$, $r = .42$). Similar results were obtained in comparisons involving the normative style (respectively: [$U = 5577.0$, $Z = 3.95$, and $p < .001$, $r = .24$] and [$U = 551.5$, $Z = 4.25$, and $p < .001$, $r = .40$]) and commitment (respectively: [$U = 5493.5$, $Z = 4.09$, and $p < .001$, $r = .25$] and [$U = 650.0$, $Z = 3.59$, and $p < .001$, $r = .34$]).

The results were different, however, in analyses focusing on the diffuse-avoidant style: individuals with marginal and heteronomous religiosity scored higher on this style than those with autonomous religiosity (respectively: [$U = 716.5$, $Z = 3.15$, and $p < .01$, $r = .39$] and [$U = 5432.0$, $Z = 4.19$, and $p < .001$, $r = .25$]).

Moreover, comparisons between participants with heteronomous and marginal religiosity showed differences regarding the informational style ($U = 1909.0$, $Z = 2.41$, and $p < .05$, $r = .16$) and the normative style ($U = 1930.0$, $Z = 2.24$, and $p < .05$, $r = .15$), the former group scoring higher in both cases.

Analyses carried out using factorial *ANOVA* in which, apart from the type of religiosity, the stage of education was additionally included as a variable revealed significant differences regarding the informational style between the groups examined, $F(2, 294) = 3.05$, $p < .05$, and $\eta^2 = .02$. Post hoc tests revealed that high school students with autonomous religiosity scored significantly higher on the style in question ($M = 40.82$) than high school students with heteronomous ($M = 35.45$, $p < .001$) or marginal religiosity ($M = 31.5$, $p < .01$) and higher than all the religiosity-based subgroups of junior high school students – that is, younger adolescents with autonomous ($M = 36.7$, $p < .05$), heteronomous ($M = 34.7$, $p < .0001$) and marginal religiosity ($M = 32.5$, $p < .01$). The differences regarding the remaining identity styles were not statistically significant.

Analogous analyses, in which religiosity type and school type (Catholic vs. non-Catholic) were included as independent variables, showed that there were significant differences regarding commitment, $F(2, 294) = 3.43$, $p < .05$ and $\eta^2 = .02$. Post hoc tests revealed that participants from Catholic schools with autonomous religiosity scored significantly higher on commitment ($M = 37.17$) than students of the same type of schools with heteronomous ($M = 33.89$, $p < .05$) and marginal religiosity ($M = 27.29$, $p < .01$) as well as higher than students of non-Catholic schools with heteronomous religiosity ($M = 33.84$, $p < .05$). Students of Catholic schools with marginal religiosity scored significantly lower ($M = 27.29$) than participants with autonomous religiosity

representing the other type of schools ($M = 36.65$, $p < .05$). The analyses in which the participants' gender was also taken into account did not reveal statistically significant effects.

Discussion

The research conducted points to a relationship between religiosity and the identity style constructed by young people. As expected, a higher level of religiosity is associated with a higher level of identity commitment as well as with the informational and normative styles. In other words, individuals in whose lives religion plays an important role and in whose personality religious constructs are central more often display the normative and informational styles.

A negative relation between religiosity and the diffuse-avoidant style allows to conclude that low interest in religious issues as well as heteronomous and marginal religiosity are associated with absence of commitment to solving personal problems and to working out one's own way in life.

The presented research thus supports the conclusions of previous studies, pointing to a relationship of religiosity and religious commitment with identity commitment (Markstrom-Adams, Hofstra, & Dougher, 1994; Tzuriel, 1984; Verhoeven & Hutsebaut, 1995; Markstrom-Adams, 1999; Watson et al., 1998). The obtained results seem to support Erikson's thesis (1958, 1964, 1965) that working out one's own attitude to religion and related issues constitutes an important element of personal identity formation.

As regards the proposal made by Maclean, Walker, and Matsuba (2004) that intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations (Allport, 1960) should be treated, respectively, as integrated and nonintegrated religious identity, it seems that the present study may to some extent support such a perspective on religious orientation. The fact that the informational and normative styles, characterized by higher commitment and greater internal integration, are associated with autonomous religiosity (suggesting intrinsic religious motivation) and that the diffuse-avoidant style, characterized by fragmentary and loose integration of identity structures, is associated with heteronomous and marginal religiosity (implying extrinsic religious orientation) may indicate that intrinsic orientation corresponds to integrated identity and extrinsic orientation to nonintegrated identity.

In view of the aim of our study, which was to determine the relationship between religiosity and adolescents' way of coping with identity crisis, we wanted to increase the diversity of results concerning the centrality of religiosity and therefore we examined young people attending both Catholic and non-Catholic

schools. It is worth noting that, as expected, young people attending Catholic schools attach greater weight to issues connected with religion. Differences between students of Catholic and non-Catholic schools occurred in the centrality of religiosity as well as in all the CRS-15 subscales, which means that young people attending Catholic schools show a greater tendency to approach religious contents intellectually, a greater subjective certainty regarding the existence of transcendent reality and a sense of divine intervention in their lives; they also attach greater weight to personal prayer and participation in religious services. The differences that were found may stem from the fact that individuals selecting Catholic schools, as well as people from their closest circle, including parents, attach greater weight to religion and related issues, which results in their choice of this kind of school. These differences may also result from the influence of school as an educational environment. It can be supposed that a Catholic school more strongly stimulates young people to be concerned with religious contents, makes a point of forming young people's religious attitudes, and encourages them to engage in religious practices, which contributes to more frequent actualization of religious constructs and, as a result, to their greater centrality in young people's personality system. The analyses, whose aim was to determine the relationship between religiosity and identity style separately for students of Catholic schools and for those of non-Catholic schools, revealed that in both cases the relationships are similar: the informational style and the normative style correlate positively and the diffuse-avoidant style negatively with the centrality of religiosity. Differences did not become clear until more detailed analyses were carried out. In the case of young people attending non-Catholic schools, no relation was found between the Private Practice and Religious Experience subscales and the diffuse-avoidant style, and in the case of students of Catholic schools – between that identity style and the Ideology subscale. It should be pointed out that young people from Catholic schools, in whose system of personal constructs religious ones occupy a more central position and who attach greater weight to religion at the same time scored higher on the informational style – the one regarded as the most mature and adaptive identity style. This result appears to confirm Erikson's thesis according to which establishing one's own attitude to religion constitutes an important element in the formation of an integrated, mature identity.

Another variable taken into account in the analyses was gender. The results show no gender differences regarding either the centrality of religion (except the Private Practice subscale) or identity styles. Moreover, in the case of both girls and boys a relationship is found between religiosity and its particular dimensions

on the one hand and the normative and informational styles on the other. Differences appear only in the case of the diffuse-avoidant style, for which we find fewer significant relationships with measures of religiosity and no relationship at all with the overall measure of the centrality of religiosity. This might suggest that in boys the diffuse-avoidant style is not necessarily associated with lower interest in matters of religion and with lower religious commitment.

Comparing the results obtained by junior high and high school students, we found differences regarding the informational style and the Intellect subscale (measuring cognitive interest in religious issues) – in both cases, high school students scored higher. Given that the informational style is connected with high identity commitment and that it is considered to be the most mature and adaptive identity style, we can expect it to appear as an effect of an individual's development and, consequently, to be characteristic of older adolescents to a greater extent than of younger ones. The obtained results are consistent with those of previous studies, in which differences were also found regarding identity styles between younger and older youth as well as between adolescents and individuals entering adulthood (Czyżowska, 2005, 2007). The greater cognitive interest in religious issues that was found in high school students, manifesting itself in looking for information and broadening religious knowledge, may stem from their cognitive development as well as from their being more advanced in working out their own attitude to religion, which means actively looking for the necessary information and processing it intellectually. As regards the relationship between identity style and religiosity, interesting results were obtained for the diffuse-avoidant style. The relationship between this style and religiosity was less clear in the case of junior high school students and, unlike the result obtained for the group of high school students, reached the level of statistical significance only in the case of Private Practice and Public Practice subscales. The findings may suggest that in the case of younger adolescents the connection between low interest in matters of religion and the development of a diffuse-avoidant style is not so strong as in the case of older ones. Perhaps this stems from the fact that this style, as more natural for younger adolescents from the developmental point of view, may appear regardless of their attitude to religion and related matters as a transitional stage in building their own identity. The stronger connection of the diffuse-avoidant style with religiosity in older youth may stem from the fact that in early adolescence a person is only developing their own attitude to religion and gradually building their personal identity, whereas in late adolescence he or she should already have a particular attitude to religion and related matters, and

that attitude may be connected to a greater extent with the identity style developed by the young person.

The obtained results allow to conclude that the more central religious constructs are in an individual's personality, the greater identity commitment the individual shows and the more mature and adaptive identity style he or she develops. It seems that, when speaking of the relationship between religiosity and identity style, it should be demonstrated that the building of a particular identity style is accompanied by the individual's working out their personal attitude to religion as well as giving it a certain importance in life and in the choices made. Such an approach to the relationship between religiosity and identity appears to be consistent with the proposal formulated by Erikson (1964, 1965), who emphasized that a young person resolving an identity crisis should work out their personal attitude towards religion and who treated ideological identity as an important aspect of personal identity. Also looking at religion in terms of the religious constructs proposed by Huber (2003) and their place in personality allows to observe the co-occurrence and interpenetration of the processes of developing one's own identity style and working out one's own stance on matters connected with religion.

When referring to Erikson, it is worth pointing out that he spoke of the importance of the young person's developing his or her personal attitude towards religion, which could mean either deep personal religious commitment or adopting a critical attitude, or even one amounting to a rejection of religion and a lack of interest in matters concerning religion. By contrast, our research and the studies cited earlier seem to indicate that greater identity commitment as well as more mature and adaptive identity styles are accompanied by religious commitment and by the individual's attaching great weight to religion and related matters, whereas loose and diffuse identity constructs, characteristic of the diffuse-avoidant style, are accompanied by low religious commitment, a marginalization of religion, and extrinsic religious motivation. Therefore, questions arise of whether religious commitment and attaching weight to religion and to related matters constitute an important or even a necessary element in the formation of an integrated personal identity, of whether religiosity favors the successful resolution of the identity crisis, and of whether it is possible to develop a mature and adaptive identity style while at the same time rejecting religion and not being religiously committed. The results of the studies conducted so far, including the study presented here, make it legitimate to suppose that religious commitment and attaching weight to religion is associated with, or perhaps even conducive to, the formation of an integrated identity and identity commitment. The obtained

results could therefore be a confirmation of the thesis advanced by different researchers (e.g., Markstrom-Adams, Hofstra, & Dougher, 1994) that religious commitment may be conducive to identity commitment and that religion may constitute an element integrating faithfulness, loyalty, and commitment, thus favoring the formation of a mature identity. It seems that in the present times, marked by relativism, a devaluation of authorities, and a lack of clear and universally accepted values – religion, with its clearly defined rules, norms, and values, may play a special role in the formation of personal identity, constituting the young person's anchorage and the basis on which he or she can build a vision of themselves and their future, and their own hierarchy of values as well as define the goals they want to achieve in life.

It is worth noting that, as the presented research has shown, religiosity is associated with both the normative and the informational identity style. Based on the characterization of these styles presented by Berzonsky (1990) and on the results of research carried out by Bart Duriez, Bart Soenens, and Wim Beyers (2004), it is legitimate to believe that attitude to religion, to Church institutions, and to religious authorities as well as the way of understanding and interpreting religious contents will be different in people representing each of these identity styles. Yet, in both of them the central position of religious constructs in the individual's personality turns out to be important, which means they are not limited by any system of superior constructs and play a considerable role in the person's deliberation on various problems and making important decisions. By contrast, the subordination of religious constructs to other personality constructs as well as the marginalization of religion and related matters is associated with a lack of identity commitment and a lack of clearly defined tasks and goals in life as well as with running away from making important decisions in life, which is characteristic of individuals with a diffuse-avoidant style.

When analyzing the relationship between religiosity and the formation of personal identity, it is worth noting that even though most researchers believe that it is religiosity that favors identity development, analyses do not clearly indicate the direction of influence. This means that a reverse relationship is also possible – namely, that it may be the way of forming one's own identity that influences a person's attitude to religion and related issues. Referring to the identity styles we examined, it is possible to consider the influence of information processing strategies and the strategies of coping with problems, including identity problems, on the individual's attitude to religion and on his or her religious commitment. In the light of the obtained results, it can therefore be supposed that openness to new information and actively looking for it, reflectiveness, and rea-

diness for change (characteristic of the informational style) will favor interest in religion, cognitive commitment to the processing of religious contents, looking for contact with God through prayer and various forms of worship, as well as belief in the existence of transcendent reality. Likewise, religious commitment and the centrality of religious constructs in personality would be an effect of the normative style, which involves the adoption of values, norms, and principles of significant others and a rigidly formed self-concept. Postponing identity decisions, avoiding confrontation with problems, and a lack of a consistent self-concept would lead to a lack of interest in religious issues and to a reluctance to establish contact with transcendence and enter into dialog with God.

Because identity crisis constitutes an important moment in development, and the manner of its resolution significantly affects the individual's further development and course of life, it is worth looking more closely at the process of personal identity formation, its important elements, and the factors that determine it. The studies conducted so far largely confirm Erikson's belief that one of the important elements in the formation of personal identity is the young person's attitude towards religion. Still, there remains the question of whether the formation of a mature integrated identity, the clear definition of life goals and plans, and the development of one's own hierarchy of values is fostered or rather accompanied by religious commitment; there also remains the question of whether individuals who have a strongly negative attitude towards religion and show a lack of religious commitment are less likely to develop a mature identity. It would also be interesting to look at the developmental aspect of the relationship between religiosity and identity and to check whether this relationship is the same at different stages of life from adolescence to adulthood, as well as to investigate the relations between religious development, the way of resolving the identity crisis, and the identity style developed.

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