THE LINK BETWEEN IDENTITY STYLES AND QUIET EGO: THE ROLE OF COMPASSION

by

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Abstract

Relationships between the identity styles (informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant), compassionate love for humanity, self-compassion, and quiet ego were explored. To date, no research has examined relationships between these constructs. Three hundred four individuals (84 men and 220 women) completed self-report measures of identity style, compassionate love for humanity, self-compassion, and quiet ego. Participants were members of an age range referred to as emerging adults (ages 18 to 29). Seven hypotheses were investigated, including whether: (1) there will be a significant positive relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego; (2) there will be a significant negative relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego; (3) there will be a significant negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego; (4) the informational identity style positively predicts quiet ego, with high self-compassion being a mediating factor; (5) the informational identity style positively predicts quiet ego, with high compassionate love for humanity being a mediating factor; (6) the normative identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, with low compassionate love for humanity being a mediating factor; and (7) the diffuse-avoidant identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, with low self-compassion being a mediating factor. Data analyses were carried out using the statistical software SPSS to conduct correlations and hierarchical multiple regressions, in order to examine the hypotheses. Results indicated that quiet ego was significantly positively correlated with the informational identity style, and significantly negatively correlated with the normative and diffuse-avoidant identity styles. Furthermore, the positive relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego was partially mediated by compassionate love for humanity. The negative relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego was linearly impacted, but not mediated, by compassionate love for

humanity. The negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego was linearly impacted, but not mediated, by self-compassion. Potential reasons for why the observed results were obtained are provided. Future studies may explore potential gender differences in these relationships, in addition to analyzing the different components of self-compassion, and their relationship to the identity styles and quiet ego. Limitations for this study included the use of a survey design, which reduces the ability to infer directionality from the findings. The implications of the results are discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Individuals have many unique qualities and beliefs that make them who they are. This independence from others, while still being connected to the environment, has been labelled as identity (Wheeler, 2017). Although there are numerous ways that an identity may change over a lifetime, it is widely agreed upon that identity is quite malleable and subject to change. Furthermore, depending on the components within one's identity, there may be relationships with other concepts that drive growth in both interpersonal and intrapersonal areas. An individual's perceptions and feelings of them self may be critical factors in deciding the work they will pursue, relationships they will build, and goals they align with and will strive for during their life (Burke & Stets, 2009). Therefore, in gaining a better understanding of identity, researchers search for possible important associations with other variables that will add predictive implications.

Identity has been measured using different methods over the past century. The concept of identity styles has seen plenty of growth over the span of the past three decades, and an influential and often used measure, the Identity Style's Inventory (ISI), is in its fifth version (Berzonsky, 2013) (further description of the three identity styles will be provided in Chapter 2 below). Significant relationships have been found between identity styles and other psychological measures. For example, researchers have found that the informational identity style was positively related to prosocial behaviours and other-oriented helping, with the relationship being partially mediated by empathy (Smits et al. 2011). In the same study, the normative identity style was found to not be related to prosocial behaviours, but positively related to maladaptive behaviours (e.g., relational aggression) and helping the self, while the diffuse-avoidant identity style was also not related to prosocial behaviours, but positively related to maladaptive behaviours (e.g., relational and physical aggression). Other studies have also

found relationships between the identity styles and successful transition for emerging adults into university, identity styles and forgiveness in university students, and identity styles and various coping strategies (Beaumont & Seaton, 2011; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000; Seaton & Beaumont, 2014).

My study examined relationships between identity styles (informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant) and measures of compassion (love for humanity and self-compassion) and quiet ego, constructs which will be described in detail below, and have not been analyzed together. Previous research has found that higher levels of the informational identity style positively predicted compassionate love for humanity (Bruser & Beaumont, 2010). Additional research has found there to be a significant positive relationship between self-compassion and quiet ego, which was related to lower perceived stress and higher life satisfaction, potentially due to strengthening positive emotional states (Wayment et al. 2016). Thus far, no studies have explicitly analyzed relationships between identity styles, compassionate love humanity, self-compassion, and quiet ego together. Novel findings in these relationships would add to the existing literature and detail additional features of the identity styles and other constructs.

Researcher Context

I chose to study this research topic for a variety of reasons. First, the concepts of positive psychology expand off the work I undertook during my undergraduate studies. I am now exploring some concepts I had previously worked with (e.g., identity styles and quiet ego), alongside novel concepts (e.g., self-compassion and compassionate love). Second, I enjoy the proactive nature of positive psychology, in contrast to the reactive nature of other psychological concepts (e.g., depression, anxiety, etc.). More specifically, positive psychology and resiliency have become associated with one another over the years, with one difference being that

resiliency presupposes adversity, while positive psychology can be applied widely, including individuals who have not experienced adversity (Luthar et al. 2014). Tying in the positive psychology concepts of compassion and quiet ego with identity styles, allows researchers to see if certain types of information processing relate more positively or negatively with compassion and quiet ego. I will discuss the relationship of these concepts with mental health below. Third, I enjoy the methodology that is associated with studies in the positive psychology area, which are often survey designs. I have worked with surveys in the past, and the experience of conducting a study in this context has strengthened my knowledge of statistics. Although there are more complex analyses out in the world of research, I now feel very comfortable with the work I have done in preparing this thesis. In addition, by having a solid foundation in this work, I can expand my knowledge into further studies. One aspiration I have is to work with positive psychology concepts in an experimental design (e.g., Mindful Self-Compassion intervention; Neff & Germer, 2013). Undertaking an experiment of that nature requires knowledge of positive psychology concepts in a research setting, like my current thesis, alongside training in a mental health area, like my training from my MEd Counselling program.

Concepts Related to Mental Health

Identity styles are the way an individual processes information, and integrates it into their decision making, a concept that is relevant in counselling and psychotherapy. An individual is not assigned one specific identity style, but rather has levels of all three, which is useful in identifying productive strategies for the individual. For example, previous studies have found low self-esteem to be positively related to high levels of depression and anxiety (Sowislo & Orth, 2013). Further work done on identity styles has determined that the informational identity style is contingent on personal standards that influence self-esteem, the normative identity style is

contingent on socially determined standards to influence self-esteem, and the diffuse-avoidant identity style is related to low self-esteem, regardless of its determination (Soenens et al., 2016). A mental health clinician may be able to integrate these pieces of information into psychotherapeutic practice, which can be included in developing the type of therapy used in sessions (if the clinician is a generalist or follows a person-centered lens). For example, if the client has higher levels of the informational identity style, changes to their self-esteem could be made through self-reflection, as self-esteem is contingent on personal standards (while examining social influences is more meaningful for those with higher levels of the normative identity style). The present study does not examine self-esteem, but the same principle can be used to see if the different identity styles are related to levels of self-compassion, compassionate love, and quiet ego. Raes (2010) reported that self-compassion was related to lower levels of anxiety and depression, with unproductive thinking as a mediating factor. Based on the theoretical foundation of the normative identity style, we can predict that higher levels of it would be negatively related to self-compassion, which can be a starting place in psychotherapy. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) targets thought processes and a clinician works with a client to identify patterns and progress towards change (Jones-Smith, 2019). This is a practical application for this study and how it can be used. Professionals in the mental health field attempt to gather as much information as they can about a client prior to and during a therapeutic relationship. In the context of counselling, this could be done with the administration of these positive psychology scales during an intake, or throughout the therapeutic relationship. The positive psychology and identity scales will be explained in further detail in Chapter 3 and can be found in the appendices. If the clinician is knowledgeable on the scoring of the scale, it can be used in practice, and has been used to quantify the success of psychotherapy in college students

in the US (Self-Compassion; Hayes et al. 2016). However, depending on the therapeutic lens of the clinician in practice, not all mental health practitioners feel comfortable or qualified to administer a scale. In addition, the best predictor of improvement from counselling is attributed to the therapeutic relationship between the client and clinician (Lambert & Barley, 2001). Therefore, the administration of a positive psychology scale may be irrelevant to the outcome of therapy for the client, unless there is a solid therapeutic relationship already established. Rather, these scales for information about the client may be an additional tool in the toolbox of the clinician, and not used to drive the therapy sessions in general. Information about identity styles and their potential relationship with different contemplative constructs can be used to develop strategies towards treatment and communicate effectively with clients, when appropriate. An example of this would be an individual who scores highly on the diffuse-avoidant identity style and low on the self-compassion measure. The client and clinician can work collectively to understand the low self-compassion of the individual and construct methods in which they can organically feel more compassion towards oneself.

Theoretical Lens

My theoretical approach to research has shifted during my graduate studies. I operate through a post-positivist lens, and I believe that the purpose of conducting research is not to find the one objective truth with no biases, the way positivism is characterized (and where I started). Instead, post-positivism does not think that something can be completely falsified and believes that we can form opinions taking in multiple perspectives into consideration, and support can be gained using the scientific method. Due to the varied nature within quantitative research (in the social sciences), it is hard to say with complete certainty that something is absolute fact, especially as we conduct further studies. Delving deeper, the replication crisis in psychology has

shown that reproducibility is a real issue, which I feel is due to the positivist lens in which, once something is found to be significant, no more questions can be asked and there is no incentive to reproduce the findings (Open Science Collaboration, 2015). Within my current study, there has been diverse findings related to self-compassion, and it is important for me to explore this concept within my own population of interest. Previous research has found self-compassion to be both significant and non-significant when studied with positive psychology measures, so there is no consensus, and detracts from the positivist belief that there is one truth (López et al. 2015; Muris et al. 2018). However, I do place importance on quantitative methods overall, and feel like instruments that are used in a study should be valid and reliable, and that findings should be generalizable to the population of interest (when correct sampling is used). I feel more comfortable looking at the probability and contributing to the literature that supports a theory or idea, rather than "proving" it per se. My exposure to qualitative research methods has shown me the importance of reflexivity (and addressing biases in the main research tool, which is oneself). As a researcher carrying out a quantitative study, I do hope to find significant results, as my hypotheses are developed from existing literature. However, I believe that non-significant findings are also important, and add to the literature in their own way. I designed this study in collaboration with my supervisory committee in hopes to control biases and collect data in a standardized manner. As I did not have any personal interactions with any of my participants, my personal biases should not have impacted their answers on the standardized scales.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Stages of Psychosocial Development

Identity is at the center of who a person is, as it provides consistency in decision making, shapes values and beliefs, and is a construct that develops through growth. The formation of an individual's identity is a process, which is described in the theories of developmental psychology. For example, Erikson (1956) proposed eight stages of psychosocial development, which emerged from psychoanalytic theory, in which he describes the development of an individual's personality and its influence during their lifetime. As an individual progresses through a psychosocial stage, they gain characteristics that become part of their personality and can then influence the following stage(s). For each of the eight stages, Erikson proposed that there is a psychosocial crisis that occurs and a basic virtue that can be acquired if the crisis is successfully managed. This means that both adaptive and maladaptive skills and coping mechanisms can persist in a person's life.

The first stage proposed by Erikson (1956, 1963; Boyd et al. 2011) focused on the crisis of Trust vs. Mistrust, where trust in the caregiver's and one's own abilities is at issue, and if successfully resolved results in the development of the virtue of *hope*. The second stage proposed a crisis of Autonomy vs. Shame, where an individual learns about choices and self-care, and if successfully resolved results in the development of the virtue of *will*. The third stage proposed a crisis of Initiative vs. Guilt, where organizational skills are developed to meet a goal, and if successfully resolved results in the development of the virtue of *purpose*. The fourth stage proposed a crisis of Industry vs. Inferiority, where norms within a culture, tools, and skills are learned, and if successfully resolved results in the development of the virtue of *competency*. The fifth stage proposed a crisis of Identity vs. Role Confusion, where a consistent sense of self is

established, and if successfully resolved results in the development of the virtue of *fidelity*. The sixth stage proposed a crisis of Intimacy vs. Isolation, where relationships become more mature, and if successfully resolved results in the development of the virtue of *love*. The seventh stage proposed a crisis of Generativity vs. Stagnation, where the focus turns from the self to others, and if successfully resolved results in the development of the virtue of *care*. The eighth and final stage proposed a crisis of Ego Integrity vs. Despair, where integration of all the stages and self-acceptance occurs, and if successfully resolved results in the development of the virtue of *wisdom*. Of these eight stages, the one most relevant to my proposed research is stage five, which addresses the psychosocial crisis of Identity vs. Role Confusion. However, as mentioned above, Erikson (1963) theorized that this stage is influenced by each of the previous stages and goes on to influence later stages through its development.

Identity is a construct that has led to much theory development. One definition of identity states that it is "an understanding of one's unique characteristics and how they have been, are, and will be manifested across ages, situations, and social roles" (Boyd et al. 2011, pp. 348). This definition considers many of the facets that compose identity. Furthermore, although previous development influences one's identity, it is not necessarily a sum of previous experiences that shape a person entirely. Rather, an individual's identity integrates, for example, their adolescent identity with the physical and physiological changes occurring within their body, perception of their role in society, seeing how they fit in various roles relative to others, setting goals, adapting beliefs, and growing in relationships they have with others.

Erikson (1963) stated that the fifth stage he proposed (Identity vs. Role Confusion) was a bridge between childhood and adulthood, where an individual establishes who they are, in addition to a sense of self-continuity that is created during this time. Although an individual may

have a familiarity with skills and tools they have been introduced to (i.e., coping, career prospects, relationships, etc.), many challenges must be repeated. During this stage, role confusion may occur, where there is strong doubt about oneself. This includes struggles, such as the inability to commit to an occupation, confusion about sexual identity, projecting feelings onto others, and over-identifying with others. There is a lot of change happening during this period of life, and this change may create an unstable experience. In this time, an identity crisis may occur, where there is distress due to not having a personal identity (Erikson, 1980). A result of this identity crisis may be over-identifying with a group of peers and taking the group's beliefs and values as one's own. This can lead to an individual establishing in- and out-groups, where maladaptive behaviours (such as intolerance) may be displayed to defend the role confusion one is going through (Erikson, 1963). Furthermore, the creation of these groups (also known as cliques), may test an individual's fidelity to those ideas, especially when being pressured by others in the group. Fidelity is the loyalty one expresses to certain ideas, values, and beliefs, and it is an important component of identity, because these core ideals do not continue to shift throughout different situations. Erikson (1963) found fidelity to be the virtue that is gained from the successful resolution of the conflict of Identity vs. Role Confusion, and once fidelity has been pledged, an individual may continue to grow and develop with their stable identity. The ideals that are integrated may have originated from a group an individual was a part of, in addition to other reflections, considerations, and discussions they have had.

Emerging Adulthood

The age demographic this study is focused on is that of 18-29 years old, which has been labelled as emerging adults (Arnett, 2000). However, the psychosocial stages proposed by Erik Erikson had their own labels, and later were attributed age ranges (Erikson, 1963; Boyd et al.

2011). The crisis addressing Identity vs. Role Confusion was thought to occur during adolescence, which covered the ages of 12-18, whereas the crisis addressing Intimacy vs. Isolation was thought to occur during young adulthood, which covered the ages of 18-30.

This stage of emerging adulthood has been proposed to be an exploration of both crises, simultaneously (Arnett, 2000). Social changes can have an impact on how development is seen, and what can be considered a norm. During the time of the original writings of Erikson (1956; 1963; 1982) society was different, and certain milestones occurred during different time periods. Significant changes have appeared since the accessibility to post-secondary education has increased, variability in living situations has been established, and it is societally acceptable to explore options prior to settling into a career, relationship, or worldview. Emerging adulthood is a unique time that differs from other stages in an individual's life.

Arnett (2000) proposed emerging adulthood to be a separate stage in development, one that is not enclosed in either adolescence or young adulthood. Both the stages of adolescence and young adulthood have physical, cognitive, social, and personality growth unique to them. To start, the age adolescence is proposed to cover has shifted through the years. During the beginning of the 20th century, Hall (1904) suggested that adolescence followed a timeline from the ages 14-24. This was based on social, physical, and cultural norms at the time, which have changed since then. Adolescence covers the ages of 10-18 in the current literature (Jensen & Arnett, 2012; Arnett, 2000), because there are characteristics representative of this time period. One factor that has been used to determine the beginning of adolescence was the beginning of puberty. In young females, this is called menarche, the onset of menstruation. Research has found that the average age of menarche has decreased over the years, with 0.3 years per decade as the average (Roche, 1979). This change in the beginning of puberty means that when Stanley

Hall proposed his timeline during the early part of the 20th century, age 14 was an accurate age to describe the start of adolescence, given the physical and reproductive changes that occur with an individual, just as adolescence beginning at 10 years old is justifiable today.

In addition to menarche, there are other changes that occur within an individual at a different rate, labelled secular trends (Boyd et al. 2011). From the time during the 19th century to now, we have seen adolescents have increased bone density, height, body fat percentages, and other physiological changes. This may be related to health and nutrition improvements, advancements in medicine, economic growth, and increased education. Aside from these changes, there are commonalities that occur for an individual that is aged between 10-18 years and their peers. Typically, a person would still be living with their guardian(s) during this time, attending secondary school, and participating in a developed peer culture (e.g., social media, artistic expressions of the self, etc.). The end of this stage is marked by increased legal responsibilities, where an individual can now vote, make independent legal decisions, and choose a pathway towards goals they value (Arnett, 2000).

Young adulthood is a unique stage with independent qualities, and its time period, as proposed by Arnett (2000), ranges from 30-40 years old. The top three criteria for identifying whether an individual is successfully handling the challenges associated with young adulthood include: accepting responsibility for oneself; making independent decisions; and becoming financially independent (Arnett, 1998). Prior to these goals being met, an individual may subjectively feel as though they have not reached adulthood, as they are still in an unstable life stage. Like adolescence, there are certain characteristics that are representative of an individual in this stage. During young adulthood, a person may have become established within a career (i.e., more stable occupation or occupational path), be in a committed romantic relationship or

marriage, have children, and have increased responsibilities (Arnett, 2000). As discussed above regarding the change in age of puberty, there has also been significant shifts in norms in adulthood. One prominent example is the increased age, on average, of an individual entering their first marriage. Research has found that, during the 1960s and 1970s, the average age at marriage was 23 years for women and 25 years for men. However, the average age at marriage for women has now climbed to 30 years for women and 31 years for men (Statistics Canada, 2013). This delay has allowed for increased exploration and opportunities for identity development prior to settling into a more stable way of life.

Arnett (2000) describes the period between adolescence and young adulthood as emerging adulthood, where role experimentation continues, and where adult commitments are postponed. One key difference observed when comparing emerging adulthood and its preceding and succeeding stages is that there is a greater depth of variety demographically. During adolescence, an individual is likely attending school and living at home, whereas they are likely married and not enrolled in school by the time they reach young adulthood. Both adolescence and young adulthood have patterns and norms that fall within them (i.e., living situation, occupation, parental relationships, etc.). However, emerging adulthood does not have the same standards, and there is a large amount of variance when looking at those who are between 18-29 years old. For example, in Canada, about 37% of the population aged 18-29 attend university (Statistics Canada, 2020). Outside of this percentage, others go into the workforce, and there are fluctuations in the living arrangements for an individual during this time. A person may be living in a campus dormitory, living with their parents, living independently, living with a roommate, cohabitating with a partner, or a combination of a few of these options. In addition, for an individual living with their parents during this stage, there is an increase in the autonomy they

have, which was not present during adolescence (e.g., legal rights, separate responsibilities, etc.). Although there is variety within living situations and environments during this time, an individual is working towards young adulthood. Arnett (1998) proposed that an individual who is on the verge of becoming a self-sufficient person is a person who is moving through the challenges presented in emerging adulthood. There is no demographic transition that is necessary for an individual reaching young adulthood, but the subjective feeling of getting there is an accumulation of what one goes through during this time, between ages 18-29 (Arnett, 2000).

Emerging adulthood is a crucial time for explorations of the self, of pursuing attainment of an identity. Arnett (2000) proposed three main areas for identity explorations: love, work, and worldview. As an individual gains experience, they can integrate pieces of information into their identity, becoming a person who has successfully resolved the crisis of Identity vs. Role Confusion. To start, love is different during emerging adulthood than it was during adolescence. Exposure to romantic love and sexual experience typically occurs while an individual is in adolescence. However, intimacy and a genuine interest in a committed romantic relationship occurs during emerging adulthood. Part of this transition includes the ability to reflect on what an individual sees from them self in the future, what they value in a partner, and what they appreciate in relationships. The time in emerging adulthood allows for experimentation to realize how love fits into their life, and how to balance that with other goals an individual has (Shulman & Connolly, 2013).

The second piece for identity exploration that Arnett (2000) proposed was work during emerging adulthood. In adolescence, an individual who is working is typically doing it part-time, who would then be able to afford leisure activities. When an individual reaches emerging adulthood, they may still be working part-time, but throughout this time, an individual is

considering work experiences that match their interests and long-term goals. In addition, exploration is made necessary during this phase, as there may not yet be a commitment to a career, and a chance to pursue educational opportunities that would give more options. Furthermore, there is a group of individuals that go straight into the workforce following high school, where similar explorations may occur.

The final piece proposed for identity exploration in emerging adulthood was the development of worldviews. This consists of a variety of constructs, including religious views, political views, independent reflections, views of society, in addition to others. During adolescence, exposure to different ideas may be limited to what an individual's parents or family believes in. Emerging adulthood allows for greater autonomy to examine other ideas. There are also additional factors that impact emerging adulthood above adolescence in areas of cognitive and neurological development. Researchers have found significant differences in the brains of adolescents and emerging adults, where there is an evolution of cognitive structures, leading to increased rational thinking, as well as pruning of gray matter (Arnett & Tanner, 2011; Gogtay et al. 2004; Labouvie-Vief, 2006). Furthermore, the increase in white matter allows for connections to be created quicker in the brain, allowing for neural reorganization, leading to more efficient emotion-regulation and decision making. In combination with social factors, the neurological and cognitive changes allow for emerging adults to probe and commit to their own worldviews.

Identity Statuses

Marcia (1966) expanded ideas related to identity introduced by Erikson (1963). Although Erikson's psychosocial stages addressed a crisis of Identity vs. Role Confusion, Marcia (1966) focused on the formation of identity and its components. The construct of identity status was proposed, where an individual can move through different phases when exploring and stabilizing

their identity. The two main components of identity statuses are crisis and commitment. A crisis is defined as "[a] period of engagement in choosing among meaningful alternatives," whereas a commitment is defined as "the degree of personal investment the individual exhibits" (Marcia, 1966, pp. 551). The four identity statuses include a combination of varying levels of these two components. Although the crisis of Identity vs. Role Confusion only allows for two polar outcomes, the identity statuses concept allows for a process to occur whereby an individual may be in any of the four statuses and for differing periods of time.

The first identity status is identity achievement, where an individual has gone through a crisis, and they have made a commitment to an occupational choice, religion, political ideology, and worldview (high crisis, high commitment). The second identity status is moratorium, where there is a crisis actively happening, but a firm commitment has not yet been made (high crisis, low commitment). The third identity status is foreclosure, where a commitment has happened with no crisis, meaning an individual has taken on an identity ascribed to them by others, potentially familial or societal (low crisis, high commitment). The fourth identity status is identity diffusion, where there is no crisis actively occurring, and no effort to make a commitment, which can occur prior to the process of forming an identity or the failure to commit after a crisis (low crisis, low commitment; Marcia, 1966).

The formation of an identity status is a process, which involves the introduction of new ideas, as well as physical and cognitive development. Researchers have found that social cognitive variables and epistemic cognition play a role in identity formation (Krettenauer, 2005; Rowe & Marcia, 1980). This research indicates that logical thinking, information processing, and critical thinking skills are used to reach identity achievement (Boyd et al. 2011). An individual works to understand the nature of the incoming knowledge and refine a process of knowing to

implement beliefs that coincide with their values. Furthermore, the process of decision making itself can be unpleasant and maladaptive at times, but this allows for formal operational thought to be applied to different environments, including the workplace, school, and at home.

The stability of identity statuses is also varied. An individual may move through multiple identity statuses prior to settling into one with more stability. Research has found that, throughout the lifetime, an individual will go through re-formulations and alternating period of stability (Marcia, 2010). In addition, even when an individual is stable in their identity status (including identity achievement), they continue to develop (Carlsson et al. 2015). Key factors in the continuation of development are flexibility and adaptability, which includes the ability to stay open to new ideas and experiences and be willing to integrate change into the self. The process is lifelong, but an individual will settle into "adult" roles based on their identity presently, which integrates physical, sexual, and cognitive abilities, alongside morality (Boyd et al. 2011).

Identity Styles

The identity statuses proposed by Marcia (1966) were used in developmental research for several decades, and Berzonsky's (1989) theory of identity styles was devised from the ideas introduced by identity statuses. Identity statuses are outcome variables that are dependent on how an individual will deal with a situation during the present moment, specifically the crisis and commitment aspects of it. The status was selected based on the identity outcome of an individual. Alternatively, the theory of identity styles is more process-oriented, with greater focus going into the input side of things. As opposed to analyzing the outcome of the decision, identity styles focused on the decision making and problem-solving pieces of the process.

An identity style is defined as "the strategy that individuals characteristically use or would prefer to employ" in processing information and decision making (Berzonsky, 1989, pp.

270). This definition relates back to the concept of self-continuity introduced by Erikson (1963). The identity style is ongoing and applicable to the daily decision making an individual goes through. Research suggests three levels of social-cognitive approaches that are integrated into decision making (Berzonsky, 1989). The first and most basic stage is the cognitive and behavioural responses an individual uses in their daily life, followed by social-cognitive strategies that work to organize these responses, with the identity style being the overarching framework within which these strategies are implemented.

Berzonsky (1989) proposed three different identity styles. The first is informational, in which an individual will pursue information and process it in an open-minded way prior to finalizing a decision. The second is normative, in which an individual is not interested in seeking further information, but rather conforms and follows guidelines set forth by authority figures in their life. The third is diffuse-avoidant, in which an individual does not engage in effective decision making and will often wait until a deadline to decide, which may be influenced by the rewards or consequences that the outcome holds. In addition to these identity styles, Berzonsky (1989) also proposed a fourth subscale for identity commitment. This commitment piece evolved from the identity statuses by Marcia (1966), where commitment measures the personal involvement an individual has to their beliefs and values. Research shows that identity commitment is positively related to the informational and normative identity styles, and negatively related to the diffuse-avoidant identity style (Berzonsky et al. 2013; Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016). Although both the informational and normative identity styles have a significantly positive relationship with identity commitment, research has found that the relationship is stronger for individuals with higher levels of the normative identity style (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005). This measure of identity commitment has been used to explore the

relationship between identity styles and academic performance, psychological well being, self-regulation, and other concepts (Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005; Berzonsky & Papini, 2014).

Berzonsky's (1989) proposed identity styles were constructed through the influence of Marcia's (1966) theory of identity statuses, and there is a relationship between the two theories. To start, the purpose of the concept of identity styles is to make the concepts introduced in the identity statuses framework more practical. Streitmatter (1993) proposed that while the concept of identity statuses indirectly address issues, the identity styles concept is useful in understanding cognitive and cognitive-behavioural aspects of addressing issues. Responding to situations by using relevant cognitive input allows for identity development to occur, as there is information on how an individual is processing incoming information. The statuses themselves relate to the styles, through a theoretical link. Researchers found that the identity achievement status was positively correlated with the informational identity style and commitment, due to the ability to explore and employ social-cognitive reasoning (Streitmatter, 1993; Berzonsky & Neimeyer, 1994; Berzonsky, 1989). The moratorium status was positively correlated with the informational identity style, and negatively correlated with commitment, due to the ability to explore, but not commit to a specific ideology. The foreclosure status was positively correlated with the normative identity style and diffuse-avoidant identity style, and negatively correlated to the informational identity style and commitment. This finding may be due to analyzing information at a lower rate (in comparison to the identity achieved and moratorium statuses) and not integrating multiple perspectives into decision making. Lastly, the diffusion status was strongly positively correlated with the diffuse-avoidant identity style and slightly positively correlated with the normative identity style, and negatively correlated to the informational identity style and

commitment (Streitmatter, 1993). This finding may be due to the tendency to avoid problems and delay decision making.

The stability of an identity style varies and shifts as time progresses. Research has found that the informational identity style and its commitment increases with age (Reio et al. 2014). Furthermore, the diffuse-avoidant identity style was found to decrease with age and was more prevalent in males. The gender difference for the diffuse-avoidant identity style also become very small once an individual reaches emerging adulthood, and the diffuse-avoidant identity style level also decreases (Crocetti et al. 2013). This information suggests that, as we grow older and gain experience, we are better able to receive, process, and integrate information. More identity work is taking place as an individual develops. It has also been suggested that an individual can carry elements of all three identity styles, but the one that is used most heavily is the preferred strategy within the profile (Žukauskienė et al. 2018). The stability of an individual's identity profile (with them having a preferred strategy) is quite stable over time.

Self-Compassion

The concept of self-compassion is quite novel in Western psychology, although it is rooted in previous teachings introduced through Buddhism and Eastern practices (Neff, 2003a). Prior to self-compassion (see a fuller description of the concept in the next paragraph), the concept of self-esteem was heavily used to assess healthy psychological functioning. The concept of self-esteem has been defined as an individual's perception of the self, using the societal environment as a framework in comparison to the self (Ziller et al. 1969). Furthermore, an individual with low self-esteem may react differently in comparison to an individual with high self-esteem when they take in and respond to new information. Although an individual with high self-esteem will be more consistent in their response to the information, an individual with low

self-esteem may be more inconsistent and shift their response depending on environmental conditions. In contrast to self-esteem, self-compassion is not dependent on evaluating the self in comparison to others, is positively related to self-worth, and less likely to fluctuate due to external factors (Neff, 2011).

The concept of compassion refers to an individual feeling kindness and understanding towards another individual, and wanting to alleviate another's pain, while remaining non-judgemental (Neff, 2003a). Adding to this idea, the concept of self-compassion refers approaching one's own pain in a non-judgemental way and using kindness and understanding to alleviate one's own pain. Neff (2003a) proposed three basic components of self-compassion: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. First, self-kindness (which is the opposite of self-judgement) represents understanding one's own difficulties, and offering the self warmth and kindness, instead of fixating on self criticism. Second, common humanity (opposite of isolation) represents a realization an individual has in understanding that their experience is interconnected with others. Common humanity works to reduce isolation and shame an individual may have when perceiving their situation and that their struggles are unique to them, when they are not, and are a part of something bigger. Third, mindfulness (opposite of over-identification) represents an individual's ability to keep a balanced awareness of the thoughts and feelings that are happening. If an individual over-identifies with the pain and emotions they are experiencing, they may gain a skewed perception of their experience, leading them to isolation. These three components of self-compassion can allow an individual to gain acceptance of the self, while keeping awareness and offering kindness to increase self-worth.

Compassionate Love

The concept of compassionate love builds on ideas introduced by the concept of compassion, noted above (Neff, 2003a). Compassionate love has been defined as an attitude an individual has to others they interact with (e.g., strangers, close others, romantic partners, etc.), in which they are focused on providing kindness, positivity, and concern when another individual is perceived to be hurting or suffering (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). Like other attitudes, compassionate love has been proposed to fluctuate and vary across different situations and contexts. Additionally, Goetz et al. (2010) suggested that there is an appraisal process an individual goes through when taking on the attitude of compassionate love. During the appraisal process, there are antecedents that occur prior to the outcome of compassionate love. For example, following a negative event, an individual may ask them self certain questions before reaching the conclusion to offer compassionate love, questions such as who the victim of the negative event is, if they are suffering, and whether the victim is deserving of help. If the answer is yes, the individual can then reflect and determine whether they are equipped with coping skills and resources that could benefit the victim. If yes, compassionate love may be displayed to the victim of the negative event.

Compassionate love involves a connection with another individual and, because of this connection, researchers have drawn comparisons between the concepts of compassionate love and empathy (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). Empathy is defined as the ability to infer and take the perspective of another individual's mental state and understand their emotions (Singer & Klimecki, 2014). Although the two concepts have certain similarities and promote prosocial behaviours, they also have vast differences, with compassionate love being described as more encompassing (Lazarus, 1991). Although compassionate love is other-related, empathy is self-related. Where compassionate love is feeling for other individuals, empathy is feeling with other

individuals (Singer & Klimecki, 2014). Empathizing with another individual can include feeling and being with someone in their negative (or positive) mental state and feelings, whereas compassionate love involves providing warmth to another individual to uplift their wellbeing (being more positive in nature). Both concepts involve using mentalization and other cognitive capacities to understand the experience, but the responses provided by compassionate love and empathy are different.

Neuroimaging studies have found different regions of brain activation when using compassionate love and empathy. In one study, participants were shown videos of individuals during everyday life and individuals who were suffering during three separate times (Klimecki et al. 2014). Time 1 was prior to any training, Time 2 followed empathy or memory training, and Time 3 followed compassion or memory training. Participants were also undergoing functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) while watching the videos, and then responded to a memory task. This study found that, following empathy training, participants increased in negative affect and brain areas associated with empathy and pain were activated (anterior insula and anterior midcingulate cortex). In comparison, following compassion training, participants increased in positive affect, while other areas in the brain were activated, including the ventral striatum, pregenual anterior cingulate cortex, and medial orbitofrontal cortex, which are regions associated with processing love, reward, and affiliation. Findings from this study suggest there are certain benefits to compassionate love that go above and beyond those of empathy. Furthermore, compassionate love is an altruistic and positive attitude, that can be beneficial to both an individual who is providing or giving it, and others they are caring for or receiving it (Underwood, 2009).

Quiet Ego

To understand the idea of quieting the ego, it is critical to have background knowledge of the current definition of ego. Ego is a complex concept, and it involves many factors. First, it involves making affective appraisals of the self, which can include the concepts of self-esteem and self-worth, among others (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). Second, it involves analyzing the relationships one has with others, including identifying bonds and creating connections with others. Third, the concept of ego involves having a conscious awareness of the self, which includes recognizing one's point of view and frame of reference. These factors together create a concept of oneself (through evaluation), which forms the ego.

The ego of an individual is dynamic, and researchers theorize that it is possible to have a noisy ego and a quiet ego (Wayment & Bauer, 2018). A quiet ego attempts to understand one's own and other's internal psychological dynamics (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). In addition, the quiet ego recognizes strengths and weaknesses in the self and in others and uses them as a tool for growth and compassion. The quiet ego works towards self-awareness and kindness and opposes selfish pursuits. Expanding further, the concept of quiet ego does not want to diminish the self-identity one has, but rather build it through a process in which an individual is not too self- or other-focused. Instead, the quiet ego attempts to incorporate factors such as courage, responsibility, and altruism to form a more integrative and less defensive concept of the self. On the other hand, the concept of a noisy ego within an individual prioritizes self-interest above all else. Furthermore, a noisier ego also focuses on the external environment, and is less capable of understanding internal sensations of the self and others. The noisy ego does not have balance and concentrates on social images and defending oneself from any criticism

There are four dimensions that compose the concept of quiet ego: detached awareness, perspective-taking, inclusive identity, and growth (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). The dimension of

detached awareness is similar to the idea of mindfulness, which includes having a subjective and non-defensive awareness of the present moment. Having a detached awareness can lead to insights, because the experience is open in an accepting environment. Next, the dimension of perspective-taking involves comprehending one's own and other's perspectives. By engaging in interdependent thoughts, an individual may have the ability to foster further connections with others and provide compassion to others in different situations. Inclusive identity emphasizes taking an empathic, accepting, and respectful stance towards one's own and other's emotions. This encourages cooperation in interpersonal interactions with others. The final dimension of quiet ego is growth, which involves assessing the progress an individual has had in detached awareness, perspective-taking, and inclusive identity. The goal of growth is to gain the ability to have better comprehension of multiple perspectives and limit egotism in the present moment (which can be impactful later as well). These four factors together contribute towards a quieter ego, which can lead to balance in an individual.

Summary

In this chapter, relevant literature was covered as the foundation for the hypotheses I will propose below. The stages of psychosocial development, specifically the fifth stage that covers identity, was detailed to provide background information (Erikson, 1963). To reiterate, identity is comprised of an individual's unique characteristics across development, situations, and societal roles (Boyd et al. 2011). Emerging adulthood, which is from the ages of 18 to 29, is when issues in identity can be delved into, to address struggles with career, relationships, and worldview (Arnett, 2000). In this study, identity styles will be used to operationalize the concept of identity (Berzonsky, 1989). There are three identity styles (Berzonsky et al. 2013). The first is the informational identity style, in which an individual will pursue information and process it in an

open-minded way prior to finalizing a decision. The second is the normative identity style, in which an individual is not interested in seeking further information, rather conforming to guidelines set forth by authority figures. The third is the diffuse-avoidant identity style, in which an individual will often wait for a deadline to plan and decide and is strongly influenced by consequences and rewards. Using identity as the basis for how individuals process information, it is possible to investigate positive psychology concepts with which they may have an association. First, there is the concept of self-compassion, which is approaching one's own pain in a non-judgmental way and using kindness to alleviate this pain (Neff, 2003a). Second, there is the concept of compassionate love for humanity, in which there is the attitude an individual has towards strangers they interact with, in which they are focused on providing kindness, positivity, and concern when this other individual is suffering (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). Third, there is the concept of quiet ego, which involves the understanding of one's own and other's internal psychological dynamics (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). My study will explore the associations between these concepts.

Chapter 3: Methods

Objectives and Hypotheses

There are two primary purposes of this study: (1) examining relationships between the identity styles and quiet ego; and (2) examining whether these relationships are mediated by self-compassion and compassionate love. The theoretical background outlined above indicates the potential for certain relationships to emerge between the identity styles, quiet ego, self-compassion, and compassionate love for humanity. Two analyses were conducted to study the possible relationships between the measures used in the present study. The first analysis comprised zero-order correlations between all the measures. The second analysis used multiple hierarchal regression to test for any mediation effects of the three compassionate measures on identity styles and quiet ego. The predicted qualitative zero order correlations can be found in Table 1.

A multiple hierarchal regression is an analysis that allows for the examination of whether a variable contributes significantly to a model where there are more than two variables (Howell, 2012). For this study, quiet ego will be the criterion variable, and the other variables acting as predictor variables, with the identity styles measure added at the first step of the analysis, and the three compassionate measures added at the second step of the analysis. Furthermore, a mediating relationship is one where a third variable mediates the relationship between two other variables. In this study, I am looking to see if the predicted relationship between each of the three identity styles and quiet ego will be mediated by either compassionate love for humanity or self-compassion. There are four possible outcomes in a mediation analysis. The first is that the mediator variable does not explain any of the original effect between the predictor variable and the criterion variable, and, further, exerts no unique effect on the criterion variable. The second is

partial mediation, where the effect between the identity style under examination and quiet ego remains significant, but some of that effect is accounted for or explained by the mediator variable. The third is total mediation, in which the original effect of the identity style under examination and quiet ego becomes non-significant, because that original effect is accounted for by the mediator variable on quiet ego. The fourth is that there may be no reduction, or a slight reduction, in the original effect between the identity style under examination and quiet ego, but not enough of a reduction to infer some type of mediation, and there is an effect of the mediator on quiet ego. In other words, the identity style has two types of effect on quiet ego, a direct effect and an indirect effect through the proposed mediator variable. Overall, this study consisted of seven primary hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant positive relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant negative relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego.

Hypothesis 4: The informational identity style positively predicts quiet ego, with high self-compassion being a mediating factor.

Hypothesis 5: The informational identity style positively predicts quiet ego, with high compassionate love for humanity being a mediating factor.

Hypothesis 6: The normative identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, with low compassionate love for humanity being a mediating factor.

Hypothesis 7: The diffuse-avoidant identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, with low self-compassion being a mediating factor.

Participants

Undergraduate students from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) were recruited. Eighteen to 29-year-old female and male students enrolled in a first- or second-year undergraduate psychology course who have an account through the online SONA system had access to participate. Participants under the age of 18 or over the age of 29, or participants who do not self-identify as female or male, were able to complete the survey, although their data were not used in the analyses. For gender, the reasoning behind eliminating the data that were provided by individuals who do not identify as either male or female is solely for statistical purposes, as there were not enough individuals who are gender non-conforming to be representative of this population for generalizations. Ethical considerations that went into this decision involved allowing individuals to participate in the survey, regardless of their gender identity, to avoid discriminatory practices. Individuals outside of the age range are simply not in the population of interest of the present study. Other than the above constraints, there were no prior restrictions on who could participate in the survey (e.g., ethnicity). In addition, students were only able to participate once in the study.

Procedure

Participants were administered five online surveys (see below) embedded into a series of 11 total surveys, which are a part of a larger study looking at identity, contemplative practices, and integrative wisdom. Only the data from the five surveys referred to in the appendix were used in this study. The data collection was estimated to take between 75-90 minutes to complete. Thus, participants were granted 2% bonus credit towards course credit for taking the survey. This

is in accordance with the Psychology Department guidelines, where students are to receive a 1% bonus for every hour (or portion thereof) for their participation. Participants were free to withdraw at any point during the survey. Prior to the surveys, there was a page explaining the study and providing informed consent. The series of surveys started with the demographics section, followed by the ten surveys, which appeared in a randomized order. Once all the surveys were completed, participants received the information and consent forms again, which they could print for their records.

Measures

The Identity Style Inventory – Revised **(ISI-5**; Berzonsky et al., 2013; Appendix C). There are 36 items. The four categories of items include informational, normative, diffuse/avoidant, and commitment. There are nine informational items (i.e., "Talking to others helps me explore my personal beliefs."), nine normative items (i.e., "I automatically adopt and follow the values I was brought up with."), nine diffuse/avoidant items (i.e., "I am not really thinking about my future now, it is still a long way off."), and nine commitment items (i.e., "I know basically what I believe and don't believe."). All items are rated on a 5-point Likert Scale, with 1 being *Not at all like me* and 5 being *Very much like me*. In addition, the 36 items are intermixed on the survey given to individuals. Several questions are reverse scored. The internal reliability of the ISI-5 has ranged from .77 to .83. Cross-cultural competency was also validated, as the measure has successfully been translated into Italian, Iranian, French, and other languages, in addition to items being revised to be less-domain specific and more applicable to a wider range of populations, in comparison to the ISI-5's predecessors (Monacis et al. 2009; Vaziri et al. 2014; Zimmermann et al. 2012; Berzonsky et al. 2013).

The Self-Compassion Scale **(SCS**; Neff, 2003; Appendix D). There are 26 items. Within the scale, there are six categories for questions, including five self-kindness items (i.e., "I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain."), five self-judgement items (i.e., "I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies."), four common humanity items (i.e., "When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through."), four isolation items (i.e., "When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world."), four mindfulness items (i.e., "When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance."), and four over-identification items (i.e., "When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong."). All items are rated on a 5-point scale, where 1 represents *Almost never,* whereas 5 represents *Almost* always. The 26 items are intermixed, with some items reverse scored. The measure was found to have internal consistency reliability ranging from .77 to .81. Cross-cultural competency has also been validated by having the measure successfully translated into multiple languages, including Turkish, Arabic, Spanish, and others (Deniz et al. 2008; Alabdulaziz et al. 2020; Garcia-Campayo et al. 2014).

The Compassionate Love for Humanity Scale **(CLHS**; Sprecher & Fehr, 2005; Appendix E). There are 21 items in the Compassionate Love for Humanity scale. The items are not split into subscales. An example of an item from this scale includes "When I see people I do not know feeling sad, I feel a need to reach out to them". Items are rated on a 7-point scale, which is used to assess to what degree each of the items represents you. A 1 on the scale is *Not at all true of me*, whereas a 7 is *Very true of me*. The internal reliability of each version of the scale was found to be .95. In addition, there was a positive correlation of .50 and .68 between the compassionate love scale and two empathy scales. Furthermore, there was found to be a

correlation of .32 for the humanity version of the scale when comparing it to Penner et al. (1995) Helpfulness scale. These and similar scales provide support for the validity of the Compassionate Love scale. Additionally, cross-cultural competency has been validated, through the successful translation of the measure into other languages, including Portuguese and French, along with the creation of a shortened version (Neto & Menezes, 2014; Virat et al. 2020; Hwang et al. 2008).

The Quiet Ego Scale **(QES**; Wayment et al. 2015; Appendix F). There are 14 items which measure detached awareness, inclusive identity, perspective taking, and growth, all factors of quiet ego. Examples of items from the QES include "Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place" and "I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision". All items are measured using a 5-point Likert Scale. Ratings range from a 1 which is *Strongly Disagree* to a 5 which is *Strongly Agree.* There are reverse-scored items within the measure, although the scale itself is unidimensional. Internal reliability ranged from .66 to .78 (considering the different factors of the scale). When comparing the QES to other scales, it was found to have a strong positive correlation with humility, self-compassion, and the Loyola Generativity Scale, a moderately positive correlation with the Savouring Beliefs Inventory, Self-Esteem, Self-Determination, and Personal Growth Inventory. These results show there to be adequate validity. Furthermore, adequate cross-cultural validation has been provided, as Quiet Ego itself stems from an Eastern Buddhist framework, and this concept has been studied using Romanian and Japanese populations, in addition to being used in positive psychology work in both Canada and the USA (Gherghel et al. 2018; Wayment at al. 2015; Beaumont, 2017).

Chapter 4: Results

Data Screening and Overview of Analyses

The data were examined for any missing values, outliers, and issues with normality prior to conducting any analyses. There were no missing values for any item of any scale, and the distribution of scores was found to be normal across both genders. Prior to opening the survey up to participants, it was decided that any individual should be allowed to take the survey, regardless of their gender or age, to avoid discriminatory practices. Due to this procedure, data from 38 participants were removed: 36 individuals because they were outside the age range associated with emerging adulthood (i.e., 18-29 years old), and two individuals who identified as non-binary. This resulted in a final sample size of 304 participants (84 males; 220 females).

The following preliminary analyses were conducted. First, potential gender differences were examined through comparison of mean scores and correlation strengths of the scales across gender (see Table 2). Second, the intercorrelations between the identity styles and identity commitment were examined.

The following analyses were then conducted to examine the research hypotheses (which are provided below): (1) correlation analyses to examine the relationships among variables (Hypotheses 1-3); and (2) mediation hierarchical multiple regression analyses to examine possible direct effects of identity styles, as well as possible mediation effects of self-compassion and compassionate love for humanity on quiet ego. For the mediation hierarchical multiple regression analyses, identity commitment was entered on step one to control for its possible effects. The inclusion of identity commitment, which is significantly correlated with the three identity styles, the mediator variables, and quiet ego, thus allowed for a more stringent

examination of the effects of identity styles and the mediator variables on quiet ego (see Table 3; Hypotheses 4-7).

Prior to conducting a mediation hierarchical multiple regression analysis, Baron and Kenny (1986) suggest testing two requirements to properly examine the effects of mediation variables. The first requirement examines whether the predictor variable is significantly correlated with the criterion variable. The second requirement examines whether the predictor variable is significantly correlated with the mediator variable. Only if both these two requirements are fulfilled can the impact of mediation be properly tested and interpreted.

As noted, there are four possible outcomes in a mediation analysis after the mediator variable is included in the analysis. The first is that the mediator variable does not explain any of the original effect between the predictor variable and the criterion variable, and, further, exerts no unique effect on the criterion variable (i.e., the effect between, in the case of the present study, the identity style under examination and quiet ego remains significant, but none of this effect is accounted for by the mediator variable, and the mediator variable exerts no unique effect on quiet ego). The second is partial mediation, where the effect between the identity style under examination and quiet ego remains significant, but some of that effect is accounted for or explained by the mediator variable (i.e., part of the original effect of identity style on quiet ego is accounted for by the mediator variable). The third is total mediation, in which the original effect of the identity style under examination and quiet ego becomes non-significant, because that original effect is accounted for by the mediator variable on quiet ego (i.e., most, if not all, the original effect of identity style on quiet ego is accounted for by the mediator variable). The fourth is that there may be no reduction, or a slight reduction, in the original effect between the identity style under examination and quiet ego, but not enough of a reduction to infer some type

of mediation, and there is an effect of the mediator on quiet ego. In other words, the identity style has two types of effect on quiet ego: a direct effect (i.e., the direct pathway between the identity style under examination and quiet ego, which has not been appreciably reduced after the inclusion of the mediator variable); and an indirect effect (i.e., the identity style under examination influences the mediator which then influences quiet ego). An alpha level of .05 was used to assess significance in all analyses.

Preliminary Analysis of Gender Differences

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to observe any gender differences that may have occurred amongst the variables. The multivariate effect of gender was significant, $F(8, 295) = 5.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .122$. The univariate effects were significant for the diffuse-avoidant identity style, compassionate love for humanity, self-compassion, and quiet ego. Males scored significantly higher on the diffuse-avoidant identity style and self-compassion measures. Females scored significantly higher on the compassionate love for humanity and quiet ego measures.

Gender differences were also examined by comparing the strengths of the correlations, after separating the correlational relationships by gender. *Z*-tests were conducted to examine any differences, and only one was significant: the comparison for the strengths of the correlation between the normative identity style and identity commitment ($r = -.025$, $p = .821$, for males; $r = .240$, $p < .001$, for females) was significantly higher for females compared to males.

Following the analyses to locate any potential gender differences, the genders were collapsed and analyzed together for several reasons. First, similar patterns of correlations were found for both males and females. Most of the constructs had significant relationships when doing a zero-order correlation divided by gender (i.e., significant positive relationship between

the informational identity style and quiet ego for both genders). Second, aside from one relationship (the normative identity style and identity commitment), all other correlation strengths were similar (confirmed by conducting *z*-tests). Third, there has been little reported literature on the impact of gender on these constructs and if there are expected gender differences. Future research may be conducted to explore these differences more thoroughly.

Intercorrelations Between Age, Identity Styles, and Identity Commitment

Age was not significantly related to the informational, normative, or diffuse-avoidant identity styles, or to identity commitment. The mean age of the participants in this study was 20.00 years old (range from 18-29 years old).

The informational identity style ($r = .26$, $p < .001$) and normative identity style ($r = .17$, $p = .004$) were significantly positively related to identity commitment. In addition, the diffuse-avoidant identity style ($r = -.66$, $p < .001$) was significantly negatively related to identity commitment. These findings are consistent with previous research (Berzonsky et al. 2013; Berzonsky & Papini, 2014; Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016). Furthermore, the diffuse-avoidant identity style was intercorrelated with the informational style ($r = -.20$, $p < .001$) and normative style ($r = .18$, $p = .001$), which is consistent with the above literature. However, the informational and normative identity styles ($r = -.17$, $p = .003$) were significantly negatively related to one another.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant positive relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego

Correlational relationships. The relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego was found to be significantly positively correlated ($r = .473$, $p < .001$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant negative relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego

Correlational relationships. The relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego was found to be significantly negatively correlated (r = -.351, p < .001). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego

Correlational relationships. The relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego was found to be significantly negatively correlated (r = -.221, p < .001). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Hypothesis 4: The informational identity style positively predicts quiet ego, with high self-compassion being a mediating factor

Baron and Kenny Requirements. Requirement one was met, as there was a significant positive correlation between the informational identity style and quiet ego. Requirement two, however, was not met, as there was not a significant correlation between the informational identity style and self-compassion (see Table 3). Thus, the mediation analysis could not be conducted. As a result, Hypothesis 4 could not be tested.

Hypothesis 5: The informational identity style positively predicts quiet ego, with high compassionate love for humanity being a mediating factor

Baron and Kenny Requirements. Requirement one was met, as there was a significant positive correlation between the informational identity style and quiet ego. Requirement two was also met, as there was a significant positive correlation between the informational identity style

and compassionate love for humanity (see Table 3). The mediation analysis was conducted following the fulfilment of the two requirements.

Hierarchical Regression Analyses. To fully examine the relationship between quiet ego and the informational identity style, with a potential mediating factor of compassionate love for humanity, a mediation hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted. The control step was used to allow identity commitment to be assessed its unique effect on quiet ego. The analysis was conducted with identity commitment entered at Step 1, the informational identity style entered at Step 2, and compassionate love for humanity entered at Step 3 (predicting quiet ego). At Step 1, identity commitment's $\beta = .14$ ($t(302) = 2.46$, $p = .014$). At Step 2, the informational identity style's $\beta = .47$ ($t(301) = 8.89$, $p < .001$), while identity commitment's $\beta = .02$ ($t(301) = 0.33$, $p = .744$). At Step 3, compassionate love for humanity's $\beta = .46$ ($t(300) = 9.69$, $p < .001$), the informational identity style's $\beta = .31$ ($t(300) = 6.28$, $p < .001$), and identity commitment's $\beta = .00$ ($t(300) = 0.02$, $p = .988$), when predicting quiet ego. For a visual demonstration of these findings, see Figure 1.

The above findings for Hypothesis 5 can be interpreted as demonstrating partial mediation (refer to Figure 1). More specifically, the relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego remained significant, after compassionate love for humanity was entered into the analysis, although there was an appreciable drop in its β at Step 3, and the relationship between compassionate love for humanity and quiet ego was significant. These two results can be interpreted further in the following way. For the relationship between the information identity style and quiet ego, for every 1 SD increase in the informational identity style, there was a .31 SD increase in quiet ego. For the relationship between compassionate love for humanity and quiet ego, for every 1 SD increase in compassionate love for humanity, there

was a .46 SD increase in quiet ego. Due to these findings, there was support for Hypothesis 5, as the informational identity style positively predicts quiet ego, with high compassionate love for humanity being a mediating factor. A fuller account of the reasons for why a partial mediation occurred in the analysis will be provided in Chapter 5.

Hypothesis 6: The normative identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, with low compassionate love for humanity being a mediating factor

Baron and Kenny Requirements. Requirement one was met, as there was a significant negative relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego. Requirement two was also met, as there was a significant negative relationship between the normative identity style and compassionate love for humanity (see Table 3). The mediation analysis was conducted following the fulfilment of the two requirements.

Hierarchical Regression Analyses. To fully examine the relationship between quiet ego and the normative identity style, with a potential mediating factor of compassionate love for humanity, a mediation hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted. The control step was used to allow identity commitment to be assessed its unique effect on quiet ego. The analysis was conducted with identity commitment at Step 1 and the normative identity style at Step 2 and compassionate love for humanity at Step 3 (predicting quiet ego). At Step 1, identity commitment's $\beta = .14$ ($t(302) = 2.46$, $p = .014$). At Step 2, the normative identity style's $\beta = -.39$ ($t(301) = -7.20$, $p < .001$), while identity commitment's $\beta = .20$ ($t(301) = 3.82$, $p < .001$). At Step 3, compassionate love for humanity's $\beta = .52$ ($t(300) = 11.65$, $p < .001$), the normative identity style's $\beta = -.31$ ($t(300) = -6.97$, $p < .001$), and identity commitment's $\beta = .13$ ($t(300) = 2.80$, $p = .005$), when predicting quiet ego. For a visual demonstration of these findings, see Figure 2.

There was not enough of a drop in the β of the original normative identity style and quiet ego relationship to indicate partial mediation (refer to Figure 2). In other words, the mediator variable of compassionate love for humanity did not account for enough of the normative identity style effect on quiet ego to justify a claim of partial mediation. Rather, the findings for Hypothesis 6 can be interpreted as supporting the fourth possible outcome of a mediation analysis outlined above. That is, the normative identity style exerted a direct effect and an indirect effect on quiet ego. The direct effect and the indirect effect of the normative identity style on quiet ego can be interpreted further in the following ways. For the direct effect of the normative identity style on quiet ego, for every 1 SD increase in the normative identity style, there was a .31 SD decrease in quiet ego. For the indirect effect of the normative identity style on quiet ego (through compassionate love for humanity), for every 1 SD decrease in compassionate love for humanity, there was a .52 SD decrease in quiet ego. A fuller account of the direct effect and indirect effect of the normative identity style on quiet ego will be provided in Chapter 5.

Hypothesis 7: The diffuse-avoidant identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, with low self-compassion being a mediating factor

Baron and Kenny Requirements. Requirement one was met, as there was a significant negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego. Requirement two was also met, as there was a significant negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and self-compassion (see Table 3). The mediation analysis was conducted following the fulfilment of the two requirements.

Hierarchical Regression Analyses. To fully examine the relationship between quiet ego and the diffuse-avoidant identity style, with a potential mediating factor of self-compassion, a mediation hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted. The control step was used to

allow identity commitment to be assessed its unique effect on quiet ego. The analysis was conducted with identity commitment at Step 1 and the diffuse-avoidant identity style at Step 2 and self-compassion at Step 3 (predicting quiet ego). At Step 1, identity commitment's β = .14 (t(302) = 2.46, p = .014). At Step 2, the diffuse-avoidant identity style's β = -.23 (t(301) = -3.03, p = .003), while identity commitment's β = -.01 (t(301) = -0.14, p = .893). At Step 3, self-compassion's β = .23 (t(300) = 4.14, p < .001), the diffuse-avoidant identity style's β = -.19 (t(300) = -2.55, p = .011), and identity commitment's β = -.02 (t(300) = -0.33, p = .740), when predicting quiet ego. For a visual demonstration of these findings, see Figure 3.

There was not enough of a drop in the β of the original diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego relationship to indicate partial mediation (refer to Figure 3). In other words, the mediator variable of self-compassion did not account for enough of the diffuse-avoidant identity style effect on quiet ego to justify a claim of partial mediation. Rather, the findings for Hypothesis 7 can be interpreted as supporting the fourth possible outcome of a mediation analysis outlined above. That is, the diffuse-avoidant identity style exerted a direct effect and an indirect effect on quiet ego. The direct effect and the indirect effect of the diffuse-avoidant identity style on quiet ego can be interpreted further in the following ways. For the direct effect of the normative identity style on quiet ego, for every 1 SD increase in the diffuse-avoidant identity style, there was a .19 SD decrease in quiet ego. For the indirect effect of the diffuse-avoidant identity style on quiet ego (through self-compassion), for every 1 SD decrease in self-compassion there was a .23 SD decrease in quiet ego. A fuller account of the direct effect and indirect effect of the diffuse-avoidant identity style on quiet ego will be provided in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion

There were two primary purposes for this study, which included examining relationships between the identity styles and quiet ego and examining whether these relationships were mediated by self-compassion and compassionate love, during emerging adulthood. These purposes were carried out in the following ways. First, analyzing via intercorrelations, the relationships between the identity styles (informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant) and quiet ego (Hypotheses 1-3). Second, by examining if the relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego was impacted through mediation of either self-compassion or compassionate love for humanity (Hypotheses 4-5). Third, by examining if the relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego was impacted through mediation of compassionate love for humanity (Hypothesis 6). Fourth, by examining if the relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego was impacted through mediation of self-compassion (Hypothesis 7). Of these seven hypotheses, four were supported.

Hypotheses Involving the Informational Identity Style

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant positive relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego. Previous research has not explicitly explored the relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego. In this study, it was found that, indeed, the informational identity style and quiet ego were correlated (refer to Table 3). More specifically, the informational identity style is positively related to quiet ego, meaning that when there is an increase in the score on the informational identity style, there is an increase in the score on quiet ego. To understand how the informational identity style may positively predict a quiet ego, quiet ego must be broken down into its four components, as described above, which

includes detached awareness, perspective-taking, inclusive identity, and growth (Bauer & Wayment, 2008).

To reiterate, detached awareness is characterized by non-defensive awareness and openness to experience in forming an accepting environment (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). There are several ways that higher levels of informational identity style processing may predict higher levels of this component of quiet ego. First, the informational identity style has been found to be significantly positively related to mindfulness (Beaumont, 2011). Mindfulness itself is a balanced awareness of thoughts and feelings that are occurring in the present moment, with intention, attention, and an attitude which practices kindness (Neff, 2003a; Shapiro et al. 2006). As there are aspects of mindfulness integrated into the informational identity style, it is logical to infer that these qualities could predict the detached awareness in quiet ego. Second, it has been reported that the informational identity style has a positive association with openness to experience and seeking out and processing relevant novel information (Duriez & Soenens, 2006; Dollinger, 1995). As opposed to only listening to and incorporating similar beliefs that coincide with personal values, high levels of the informational identity style look to engage with new ideas, in a non-confrontational way. The foundational values of mindfulness, openness to experience, and willingness to process novel information are several possible features of the informational identity style that may predict detached awareness in quiet ego.

Perspective-taking is characterized by comprehending one's own and other's perspectives, which foster inter-personal connections (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). The informational identity style may predict this facet of quiet ego in the following ways. First, the informational identity style has been positively related to identity commitment and problem-focused coping, which is an active method of information processing (Berzonsky, 1992). By

having a commitment to one's own identity, while still actively processing views that are dissonant to one's own, it is logical to infer that an individual with a higher level of the informational identity style is openly taking the perspectives' of others. Second, researchers had previously found that the informational identity style is positively associated with other-oriented helping and empathy (Smits et al. 2011). Other-oriented helping involves behaviours that are carried out in consideration of someone else's needs and wants, without the expectation of something in return (Smits et al. 2011). Empathy is taking another individual's mental state to understand their emotions (Singer & Klimecki, 2014). Engaging in altruistic behaviour that is other-oriented helping and empathy are possible components of the informational identity style that facilitate the development of perspective-taking. Third, the information identity style has been positively associated with volunteerism, which applies perspective-taking and empathy to assist those in need, and prosocial behaviours, which are voluntary behaviours which benefit others (Crocetti et al. 2014; Smits et al. 2011). Furthermore, in a study examining parent-emerging adult child relationships, it was observed that higher levels of autonomy supporting behaviours by the parents were related to higher levels of the informational identity style in the emerging adult children (Kaniušonytė & Žukauskienė, 2018), which was subsequently positively associated with stronger self, family, and community relationships. In other words, individuals who have learned to integrate information more openly and effectively are more likely to provide care to others. Engaging in behaviours that are beneficial to others, with no expectation of a reward, speaks to the perspective-taking an individual with a higher level of the informational identity style engages in, and why these behaviours likely help predict the positive association with the perspective-taking component of quiet ego.

Inclusive identity is characterized by being accepting towards one's own and other's emotions and having cooperation in interactions with others (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). The informational identity style predicts this component of quiet ego in the following possible ways. First, the informational identity style has been positively associated with self-actualization (which indicates high self-esteem, high self-awareness, high empathy, and having realistic perceptions) and self-transcendence (ability to expand and transcend the ego's boundaries, leading to higher connectedness with others) (Lefrancois et al. 1997; Beaumont, 2009). Having a part of the informational identity style, which is characterized by high levels of self-awareness and attempting to connect with others is important in predicting the inclusive identity component of quiet ego. Second, the informational identity style has been negatively associated with both relational aggression, which involves manipulation and damaging other's relationships, and self-enhancements, which is the opposite of self-transcendence and focuses on self-centered achievement and power (Smits et al. 2011; Berzonsky et al. 2011). In addition, when analyzing the defense mechanisms an individual may use when faced with conflict, it was found that those who score higher on the informational identity style use cognitive restructuring to reduce the personal effect of threats, shifting emotions, and thereby rationalizing the situation (Berzonsky & Kinney, 2008). With higher levels of the informational identity style, it is expected that there will be lower levels of relational aggression and lower focus on self-centered achievement and power, leading to productive and cooperative interactions with others. Holding a positive regard to both the self and others, in the ways in which the informational identity style does, may account for why it predicts the inclusive identity component of quiet ego.

Growth is characterized by comprehending multiple perspectives and assessing one's own progress in seeking and analyzing information, and problem-solving (Bauer & Wayment,

2008). The informational identity style predicts this component of quiet ego in the following possible ways. First, the informational identity style has a positive association with curiosity, exploration, and proactive coping, which builds on skills a person has previously gained (Seaton & Beaumont, 2008). The exploration aspect that is integrated into the informational identity style may be one of the reasons for the predictive relationship with growth. Second, the informational identity style has been positively associated with dispositional forgiveness (offering forgiveness) and negatively associated with revenge motivations, which indicates flexibility, maturity, and integrated cognitive and emotional functioning (Seaton & Beaumont, 2014). Moreover, forgiveness itself is associated with a reduction in anger, increased social support, and higher well-being (Freedman & Enright, 1996; Lawler-Row & Piferi, 2006). Having this ability to reflect and extend forgiveness may also account for why higher levels of the informational identity style predicts the growth component of quiet ego. Third, the informational identity style has been found to be positively associated with reflective wisdom (looking at different perspectives and overcoming subjectivity and projections), cognitive wisdom (seeing reality for what it is, including the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects), and affective wisdom (sympathy and compassion for others; Beaumont, 2011; Ardelt, 2003). With higher levels of the informational identity style being associated with higher levels of wisdom, it seems that these relationships also contribute to the growth component of quiet ego. Overall, the informational identity style proclivity to explore, forgive, and assess progress in wisdom, makes it a likely explanation for why higher levels of the informational identity style are associated with higher levels of the growth component of quiet ego.

As just outlined, the informational identity style positively predicts quiet ego, for a plethora of possible reasons. This novel finding highlights the factors of the informational

identity style that are likely involved in the prediction of higher levels of the four components of quiet ego.

Hypothesis 4: The informational identity style positively predicts quiet ego, with high self-compassion being a mediating factor. Previous research has explored the potential relationship between the informational identity style and self-compassion, in addition to the relationship between self-compassion and quiet ego (Bruser & Beaumont, 2010; Chew & Ang, 2021). Bruser and Beaumont (2010) reported no significant relationship between the informational identity style and self-compassion, and the results of the present study found the same non-significant relationship (refer to Table 3). However, recent unpublished research has found there to be a significant positive relationship between the informational identity style and self-compassion, which contributed to the inclusion of this hypothesis (S. Beaumont, Personal Communications, May 21, 2021). In addition, Chew and Ang (2021) reported there to be a significant positive relationship between self-compassion and quiet ego, and the present results replicated this finding (refer to Table 3).

To determine whether to conduct a mediation analysis associated with Hypothesis 4, one of two requirements by Baron and Kenny (1986) were not met, as there was no significant relationship between the predictor (informational identity style) and mediator of interest (self-compassion). Due to the non-significant correlation between the informational identity style and self-compassion, the mediation relationship could not be assessed. The non-significant relationship illustrates that the informational identity style does not reliably predict self-compassion, and the two variables are separately related to quiet ego. My findings also support previous research, which suggests that self-compassion and self-esteem are unique constructs, as the informational identity style has been found to be positively correlated with self-esteem

(Soenens et al. 2016). Self-compassion is not dependent on the perspectives of others on the self, as is the case for self-esteem, which may be why the self-reflection that is necessary for higher levels of the informational identity style is not needed for self-compassion (Neff, 2011). In summary, Hypothesis 4 could not be examined.

Hypothesis 5: The informational identity style positively predicts quiet ego, with high compassionate love for humanity being a mediating factor. Previous research has explored the relationship between the informational identity style and compassionate love for humanity, and the results of my study are consistent with this research, although participants were from a different demographic. Bruser and Beaumont (2010) reported a significant positive relationship between the informational identity style and compassionate love for humanity, in romantic couples, with individuals aged between 31 and 80 years old. The results of the present study have replicated this finding within individuals who are in emerging adulthood (refer to Table 3). To reiterate, compassionate love is an attitude that is displayed towards others in which kindness and positivity are shown when another individual is going through a challenging situation (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). An individual who has scored higher on the informational identity style will also have scored higher on measures of empathy, prosocial behaviour, and other oriented helping (Smits et al. 2011). Taking into consideration the factors that are involved in decision making related to the information identity style, such as processing incoming feedback openly, therefore allowing for honest and non-judgemental interactions with others, it seemed worthwhile to assess the positive predictive relationship it may hold with compassionate love for others.

Mediation Effect. The positive relationship between the informational identity style and compassionate love for humanity may add further insight into the positive relationship between

the informational identity style and quiet ego. Therefore, I predicted that there would be a mediating effect of compassionate love for humanity in the positive relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego (refer to Figure 1). A partial mediating effect was found, meaning that compassionate love for humanity partially accounts for the relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego. However, the relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego remained statistically significant, which is a valuable finding and illustrates two points: a remaining significant direct effect and a partial mediating effect.

The direct effect of the informational identity style positively predicted quiet ego, even after the inclusion of compassionate love for humanity. The original relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego was discussed above in Hypothesis 1, and the possible ways in which the informational identity style may predict the components of quiet ego outlined above continue to remain in force. The partial mediating effect of compassionate love for humanity in the relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego provides novel ways of accounting for what contributes to a quiet ego.

For partial mediation, the informational identity style is associated with quiet ego through compassionate love for humanity, which grants addition depth in the explanation of the relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego. More specifically, higher scores on the informational identity style predict higher scores on compassionate love for humanity, and higher scores on compassionate love for humanity predict higher scores on quiet ego. In the mediation model, partial mediation indicates that the significant positive relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego is reduced (although not eliminated) once compassionate love for humanity is introduced. That is, the predictive relationship can be broken

down, compassionate love for humanity significantly independently positively predicts quiet ego (separate from the informational identity style).

Informational Identity Style and Compassionate Love for Humanity. One component of compassionate love for humanity is prosocial behaviour towards others, such as an individual helping another in a time of need (Fehr & Russell, 1991). The informational identity style has been associated positively with volunteerism and perspective-taking, which involves helping those in need (Crocetti et al. 2014). The informational identity style has also been associated positively with prosocial behaviours themselves that benefit others, such as assisting an elderly individual carrying groceries or comforting a child in distress (Smits et al. 2011). These two examples support the idea that the informational identity style integrates helping others into the process of analyzing information. Furthermore, researchers have found that the informational identity style is positively associated with an autonomous orientation when processing information, which involves an awareness of personal standards and seeking out values which align with their self-interests (Soenens et al. 2005a). These factors of helping others may arise because of the implementation of processes associated with the informational identity style, which may lead to its positive predictive relationship with a part of compassionate love for humanity.

A second component of compassionate love for humanity includes having a positive attitude towards others when they are perceived to be suffering, by providing positivity and kindness (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). There are characteristics within the informational identity style which aid in predicting a positive attitude towards others. First, it has been reported that there is a positive association between the informational identity style and problem-focused coping and empathy (Soenens et al. 2005b). By rationalizing a response when interacting with

another individual, through incorporating empathy, a tone of caring and compassion can be created. Having an approach of empathy that is associated with the use of the informational identity style, it is understandable how this would be predictive of compassionate love for humanity. Second, the informational identity style has been negatively associated with revenge and positively associated with ego resilience and openness to experience (Seaton & Beaumont, 2014; Berzonsky et al. 2010). In other words, these processes involve avoiding actions that are taken to hurt another individual, but rather adapting to the situation an individual may find themselves in. Third, the informational identity style is negatively associated with relationship aggression, which involves manipulation and causing damage to another individual (Smits et al. 2011). Manipulation is not a tactic which fosters connections and provides kindness to others and is not a factor which is observed in research examining the informational identity style. Caring for others, showing empathy, avoiding revenge, and avoiding manipulation are all characteristics of the informational identity style that are useful in providing possible explaination of why the informational identity style is positively associated with compassionate love for humanity.

A third component of compassionate love for humanity involves engaging in behaviours that are other-related and show positivity, rather than those which involve selfish interests (Lazarus, 1991). This component of compassionate love is different from the previous component, in that it involves going beyond the self and lessens personal interests, as opposed to just providing positivity to others who may be suffering. The informational identity style is positively associated with other-oriented helping (Smits et al. 2011). Helping others goes beyond one's own personal interests, which is predictive of a component of compassionate love for humanity. In addition, the informational identity style is negatively associated with prejudicial values, such as racism and homophobia (Soenens et al. 2005b). It appears that thinking that uses

underlying discriminatory beliefs is not part of how informational identity style processes incoming environmental information. Lastly, the informational identity style is positively associated with openness to change and transcending selfish interests (Berzonsky et al. 2011). The combination of these factors of relating to other people provides a reasonable explanation as to why higher levels of informational identity style processing is associated with higher levels of compassionate love for humanity.

Compassionate Love for Humanity and Quiet Ego. Analyzing the four components of quiet ego in turn will help demonstrate why compassionate love for humanity predicts quiet ego, essential to explaining the presence of a mediation effect.

Compassionate love for humanity may positively predict detached awareness in the following way. First, compassion has been found to have a strong positive association with openness to experience (DeYoung et al. 2014). In addition, there has been a positive association between openness to experience and agreeableness, as well as constructive problem-solving (Arslan, 2016). Compassionate love for humanity requires being available to hearing diverse ideas and feeling, and once the ideas are heard, are associated with agreeableness. This involves processing information through a lens of acceptance. Second, compassion has been found to be positively associated with feelings of closeness to others, and increased self-esteem of either person in the dyad only results when compassionate love is received, not when it is given (Sprecher & Fehr, 2006). An interpretation of the reasoning behind the finding of Sprecher and Fehr (2006) could be that compassion allows for an individual to be close to another individual, while not receiving an increase in their own self-esteem. Third, compassionate love for others is positively associated with active listening, a concept that entails listening to another individual's needs and desires while avoiding offering criticism (Ramos Salazar, 2017). By repressing

criticism during active listening, acceptance is inferred in the moment during an interaction, which is a component of compassionate love for humanity. These relationships which address openness to experience, building a closer relationship with others, and offering non-judgemental listening are characteristics of compassionate love for humanity which positively predict the detached awareness component of quiet ego.

As noted above, the second dimension of quiet ego is perspective-taking (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). Compassionate love for humanity consists of characteristics that positively predict this factor of quiet ego. First, compassionate love for others has been found to be positively associated with empathy and cognitive empathy, the latter which involves mentalization and perspective-taking (Gilbert et al. 2017). Not only is compassion involved in listening to another individual, as discussed above, it is important in the ability of an individual to comprehend another perspective. Second, compassionate love for others has been found to be positively associated with formal meditation and reflection (Jazaieri et al. 2012). Total awareness of the present moment is essential to understanding one's own internal processes, in addition to other's external processes, which helps one to connect with others who may have different perspectives on things. These components of cognitive empathy, reflection, and meditation within compassionate love for humanity provides support for the positive predictive relationship it holds with the perspective-taking component of quiet ego.

Compassionate love for humanity is comprised of multiple characteristics which may account for higher levels of the inclusive identity component of quiet ego. First, compassion for others is positively associated with social skills (Gilbert et al. 2017). Social skills are essential in engaging in a social interaction with another individual where there is cooperation. Cooperation sets the standard of acceptance of one's own and other's ideas. Second, compassionate love for

others is positively associated with enhanced positive mood for the self and others, which can be an integral component in a productive relationship (Sprecher et al. 2007). Third, compassionate love for others has been found to be negatively associated with intrapersonal group conflict when working on post-secondary school-related projects (Park et al. 2018). The combination of positive association with social skills, enhanced mood for the self and others, and a reduction in intrapersonal group conflict represents some of the factors that characterize compassionate love for humanity. These components of compassionate love for humanity provide a reasonable accounting of the positive predictive relationship with the inclusive identity component of quiet ego.

Compassionate love for humanity has several associations which aid in the explanation of the positive predictive relationship of the growth component of quiet ego. First, compassion for others is positively associated with other-oriented emotions, positive feelings, and prosocial motivations (Singer & Klimecki, 2014). Further, higher levels of collectivism are positively associated with prosocial behaviours (Marti-Vilar et al. 2019). Other-oriented behaviours, as well as considering the individuals within a group as equal, allow for a strong comprehension of multiple perspectives, which are factors related to compassionate love for humanity. Growth is partially achieved by challenging one's own ideas, and it is important to consider multiple perspectives. Second, compassion for others has been found to increase with Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT; Jazaieri et al. 2012). Having the ability to increase levels of compassion following directed training is an indication that an individual has the potential to experience progress in showing and feeling compassion towards others. If compassionate love were a stagnant construct, and not socially, personally, or reflectively influenced, there would not be support for growth. Compassionate love for humanity is characterized by the ability to

take in multiple perspective and increase over time with experience and training. These factors support the reasoning behind compassionate love for humanity having a positive predictive relationship with the growth component of quiet ego.

As just outlined, compassionate love for humanity positively predicts quiet ego, for a plethora of possible reasons. This novel finding highlights the factors of compassionate love for humanity that are likely involved in the prediction of higher levels of quiet ego, and help elucidate how it mediates the positive relationship between the information identity style and quiet ego.

Hypotheses Involving the Normative Identity Style

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant negative relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego. Previous research has not explicitly explored the relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego. In this study, it was found that, indeed, the normative identity style and quiet ego were correlated (see Table 3). More specifically, the normative identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, meaning that when there is an increase in the score on the normative identity style, there is a decrease in the score on quiet ego. To understand how the normative identity style negatively predicts the quiet ego, quiet ego must be broken down into its four components, which includes detached awareness, perspective-taking, inclusive identity, and growth (Bauer & Wayment, 2008).

The normative identity style consists of certain characteristics that would predict an attenuation of detached awareness. First, there is a negative association between the normative identity style and openness to experience (Duriez & Soenens, 2006; Miklikowska, 2012). Openness to experience is necessary in detached awareness, as it can be difficult to form a comfortable and accepting environment if there is resistance towards ideas. Second, the

normative identity style has been found to have a negative association with facilitative anxiety, which is related to behaviours leading to productive outcomes (e.g., stress during a test leading to more studying that results in a higher score), and positively associated with debilitative anxiety, which is related to behaviours leading to less productive outcomes (e.g., stress during a test leading less or ineffective studying that results in a lower score). These relationships may have applications in social situations (Berzonsky, 1992). If social interactions include the exposure to many different ideas, which require non-judgement and awareness, possible benefits that may arise from them will not be as frequent as they could be for an individual using the normative identity style of processing incoming information. One example of why the above case might be is of an individual using the normative identity style may be more likely to withdraw from a discussion if values that conflict with their own are presented. Lower openness to experience and levels of facilitative anxiety, and higher levels of debilitative anxiety may be factors that are associated with lower levels of detached awareness.

The following characteristics of normative identity style may help account for why it attenuates perspective-taking component of quiet ego. First, there is a negative association between the normative identity style and democratic values, which suggests that individual's processing information through the normative lens are threatened by political differences (Miklikowski, 2012). For example, in politics, both left-of-centre and right-of-centre individuals may exhibit attributes of authoritarianism, which impacts the ability to effectively communicate between these two groups of individuals. Studies have found that heavily leaning one way or the other is associated with prejudice, strength in the commitment to one's own attitude, and dogmatism, which does not consider contrary opinions/evidence (Conway III et al. 2018; Altemeyer, 1988). Thus, if individuals are not willing to consider contrary opinions in political

discussions, they likely are inhibited in their ability to perspective-take. Second, the normatively identity style has a negative association with empathy (Miklikowska, 2012). Third, the normative identity style has a positive association with self-oriented helping, which is helping-related behaviour that is enacted for other's approval and appreciation (Smits et al. 2011). This type of helping does not foster positive interpersonal connections and does not illustrate and individual's ability to recognize when another individual is suffering and requires assistance. Rather, this type of helping attempts to preserve self-image for the individual providing the helping (i.e., it is not inherently pro-social helping). Fourth, the normative identity style is positively associated with self-rumination, which is a behaviour motivated through fear and perceived threats to the self and inhibits an individual's ability to comprehend their own feelings (Luyckx et al. 2007). Together, low democratic values, low empathy, high self-oriented helping, and high self-rumination are all characteristics associated with the normative identity style that may negatively affect the perspective-taking component of quiet ego.

The following characteristics of the normative identity style may help account for why it attenuates the inclusive identity component of quiet ego. First, the normative identity style has a positive association with anxious attachment, which is the fear of abandonment and not receiving attention from peers (Doumen et al. 2012). Anxious attachment involves issues with boundaries and not being comfortable with oneself (and others), which are both necessary for successful inclusive identity. Second, the normative identity style is positively associated with relational aggression, in which an individual attempts to damage someone else's relationships (Smits et al. 2011). Third, there is a positive association between the normative identity style and conformity and tradition, accompanied with a negative association with self-direction (Berzonsky et al. 2011). In a relationship where an individual is guided by authority figures and does not self-

reflect, they may not be accepting towards conflicting values and ideas going against those held by the authority to which they ascribe. The characteristics of anxious attachment, relational aggression, and conformity to tradition may negatively affect the inclusive identity component of quiet ego.

The following characteristics of the normative identity style may help account for why it attenuates the growth component of quiet ego. First, there is a positive association between the normative identity style and need for closure (i.e., structure is needed in the form of guidance, direction, communication, and decision-making, with little ambiguity and exploration), racism, right-wing authoritarianism (i.e., an individual is submissive to authority figures, and will act aggressively in their name), social dominance orientation (i.e., an individual believes that the world is ruthless and competitive), cultural conservatism (i.e., values that are prejudicial towards non-traditional ways of life), and homophobia (Soenens et al. 2005b). The combination of these factors obviously does not lead towards personal growth, but rather suggests that many aspects of growing and expanding, such as coming into contact with a multiplicity of ideas, worldviews, or peoples, are actively avoided. Second, the normative identity style has a positive association with self-enhancement, which is the opposite self-transcendence, in which an individual does not transcend personal interests (Berzonsky et al. 2015). The ability to see situations beyond the self is indicative of growth, and it is necessary to be able to comprehend multiple perspectives. The characteristics just outlined may negatively affect the growth component of quiet ego.

As just outlined, the normative identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, for a plethora of possible reasons. This novel finding highlights the characteristics of the normative identity style that are likely involved in the prediction of lower levels of the four components of quiet ego.

Hypothesis 6: The normative identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, with low compassionate love for humanity being a mediating factor. Previous research has explored the relationship between the normative identity style and compassionate love for humanity. Bruser and Beaumont (2010) found there to be a non-significant relationship between the normative identity style and compassionate love for humanity, in romantic couples, with individuals aged from 31 to 80 years old. These results were not observed in the present study for individuals who are in emerging adulthood (see Table 3). Rather, in the present study, there was a significant negative relationship between the normative identity style and compassionate love for humanity. To reiterate, compassionate love for humanity is characterized by providing warmth to others and being moved in a way that an individual engages in prosocial behaviours for the benefit of others (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). Longer terms of compassionate love towards others who are not close can be viewed as altruistic in nature. As noted above, the normative identity style has been reported to be positively related to self-oriented helping and relational aggression (Smits et al. 2011). These behaviours are considered antisocial (i.e., the opposite of altruistic behaviours) and not working toward compassionate love for humanity, which is selfless and positive. Furthermore, individuals with higher levels of the normative identity style form relationships that have an anxious attachment, seeking the approval of those close to them, and disregarding contradictory feedback from others (Berzonsky & Kinney, 2008; Doumen et al. 2012). Taking the above priorities of the normative identity style into consideration, its negative relationship to compassionate love towards humanity seems to make sense. Therefore, when there is an increase in the level of the normative identity style, there will be a decrease in compassionate love for humanity. Possible reasons for this relationship are discussed below.

The negative relationship between the normative identity style and compassionate love for humanity may add further insight into the negative relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego. I had predicted that there would be a mediating effect of compassionate love for humanity in the negative relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego (refer to Figure 1). A mediating effect was not found, as there was not a significantly large enough drop in the direct relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego, meaning that compassionate love for humanity does not account for part of the relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego. However, the relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego remained statistically significant, which is a valuable finding and illustrates two points: there is a significant direct effect and an indirect effect, through compassionate love for humanity, between the normative identity style and quiet ego.

There is a direct effect of the normative identity style negatively predicting quiet ego, even after the inclusion of compassionate love for humanity. The original relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego was discussed above in Hypothesis 2, and the possible ways in which the normative identity style may predict the components of quiet ego outlined above continue to remain. The indirect effect of the normative identity style through compassionate love for humanity on quiet ego provides alternative possible reasons of how the normative identity style influences quiet ego.

The following explanations provide possible reasons for how to interpret the linear indirect effect. First higher scores on the normative identity style predict lower scores on compassionate love for humanity (as indicated by the negative β between these two measures – see Figure 2). Second, lower scores on compassionate love for humanity predict lower scores on

quiet ego (as indicated by the positive β between compassionate love for humanity and quiet ego – again see Figure 2).

Normative Identity Style and Compassionate Love for Humanity. One component of compassionate love for humanity is prosocial behaviour towards others, such as an individual helping another in a time of need (Fehr & Russell, 1991). The normative identity style has been found to have a non-significant association with prosocial behaviours towards others (Smits et al. 2011). Furthermore, the normative identity style has been found to have a significantly lower rate of volunteerism among youth in comparison to the informational identity style (Crocetti et al. 2014). In addition, the normative identity style scored significantly lower than the informational identity style on measures of establishing mature interpersonal relationships, such as, emotional autonomy, tolerance of diversity, and social connectedness to others, which goes on to impact interpersonal communication and behaviours (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005). The factors of no significant relationship with prosocial behaviours, low volunteerism, and difficulty in establishing mature interpersonal relationships provide possible reasons as to why higher levels of the normative identity style predicted lower levels of compassionate love for humanity.

A second component of compassionate love for humanity includes having a positive attitude towards others when they are perceived to be suffering, by providing positivity and kindness (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). The normative identity style has been negatively associated with empathy (Miklikowska, 2012). Furthermore, the normative identity style has been positively associated with compassionate love for close others, unrelated to compassionate love for humanity, and negatively associated with openness to experience (Bruser & Beaumont, 2010; Miklikowska, 2012). Only showing compassion or caring to individuals that are close to oneself (e.g., one's religious community or perceived racial group) demonstrates the lack of

unconditional positive regard towards all others and kindness towards humanity, which are necessary for compassionate love for humanity. Taken together, low empathy towards others, only showing compassion when it serves one's own interests, and being closed to new experiences, it is easier to understand why higher levels of the normative identity style predict lower levels of this component of compassionate love for humanity.

A third component of compassionate love for humanity involves engaging in behaviours that are other-related and show positivity, rather than those which involve selfish interests (Lazarus, 1991). This component of compassionate love for humanity is different from the previous component, in that it involves going beyond the self and lessens personal interests, as opposed to just providing positivity to others who may be suffering. The normative identity style has been positively associated with self-oriented helping, which is egoistic because it is undertaken for other's approval (Smits et al. 2011). In addition, self-oriented helping has been found to relate back to feelings of internal compulsions, which are behaviours not expressed through choice (e.g., continuing to interact with a rude individual because it is expected by one's parents; Roth, 2008). Furthermore, the normative identity style has been positively associated with a social identity emphasis (i.e., seeking validation from others), and negatively associated with values and actions associated with openness to experience (i.e., not engaging with other's whose ideas and behaviours do not align with one's own) (Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992). Prioritizing one's own self-interests and only expressing positivity and prosocial behaviours when it is the expectation of an authority figure, for example, are not consistent with compassionate love for humanity. Therefore, it is understandable as to why higher levels of the normative identity style predict lower levels of this component of compassionate love for humanity.

Compassionate Love for Humanity and Quiet Ego. As outlined immediately above, higher levels of normative identity style are associated with lower levels of compassionate love for humanity (again, indicated by the negative β between these two measures – see Figure 2). This relationship influences the second part of the indirect effect of normative identity style on quiet ego, such that *lower levels of compassionate love for humanity are associated with lower levels of quiet ego* (again, indicated by the positive β between the latter two measures – see Figure 2). The following discussion provides possible ways by which lower levels of compassionate love for humanity may predict lower levels of quiet ego.

Compassionate love for humanity may predict the detached awareness component of quiet ego in the following way. Compassion has been found to have a strong positive correlation with openness to experience, agreeableness, closeness to others, and active listening, while avoiding criticisms of others (Arslan, 2016; DeYoung et al. 2014; Ramos Salazar, 2017; Sprecher & Fehr, 2006). Therefore, lower levels of compassion are associated with lower openness to experience, lower agreeableness, avoiding close relationships with others, and not engaging in active listening, while criticizing others. Due to the nature of the relationship between compassionate love for humanity and quiet ego, it is likely that lower compassionate love for humanity will predict lower levels of detached awareness.

Compassionate love for humanity may predict the perspective taking component of quiet ego in the following manner. Compassionate love for others has been found to be positively associated with empathy and cognitive empathy (mentalization and perspective-taking), formal meditation and reflection, which leads to increased awareness (Gilbert et al. 2017; Jazaieri et al. 2012). Therefore, lower levels of compassion for others are associated with lower levels of empathy, less cognitive empathy (characterized by the lack of mentalization and perspective-

taking), and avoidance of meditation and reflection, leading to lower levels of awareness of what is happening in the present moment. These components of cognitive empathy, reflection, and meditation within compassionate love for humanity provides support for the predictive relationship it holds with the perspective-taking component of quiet ego. Therefore, the lower these characteristics are for compassionate love for humanity, there will be a lower predicted outcome for perspective-taking within quiet ego.

The following factors may account for how compassionate love for humanity may predict the inclusive identity component of quiet ego. Compassion for others is positively associated with social skills, enhanced positive mood for the self and others, and negatively associated with intragroup conflicts (Gilbert et al. 2017; Sprecher et al. 2007; Park et al. 2018). Therefore, lower levels of compassion for others is associated with poorer social skills, lower positive mood for the self and others, and increased intragroup conflicts. Lower levels of these components of compassionate love for humanity provide an explanation for the lower predicted levels of inclusive identity within quiet ego.

Growth is the fourth component of quiet ego (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). Compassionate love for humanity may predict the growth component of quiet ego in the following way. Compassion for others is positively associated with other-oriented emotions, positive feelings, and prosocial motivations, while having the ability to increase over time following Compassion Cultivation Training (Jazaieri et al. 2012; Marti-Vilar et al. 2019; Singer & Klimecki, 2014). Therefore, lower compassion for others is associated with a lack of other-oriented emotions, lower positive feelings, and fewer prosocial motivations. Compassionate love for humanity is characterized by the ability to take in multiple perspectives and increases over time with experience and training and will not increase in the same way if the training is avoided. Lower

levels of these components of compassionate love for humanity may contribute to the lower levels of growth within quiet ego.

As just outlined, compassionate love for humanity positively predicts quiet ego, for numerous reasons. This means as the levels of compassionate love for humanity increase, quiet ego is also predicted to increase, and, importantly, vice versa, that is, as compassionate love for humanity decreases, it predicts a decrease in quiet ego. These are novel findings and provide additional depth in the relationship between the normative identity style, compassionate love for humanity, and quiet ego. That is, the original direct negative relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego remains significant, but in addition there are additional predictive relationships where higher levels of the normative identity style predict lower levels of compassionate love for humanity, which then predicts lower levels of quiet ego.

Hypotheses Involving the Diffuse-Avoidant Identity Style

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego. Previous research has not explicitly explored the relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego. In this study, it was found that, indeed, the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego were correlated (see Table 3). More specifically, the diffuse-avoidant identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, meaning that higher scores on the diffuse-avoidant identity style are associated with lower scores on quiet ego. To understand how the diffuse-avoidant identity style negatively predicts the quiet ego, quiet ego must be broken down into its four components, which includes detached awareness, perspective-taking, inclusive identity, and growth (Bauer & Wayment, 2008).

The following characteristics of the diffuse-avoidant identity style may help account for why it attenuates the detached awareness component of quiet ego. First, the diffuse-avoidant

identity style is negatively associated with openness to experience, in which the consumption of diverse viewpoints and ideas is not encouraged through the diffuse-avoidant method of information processing (Duriez & Soenens, 2006). Second, expanding into the relationship the diffuse-avoidant identity style has with openness to experience, the diffuse-avoidant identity style is negatively associated with openness to ideas (i.e., avoiding intellectual curiosity and exposure to novel opinions) and openness to feelings (i.e., avoiding experiences with a wider range of emotions), both essential factors within detached awareness (Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992). Third, the diffuse-avoidant identity style is negatively associated with environmental mastery, which leads to incompetence in managing the environment and engaging with external opportunities, like communicating with others in various settings (Vleioras & Bosma, 2005). Together, lower openness to experience, especially with ideas and feelings, and less engaged environmental mastery, are factors within the diffuse-avoidant identity style which may predict lower levels of detached awareness.

The following characteristics of the diffuse-avoidant identity style may help account for why it attenuates the perspective taking component of quiet ego. First, the diffuse-avoidant identity style is negatively associated with empathy, prosocial behaviours (i.e., not assisting others in need), and other-oriented helping (i.e., not assisting others due to altruism, but rather by expecting some benefit from helping others, such as an increase in social status), all necessary pieces in predicting perspective-taking (Smits et al. 2011). Second, the diffuse-avoidant identity style is negatively associated with a need for cognition (i.e., avoiding active information processing in the present and during decision-making) and introspectiveness (i.e., refraining from engaging in one's own mental and emotional processes), which are factors imperative in understanding others (Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992). Third, individuals with higher levels of the

diffuse-avoidant identity style volunteered significantly less often than those with higher levels of the informational identity style (Crocetti et al. 2014). Fourth, the diffuse-avoidant identity style is negatively associated with intimacy, which means individuals with higher levels of the diffuse-avoidant identity style avoid building connections and relationships with others, a key piece in perspective-taking with close others (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011). The lower levels of empathy, prosocial behaviours, other-oriented helping, need for cognition, introspectiveness, volunteerism, and intimacy are factors of the diffuse-avoidant identity style that may predict lower levels of perspective-taking.

The following characteristics of the diffuse-avoidant identity style may help account for why it attenuates the inclusive identity component of quiet ego. First, the diffuse-avoidant identity style is positively associated with physical aggression (i.e., increased frequency of fighting others during conflict) and relational aggression (i.e., manipulating and damaging other's relationships), both maladaptive methods of coping with others (Smits et al. 2011). Second, the diffuse-avoidant identity style is negatively associated with self-acceptance (i.e., the lack of acknowledging multiple perspectives of the self) and positive relations with others (i.e., not having trusting relationships and not being concerned for the welfare of others; Vleioras & Bosma, 2005). Third, the diffuse-avoidant identity style is negatively associated with conscientiousness (i.e., lowered desire to do well and take obligations to others seriously) and agreeableness (i.e., lower levels of cooperation, politeness, and friendliness), both of which are important factors within social interactions (Duriez & Soenens, 2006). Together, higher levels of physical and relational aggression, along with lower levels of self-acceptance, positive relations with others, conscientiousness, and agreeableness are factors within the diffuse-avoidant style that may contribute to the negative prediction of inclusive identity.

The following characteristics of the diffuse-avoidant identity style may help account for why it attenuates the growth component of quiet ego. First, the diffuse-avoidant identity style is negatively associated with generativity, such that an individual with lower levels will not go beyond oneself and contribute to the wellness of others (Beaumont & Pratt, 2011). Second, the diffuse-avoidant identity style is negatively associated with personal growth, such that there is a lack of development (i.e., gaining knowledge and pursuing goal fulfillment) and then not seeking to improve (Vleioras & Bosma, 2005). Third, the diffuse-avoidant identity style has a negative association with self-actualization, in which lower levels of self-actualization demonstrate a lack of interest in varied experiences and deficient awareness of one's own experiences (Beaumont, 2009). Fourth, the levels of the diffuse-avoidant identity style decrease as individuals move from middle school to post-secondary school, while levels of the informational identity style increase, suggesting that individuals become more growth-oriented as they age (Phillips, 2008). The general trend of usage of the diffuse-avoidant identity style decreasing as one ages is important, because this way of processing information (which is characterized through procrastination and is rewards- and punishment-driven) is less effective than the informational style when analyzing incoming information. Together, lower levels of generativity, personal growth, self-actualization, and decreases in the levels of the diffuse-avoidant identity style as individuals age, there is a combination of factor which would predict lower levels of growth.

As just outlined, the diffuse-avoidant identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, for a number of reasons. This novel finding highlights the characteristics of the diffuse-avoidant identity style that are likely involved in the prediction of lower levels of the four components of quiet ego.

Hypothesis 7: The diffuse-avoidant identity style negatively predicts quiet ego, with low self-compassion being a mediating factor. Previous research by Bruser and Beaumont (2010) found there to be no significant relationship between self-compassion and the diffuse-avoidant identity style, in couples aged 31 to 80 years old. This finding was not supported in the present study (see Table 3). As predicted, there was a significant negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and self-compassion. Self-compassion involves self-kindness, feeling of common humanity, and mindfulness (Neff, 2003a). Previous research has found that the diffuse-avoidant identity style is positively related to high levels of psychosocial distress, low levels of self-worth, low self-esteem, and high levels of loneliness (Beaumont & Zukanovic, 2005; Doumen et al. 2012; Soenens et al. 2016). Furthermore, high levels of self-compassion are associated with coping with stressful events through positive cognitive restructuring and not avoiding situations (Allen & Leary, 2010), whereas the diffuse-avoidant identity style relies on maladaptive coping strategies, including aggression towards oneself (Berzonsky & Kinney, 2008). Overall, the diffuse-avoidant identity style does not use positive and effective methods of coping, which can be harmful in the long-term and disruptive in the short-term. Therefore, when there is an increase in the level of the diffuse-avoidant identity style, there will be a decrease in self-compassion. Possible reasons for this relationship are discussed below.

The negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and self-compassion may add further insight into the negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego. It was predicted that there would be a mediating effect of self-compassion in the negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego (refer to Figure 3). A mediating effect was not found, as there was not a significant drop in the direct relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego, meaning that self-compassion does not

account for part of the relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego. The relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego remained statistically significant, which is a valuable finding and illustrates two points: first, there is a significant direct effect; and second, there is an indirect effect, where lower levels of the diffuse-avoidant identity style predict lower levels of self-compassion, which then predict lower levels of quiet ego.

There is a direct effect of the diffuse-avoidant identity style negatively predicting quiet ego, even after the inclusion of self-compassion. The original relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego was discussed above in Hypothesis 3, and the possible ways in which the diffuse-avoidant identity style may predict the components of quiet ego outlined above continue to remain. The linear indirect effect of the diffuse-avoidant identity style predicting self-compassion, which predicts quiet ego provides alternative possible reasons of how the diffuse-avoidant identity style influences quiet ego.

The following offers possible ways in which the indirect effects of self-compassion may be interpreted. First higher scores on the diffuse-avoidant identity style predict lower scores on self-compassion (as indicated by the negative β between these two measures – see Figure 3). Second, lower scores on self-compassion predict lower scores on quiet ego (as indicated by the positive β between self-compassion and quiet ego – again see Figure 3).

Diffuse-Avoidant Identity Style and Self-Compassion. One component of self-compassion involves self-kindness (opposite of self-judgement), which is the understanding of one's own difficulties and offering oneself warmth and kindness, rather than self-criticism (Neff, 2003a). The diffuse-avoidant identity style has been found to be negatively associated with self-acceptance, which involves having a positive attitude towards oneself and accepting both the

good and bad aspects of the self (Vleioras & Bosma, 2005). This negative association highlights lower levels of self-acceptance an individual with higher levels of the diffuse-avoidant identity style would have. Secondly, the diffuse-avoidant identity style has been positively associated with comparative self-criticism, which involves seeing the self as less than others, which also leads to an aversion towards evaluation, or not wanting to be evaluated by others (Öngen, 2011). Thirdly, the diffuse-avoidant identity style, compared to both the informational and normative identity styles, has been found to have lower levels of self-esteem, which is associated with personal worth and value (Crocetti et al. 2012). These factors of lower levels of self-acceptance, higher self-criticism, and lower levels of personal self-esteem in comparison to the other identity styles may provide insight as to why lower levels of the diffuse-avoidant identity style predict lower levels of this component of self-compassion.

A second component of self-compassion is common humanity (i.e., the opposite of isolation), which is the realization that one's own experiences are interconnected with others, and that they are not alone in their suffering (Neff, 2003a). The diffuse-avoidant identity style has been found to be negatively associated with agreeableness, which means that kindness and understanding is not offered to others, and negatively associated with openness to experience, which means that there is higher rigidity of ideas and closed-mindedness (Duriez & Soenens, 2006). Furthermore, the diffuse-avoidant identity style has been negatively associated with empathy (i.e., it is challenging to see other's perspectives), negatively associated with other-oriented helping (i.e., help is not actively offered to others for altruistic reasons), and positively associated with self-oriented helping (i.e., offering aid to others that will benefits oneself in some way) (Smits et al. 2011). In addition, the diffuse-avoidant identity style has been negatively associated with positive relations with others, meaning that there is a lack of trust in others and

there is an avoidance in understanding the relationship with others (Vleioras & Bosma, 2005). Taken together, the factors of low agreeableness, openness to experience, empathy, other-oriented helping, and positive relations with others, alongside high self-oriented helping can provide insight as to why lower levels of the diffuse-avoidant identity style predict lower levels of this component of self-compassion.

A third component of self-compassion is mindfulness, which involves keeping a balanced awareness of thoughts and feelings in the present moment (Neff, 2003a). The diffuse-avoidant identity style has a negative association with introspectiveness, which is thoughtfulness about one's own situation and feelings, a crucial piece in this component (Berzonsky, 1992). Furthermore, the diffuse-avoidant identity style has a negative association with self-reflection, which means there is a lower reflective awareness of thoughts and feelings an individual is having, another key part of mindfulness (Bagheri & Nazari, 2014). In addition, the diffuse-avoidant identity style has been found to be positively associated with avoidance coping, meaning that conflict is handled through distancing and wishful thinking, which also involves lacking awareness of the present moment (Soenens et al. 2005b). Taken together, low introspectiveness and self-reflection, with high avoidance coping can provide insight into why lower levels of the diffuse-avoidant identity style predicts lower levels of this component of self-compassion.

Self-Compassion and Quiet Ego. As outlined above, higher levels of diffuse-avoidant identity style are associated with lower levels of self-compassion (again, indicated by the negative β between these two measures – see Figure 3). This relationship influences the second part of the indirect effect of diffuse-avoidant identity style on quiet ego, such that lower levels of self-compassion are associated with lower levels of quiet ego (again, indicated by the positive β

between the latter two measures – see Figure 3). The following discussion provides possible ways by which lower levels of self-compassion may predict lower levels of quiet ego.

The following characteristics of self-compassion may help account for why it attenuates the detached awareness component of quiet ego. A positive association has been found between self-compassion and openness to experience (which is a willingness to accept new ideas, diverse thinking, and curiosity) and agreeableness (which is characterized through friendliness and respectfulness towards others) (Arslan, 2016). In addition, prior to an intervention in adolescents aged 10 to 18, self-compassion and mindfulness have been found to be positively associated, both of which involve paying attention to the present moment with non-judgemental awareness (Bluth et al. 2015). Therefore, lower levels of self-compassion are associated with lower openness to experience, lower agreeableness, and lower mindfulness (pre-intervention). Due to the nature of the relationship between self-compassion and quiet ego, it is likely that lower self-compassion will predict lower levels of detached awareness.

The following characteristics of self-compassion may help account for why it attenuates the perspective taking component of quiet ego. First, short-term compassion training leads to an increase in prosocial behaviours towards strangers (based in cooperation and helping others in need) through empathic concern, an action that requires an individual to perspective-take (Leiberg et al. 2011). Second, the positive predictive relationship between self-affirmation (which involves affirming one's own value and confidence) and helping behaviours in the shelf-collapse experiment, is completely mediated by self-compassion (Lindsay & Creswell. 2014). The shelf-collapse experiment involves the researcher providing directions to the participants about questionnaires to be completed and leaving the laboratory, at which time the shelves in the room collapse, containing various stationary materials. Helping behaviours were assessed by

observing participant responses (e.g., picking up items immediately, doing nothing, etc.) on a standardized 9-point Likert scale. The results from this experiment indicate that self-compassion accounts for helping behaviours above and beyond those that affirm positive feelings of the self, which may indicate the importance of taking the perspective of another individual when they are struggling. Third, self-compassion is positively associated with perspective-taking itself, which allows an individual to meet others' needs by being able to see from a different outlook (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2020). Therefore, lower levels of self-compassion are associated with lower engagement in prosocial behaviours, being a main predictor of engaging in other-oriented helping, and lower levels of perspective-taking. Due to the nature of the relationship between self-compassion and quiet ego, it is likely that lower self-compassion will predict lower levels of overall perspective-taking.

The following characteristics of self-compassion may help account for why it attenuates the inclusive identity component of quiet ego. First, self-compassion is positively associated with acceptance (of one's own and other's flaws), which is related to being more mindful of the reality of the present situation and fostering honest connections with others (Zhang et al. 2020). Second, self-compassion is positively associated with responsibility (e.g., being careful, disciplined, and determined towards expectations and goals) and negatively associated with unwillingness to take responsibility (Arslan, 2016). Third, self-compassion is negatively associated with intragroup conflict and negative emotions (e.g., distress) and positively associated with positive emotions (e.g., joy) during post-secondary group projects (Park et al. 2018). Therefore, lower levels of self-compassion are associated with lower acceptance of the self and others, and lower responsibility, alongside higher unwillingness to take responsibility

and higher intragroup conflict. Due to the nature of the relationship between self-compassion and quiet ego, it is likely that lower self-compassion will predict lower levels of inclusive identity.

The following characteristics of self-compassion may help account for why it attenuates the growth component of quiet ego. First, the self-compassion dimensions of self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness are positively associated with personal growth, through factors of readiness for change, ability to plan, use of resources, and intentional behaviours (Umandap & Teh, 2020). In addition, following the administration of the Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) program, adults experienced significant increases in self-compassion, mindfulness, and wellbeing (through measures of life satisfaction, social connectedness, and happiness) compared to a control group, immediately following the experiment and at the 6 month and 1 year follow ups (Neff & Garner, 2013). Therefore, lower levels of self-compassion are associated with lower personal growth (through lower readiness for change, ability to plan, use of resources, and intentional behaviour), and lower self-compassion, mindfulness, and wellbeing without MSC intervention. Due to the nature of the relationship between self-compassion and quiet ego, it is likely that lower self-compassion will predict lower levels of growth.

As just outlined, self-compassion positively predicts quiet ego, for a plethora of possible reasons. This means as the levels of self-compassion increase, quiet ego is also predicted to increase, and, importantly, vice versa, as self-compassion decreases, it predicts a decrease in quiet ego. These are novel findings and provide additional depth in the relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style, self-compassion, and quiet ego. That is, the original direct negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego remains significant, but in addition there is an additional predictive relationship where higher levels of

the diffuse-avoidant identity style predict lower levels of self-compassion, which then predicts lower levels of quiet ego.

Identity Commitment

Identity commitment is associated with the identity styles and has been used as a validation measure at times, as mentioned above (Berzonsky et al. 2013). However, identity commitment has also been found to be significantly related to personal growth, relationships with others, self-acceptance, parenting styles and other constructs (Berzonsky & Cieciuch, 2016; Berzonsky, 2004). In my study, identity commitment was the only construct found to be significantly correlated to all other constructs (see Table 3). Due to these significant relationships, and to control for any confounding effects, I controlled for identity commitment when examining whether there was a significant relationship between the identity styles, compassionate love for humanity, self-compassion, and quiet ego. Taking this extra step to statistically control for any effects due to identity commitment, there is added assurance of the reliability of the results presented in the present research.

Identity Styles as a Profile

The three identity styles work to become a profile, where an individual can have variable levels of each style. The identity styles are characterized as strategies used by individuals to process information, and depending on an individual's profile, they have a preference of how to approach analysis and reflection on incoming information (Žukauskienė et al. 2018). In a helping profession, such as counselling, there are certain implications for the profile. Research had found that both the informational and normative identity styles were positively related to forming a professional counsellor identity, while the diffuse-avoidant identity style was unrelated (Lile, 2017). The same study found that identity commitment continued to be significantly positively

related to forming a professional counsellor identity after other factors were added. Using a hierarchical regression analysis, with professional counsellor identity as the criterion variable and counselling courses completed entered at Step 1, identity commitment at Step 2, and the informational and normative identity styles entered at Step 3, the informational identity style remained significant, while the normative identity style did not. Interestingly, identity commitment also remained statistically significant at Step 3, with the inclusion of the other factors. This is important for many reasons, including the counsellor's commitment to their own beliefs and values, in the face of diverse opinions presented during sessions. For a counsellor, there is an expectation that they will be growth oriented and process information honestly, and willing to engage in self-reflection. Pairing what is known about the identity styles profile, with the findings of the present research, there is a link between the way an individual processes information and then uses it to be compassionate towards others and engaging in the prosocial behaviours around quiet ego.

On the other hand, the identity styles can be used to offer more tailored therapy to clients, depending on their profile. For example, my findings suggest that the diffuse-avoidant identity style is negatively related to quiet ego, through low self-compassion. During therapy, self-compassion training can be targeted, to allow the client to begin to work towards self-kindness, mindfulness, and common humanity, which would provide direction to the scattered and last-minute decisions that individuals who primarily use the diffuse-avoidant identity style typically use. Furthermore, researchers have found that self-compassion training, in addition to other interventions, following a suicide attempt were related to a reduction in shame, depressive symptoms, and suicide ideation, as well as an increased capacity for resilience (Zhang et al.

2018). The findings of the present study can lay down the foundation to more proactive measures that can be undertaken during therapy and tailored towards counsellors and clients alike.

Suggestions for Future Research

Although the present study's results support four of seven hypotheses, it is appropriate to recognize interesting findings that could be addressed with further research. First, the non-significant relationship between total self-compassion and the informational and normative identity styles; the self-compassion scale designed by Neff (2003a) can produce several calculated outcomes, such as a total metric for total self-compassion, as well as for each of the six subscales separately. Typically, the scale is used to analyze total self-compassion, but there is the potential for it to be broken down to only include the positive or negative measures in the dichotomy (i.e., self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness; or self-judgement, isolation, and overidentification). This manner of using the measure could possibly result in more breadth in the information and show researchers where potential effects may lie (e.g., significant correlation between self-compassion and another construct resulting from high levels in the self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness subscales; not self-judgement, isolation, and overidentification subscales). Furthermore, a recent study has found issues with the use of the total SCS score and failed to replicate the SCS's six-factor structure (López et al. 2015). Instead, these researchers found that the three negative subscales were strongly associated with depressive symptoms, negative affect, and perceived stress, whereas the three positive subscales were associated with positive affect (with the positive subscales also weakly associated with psychological symptoms, rumination, and other variables). Not having consistency between the dichotomous subscales could potentially lead to issues if researchers use the total scores to measure self-compassion. Using the subscales may allow for a finer grain of analysis. However,

the findings from López et al (2015) do need to be examined further, as it is just one study, although there is potential for future directions.

My study analyzed the male and female gender data together, but there is the opportunity for future studies to conduct separate analyses. As mentioned in Chapter 4, there were gender differences found, with males scoring significantly higher in the diffuse-avoidant identity style and self-compassion and females scoring significantly higher in compassionate love for humanity and quiet ego. However, the strengths of the correlations comparing the genders were similar (except for the relationship between the normative identity style and identity commitment being stronger in females), which was part of the reason the data were analyzed jointly. Conducting another study including these factors and more (or replicating this study) to look at specific gender differences would add to the sparse literature addressing differences in identity styles and contemplative factors. In addition, the study could be designed to include individuals who are gender non-conforming to give a broader outlook on the landscape of these relationships.

Limitations

It is appropriate to recognize several limitations of my study. First, the methodology for my study included data collection through concurrent surveys. Collecting data in this way restricts researchers from determining the direction of the relationships of the constructs (e.g., higher levels of the informational identity style cause increased levels of self-compassion, or vice versa). To rectify this limitation, and confirm directionality, a different experimental approach can be used. For example, the ISI-5 and SCS can be administered before and after a self-compassion intervention, to allow for converging evidence of the directionality of the

relationship between the identity styles and self-compassion. In this case, a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) could be applied to determine any significant effects.

A second limitation of my study involves generalizing and replicating the present results within a different population. Emerging adults were the target population of this study, with an age range of individuals between 18 to 29. This range is quite large, with the potential of findings not being relevant to the entire age group, as the mean age was 20.00 years old (*SD* = 2.12). To find a more nuanced representation of this entire age group, eligibility requirements can be adjusted to allow for a more even distribution across the desired age range. In addition, the emerging adult group was pulled from a post-secondary school population, which may not be representative of all individuals in emerging adulthood (e.g., not attending post-secondary school, graduated, joined workforce immediately, etc.).

A third limitation involves analyzing gender differences for significant effects. As stated above, there were significant gender differences found when conducting preliminary analysis prior to the data being collapsed together (see Table 2). However, this study can be replicated to include measures that allow for differences to be found between the male, female, and gender non-conforming groups.

A fourth limitation involves analyzing cultural differences (through ethnicity and religion) for significant effects. Cultural data were collected as part of the standard demographics measure (see Appendix B) but not used in the analyses, as it is not typically analyzed in this form of research. All eligible participants were collapsed together in this study, and the scales were found to be culturally valid, as mentioned in Chapter 3. However, future studies can explore to see if there are cultural differences among the participants, and if this leads to different associations within the measures.

Conclusions

My study found support for four of seven of the hypotheses, including the positive relationship between the quiet ego and informational identity style, and negative relationship between quiet ego and both normative and diffuse-avoidant identity styles. Furthermore, there was support to show: the positive relationship between the informational identity style and quiet ego was partially mediated through high compassionate love for humanity; the negative relationship between the normative identity style and quiet ego was influenced linearly through low compassionate love for humanity; the negative relationship between the diffuse-avoidant identity style and quiet ego was influenced linearly through low self-compassion. I have provided a detailed analysis in the present chapter of possible ways in which the above results may be understood. I have also discussed the concepts in a mental health field, which can incorporate these results to form foundation in proactive, not reactive, measures in therapy if appropriate. I have outlined several limitations of this study, and suggestions to address them. Despite the limitations of the present study, its results clarify our understanding of the relationship between the identity styles and commitment, compassionate love for humanity, self-compassion, and quiet ego. I hope this present study will encourage further research to be conducted on these subject matters.

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Tables

Table 1

The Predicted Qualitative Relationships Between Constructs (Zero Order Correlations)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Informational	—							
2. Normative	-	—						
3. Diffuse-Avoidant	-	-	—					
4. CL for Humanity	+	-	-	—				
5. CL for Close Others	+	+	-	+	—			
6. Self-Compassion	+	-	-	+	+	—		
7. Quiet Ego	+	-	-	+	+	+	—	
8. Identity Commitment	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	—

Note. The (+) symbol indicates a positive correlational relationship, while the (–) symbol indicates a negative correlational relationship; CL = Compassionate Love.

Table 2

Gender Differences in Identity Styles, Compassion, and Quiet Ego

	Total	Males	Females		
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*F*	η^2
Informational Identity Style	34.59 (5.07)	34.17 (5.08)	34.75 (5.06)	0.79	.003
Normative Identity Style	21.75 (5.70)	21.92 (5.89)	21.69 (5.64)	0.10	.000
Diffuse-Avoidant Identity Style	22.59 (6.37)	23.79 (6.33)	22.14 (6.33)	4.12*	.013
Identity Commitment	31.29 (6.93)	31.27 (6.77)	31.30 (7.00)	0.00	.000
CL Humanity	4.57 (1.04)	4.30 (1.07)	4.67 (1.01)	7.61**	.025
Self-Compassion	2.77 (0.65)	2.89 (0.66)	2.72 (0.63)	4.47*	.015
Quiet Ego	48.20 (4.97)	47.23 (4.95)	48.57 (4.93)	4.52*	.015

Notes. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; $N = 84$ males and 220 females; CL = Compassionate Love.

Table 3

Zero Order Correlations Amongst Identity Styles, Compassion, and Quiet Ego

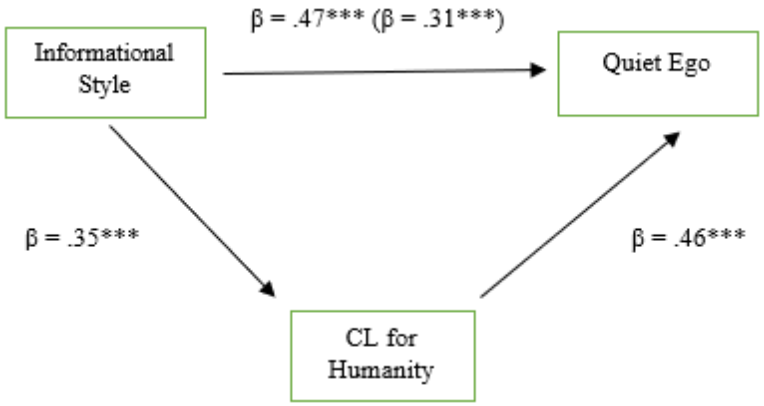
Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Informational Identity Style	—						
2. Normative Identity Style	-.169**	—					
3. Diffuse-Avoidant Identity Style	-.203***	.182**	—				
4. ISI Commitment	.263***	.166**	-.662***	—			
5. Compassionate Love for Humanity	.359***	-.114*	-.056	.128*	—		
6. Self-Compassion	.103	-.096	-.210***	.173**	.115*	—	
7. Quiet Ego	.473***	-.351***	-.221***	.140*	.571***	.268***	—

Notes. $N = 304$; *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Figures

Figure 1

Mediation Model with Informational Identity Style as Predictor, Compassionate Love for Humanity as Mediator, and Quiet Ego as Criterion Variables



Notes. *** $p < .001$; CL = Compassionate Love; Bracket value indicates post-mediation β.

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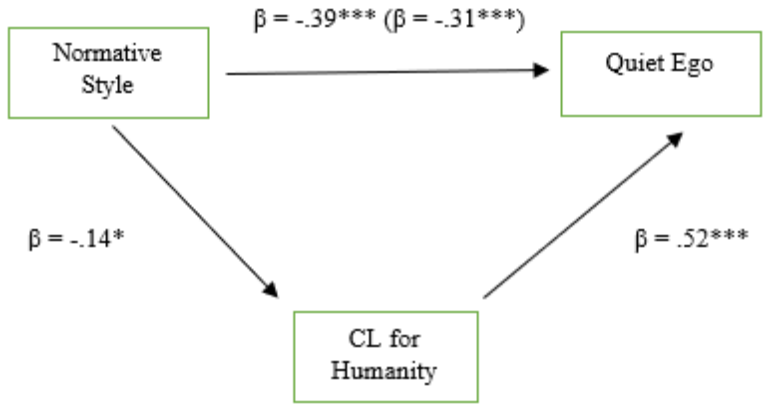
Figure 2

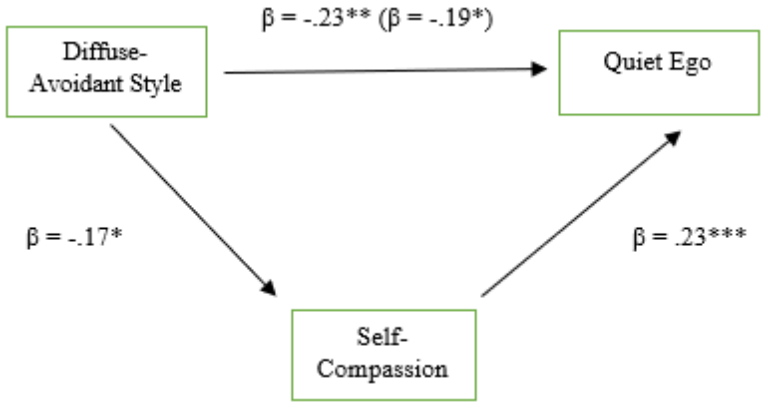
Mediation Model with Normative Identity Style as Predictor, Compassionate Love for Humanity as Mediator, and Quiet Ego as Criterion Variables



Notes.; * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$: CL = Compassionate Love; Bracket value post-mediation β.

Figure 3

Mediation Model with Diffuse-Avoidant Identity Style as Predictor, Self-Compassion as Mediator, and Quiet Ego as Criterion Variables



Notes. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; Bracket value post-mediation β.

Appendix A - Online Participant Information Letter and Informed Consent

The Role of Contemplative Processes Between Identity Styles and Integrated Wisdom Participant Information Letter

This study consists of an online survey, which you may now participate in. The survey consists of a number of Likert scale questions, and may be divided into a number of sections. You must complete all sections in one sitting, as you are not allowed to resume at another time from where you left off. While you are participating, your responses will be stored in a temporary holding area as you move through the sections, but they will not be permanently saved until you complete all sections and you are given a chance to review your responses.

Criteria for Participation

Eligible participants will be UNBC undergraduate students from 100- and 200-level Psychology courses that allow students to receive bonus credit for research participation.

Purpose and Procedure

This research is being conducted by Dr. Sherry Beaumont and Dr. Paul Siakaluk. The study will investigate the relationship between a person's sense of self (identity), contemplative processes, such as mindfulness, compassion, and acceptance, and different aspects of wisdom. You are being asked to complete online surveys regarding your daily life, experiences, thoughts, and feelings. The questionnaires will take approximately 75-90 minutes to complete. If you are a student in a psychology course that is included in the Psychology Research Participation System you will be compensated for completion of these questionnaires with 2% extra bonus marks to be added to your final grades after you complete the survey.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Your responses to the questions are considered confidential. Only the researchers, their research students, and Mrs. Howard, the system administrator, will have access to the completed data, which will be kept in a locked and secure place for five years, after which they will be destroyed. Only the online system records that you have participated in this study, so that you will receive course credit; information regarding your specific answers will be kept separately from your identity, preserving anonymity. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time.

Possible Conflicts of Interest

The researchers, Drs. Beaumont and Siakaluk, may be the course instructor for 100- and 200-level Psychology courses that allow students to receive bonus credit for research participation. If you choose to participate in this study, the SONA system provides a 'study number' to each participant. The researchers do not know which 'study number' corresponds with which participant. In other words, the researchers do not know whether anyone in their course participated or not in this study.

Possible Risks, Benefits, or Concerns

There may be the chance that some participants may experience psychological discomfort while completing the questionnaires that deal with personal characteristics, and closely held values and beliefs that are associated with this research. If you wish to talk to someone regarding issues raised as a result of being part of this project, the following organizations in Prince George can be contacted for information about mental health resources: UNBC Student Wellness Centre

(250-960-6369); the Canadian Mental Health Association (250-564-3396); or, the Personal Supports Centre (250-563-2008).

The benefit to you personally is that completing this survey might help to remind you or to create greater focus on what is meaningful and important in your life. Another benefit is knowing that you are contributing to scientific knowledge about what helps people to feel a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment.

If you have any questions or concerns, or you wish to obtain a copy of the study results (available by December 31, 2021), please contact either Dr. Sherry Beaumont (250-960-6501 or sherry.beaumont@unbc.ca) or Dr. Paul Siakaluk 250-960-6120 or paul.siakaluk@unbc.ca). Complaints or concerns regarding this study should be directed to the UNBC Office of Research at 250-960-6735, or by email at reb@unbc.ca.

PLEASE READ
Informed Consent Form

Clicking "Continue" following this form indicates that I have read the letter about the research project on identity, contemplative processes, and wisdom being conducted by Dr. Sherry Beaumont and Dr. Paul Siakaluk, and I consent to participate in this study. Specifically, I confirm that:
(1) I am being asked to complete questionnaires that will take approximately 75-90 minutes of my time;
(2) I understand that all the information gathered for this project is to be used for research purposes only and will be considered confidential;
(3) I will receive TWO bonus marks (i.e., 2% bonus mark) for completion of these questionnaires after completing the survey;
(4) There are no risks associated with this research, however, my participation in this research study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty;
(5) The purposes, procedures, and benefits of this project have been explained to me;
(6) I can request a summary of the study results in December 2021 from Dr. Sherry Beaumont or Dr. Paul Siakaluk;
(7) I have read and understand this informed consent and the attached information letter;
(8) I consent to participate in this study.

Researchers:
Dr. Sherry Beaumont
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TLC 10-3534
Phone: 250-960-6501 email: sherry.beaumont@unbc.ca

Dr. Paul Siakaluk
Professor, Department of Psychology
TLC 10-3598
Phone: 250-960-6120 email: paul.siakaluk@unbc.ca

THANK YOU for your participation.

NOTE: You will be automatically logged out after 30 minutes of inactivity, so please keep this in mind when completing lengthy sections. Due to the nature of the online survey, you can only answer the questions in the response format presented; however, you will be given space at the end of the survey to voice any comments you may have.

Would you like to participate in the survey?

Submit | No, Decline to Participate

Appendix B - Demographics Information

The following information is collected to allow us to accurately describe the sample of participants. For each question, make a check mark in front of the option that best describes you, unless otherwise indicated.

1. Age (numerical value in years): _____
2. Gender: ____ Female ____ Male ____ Non-binary _____ Prefer to self-describe
3. Ethnicity: _____ Aboriginal _____ African-Canadian _____ Asian-Canadian_____ Indo-Canadian _____Caucasian _____ Other (please specify: _____)
4. Your occupation or previous occupation: _____
5. Your current employment status (check all that apply):

_____ Employed full-time ____ Employed part-time ____ Student ____ Retired

____ Unemployed ____ Other (please specify: _____)

6. Check your highest education level completed:

_____ Elementary school	_____ Some college
_____ Secondary school	_____ College diploma
_____ High School diploma	_____ Some university
_____ Trade or technical school	_____ University degree
_____ Other: please describe_____	

7. Which of these categories best describes your family annual income?

_____ 10-20,000 _____ 20-30,000 _____ 30-40,000 _____ 40-60,000
_____ 60-80,000 _____ 80-100,000 _____ 100,000 and up

8. Marital status: _____ single, never married
   _____ married or common-law relationship (# of years _____)
   _____ divorced or separated
   _____ widowed
9. How many children do you have? _____ What are their ages? _____
10. If your children are over 18, do any of them still live with you? _____ yes ____ no
11. Do you consider yourself as spiritual or religious or both or neither? _____ Spiritual

_____ Religious _____ Both spiritual and religious _____ Neither spiritual nor religious

12. If you consider yourself to be religious, with which affiliation do you currently identify?

___ First Nations ___ Christian ___ Jewish ___ Hindu ___ Buddhist ___ Sikh ___ Muslim
___ Other: _____

13. Rate the degree to which you actively participate in religious/spiritual practices (circle the number that best fits):

1 2 3 4 5
Not active Very active

Appendix C - Identity Style Inventory – Version 5 (Berzonsky et al., 2013)

INSTRUCTIONS

You will find a number of statements about beliefs, attitudes, and/or ways of dealing with issues. Read each carefully, and then use it to describe yourself. Circle the number which indicates the extent to which you think the statement represents you. There are no right or wrong answers. For instance, if the statement is very much like you, circle 5, if it is not like you at all, circle 1. Use the 1 to 5 point scale to indicate the degree to which you think each statement is uncharacteristic (1) or characteristic (5) of you.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all like me				Very much like me

1.	I know basically what I believe and don't believe	1 2 3 4 5
2.	I automatically adopt and follow the values I was brought up with.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	I'm not sure where I'm heading in my life; I guess things will work themselves out.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	Talking to others helps me explore my personal beliefs.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	I know what I want to do with my future.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	I strive to achieve the goals that my family and friends hold for me.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	It doesn't pay to worry about values in advance; I decide things as they happen	1 2 3 4 5
8.	When facing a life decision, I take into account different points of view before making a choice.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	I am not really sure what I believe.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	I have always known what I believe and don't believe; I never really have doubts about my beliefs	1 2 3 4 5
11.	I am not really thinking about my future now, it is still a long way off.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	I spend a lot of time reading or talking to others trying to develop a set of values that makes sense to me.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	I am not sure which values I really hold.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	I never question what I want to do with my life because I tend to follow what important people expect me to do.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	When I have to make an important life decision, I try to wait as long as possible in order to see what will happen.	1 2 3 4 5

16.	When facing a life decision, I try to analyze the situation in order to understand it.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	I am not sure what I want to do in the future.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	I think it is better to adopt a firm set of beliefs than to be open-minded.	1 2 3 4 5
19	I try not to think about or deal with personal problems as long as I can.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	When making important life decisions, I like to spend time thinking about my options.	1 2 3 4 5
21.	I have clear and definite life goals.	1 2 3 4 5
22.	I think it's better to hold on to fixed values rather than to consider alternative value systems.	1 2 3 4 5
23.	I try to avoid personal situations that require me to think a lot and deal with them on my own.	1 2 3 4 5
24.	When making important life decisions, I like to have as much information as possible.	1 2 3 4 5
25.	I am not sure what I want out of life.	1 2 3 4 5
26.	When I make a decision about my future, I automatically follow what close friends or relatives expect from me.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	My life plans tend to change whenever I talk to different people.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	I handle problems in my life by actively reflecting on them.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	I have a definite set of values that I use to make personal decisions.	1 2 3 4 5
30.	When others say something that challenges my personal values or beliefs, I automatically disregard what they have to say.	1 2 3 4 5
31.	Who I am changes from situation to situation.	1 2 3 4 5
32.	I periodically think about and examine the logical consistency between my life goals.	1 2 3 4 5
33.	I am emotionally involved and committed to specific values and ideals.	1 2 3 4 5
34.	I prefer to deal with situations where I can rely on social norms and standards.	1 2 3 4 5
35.	When personal problems arise, I try to delay acting as long as possible.	1 2 3 4 5
36.	It is important for me to obtain and evaluate information from a variety of sources before I make important life decisions.	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix D - The Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003)

HOW I TYPICALLY ACT TOWARDS MYSELF IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the left of each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner, using the following scale:

Almost never				Almost always
1	2	3	4	5

_____ 1. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.

_____ 2. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.

_____ 3. When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.

_____ 4. When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.

_____ 5. I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.

_____ 6. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.

_____ 7. When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.

_____ 8. When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.

_____ 9. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.

_____ 10. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.

_____ 11. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

_____ 12. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.

_____ 13. When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.

_____ 14. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.

_____ 15. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.

_____ 16. When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.

_____ 17. When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.

_____ 18. When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.

_____ 19. I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.

_____ 20. When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.

_____ 21. I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.

_____ 22. When I'm feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.

_____ 23. I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.

_____ 24. When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.

_____ 25. When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.

_____ 26. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

Appendix E – Compassionate Love Scale (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005)

Stranger/Humanity Version

Listed below are statements that refer to how you might feel about others. As you complete these items, think of those with whom you do not have relationships. For example, you might think about all of humanity or humankind or you might think about specific strangers. Circle or click on the number which indicates the extent to which you think the statement represents you. There are no right or wrong answers. For instance, if the statement is very true of you, circle 7, if it is not at all true of you, circle 1. Use the 1 to 7 point scale to indicate the degree to which you think each statement is uncharacteristic (1) or characteristic (7) of yourself.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true of me			Somewhat true of me			Very true of me

1.	When I see people I do not know feeling sad, I feel a need to reach out to them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.	I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of humankind.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.	When I hear about someone (a stranger) going through a difficult time, I feel a great deal of compassion for him or her.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.	It is easy for me to feel the pain (and joy) experienced by others, even though I do not know them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.	If I encounter a stranger who needs help, I would do almost anything I could to help him or her.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.	I feel considerable compassionate love for people from everywhere.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7.	I would rather suffer myself than see someone else (a stranger) suffer.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8.	If given the opportunity, I am willing to sacrifice in order to let people from other places who are less fortunate achieve their goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9.	I tend to feel compassion for people, even though I do not know them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10.	One of the activities that provides me with the most meaning to my life is helping others in the world when they need help.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11.	I would rather engage in actions that help others, even though they are strangers, than engage in actions that would help me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12.	I often have tender feelings towards people (strangers) when they seem to be in need.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13.	I feel a selfless caring for most of humankind.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14.	I accept others who I do not know even when they do things I think are wrong.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15.	If a person (a stranger) is troubled, I usually feel extreme tenderness and caring.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16.	I try to understand rather than judge people who are strangers to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17.	I try to put myself in a stranger's shoes when he or she is in trouble.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18.	I feel happy when I see that others (strangers) are happy.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19.	Those whom I encounter through my work and public life can assume that I will be there if they need me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20.	I want to spend time with people I don't know well so that I can find ways to help enrich their lives.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21.	I very much wish to be kind and good to fellow human beings.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix F - Quiet Ego Scale (Wayment et al. 2015)

My Thoughts and Feelings

Below is a list of statement that may or may not describe your views and values. Please read each of the items below and then rate the extent to which you agree or disagree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world.					
I find myself doing things without paying much attention.					
I feel a connection to all living things.					
Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.					
For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.					
I sometimes find it difficult to see things from another person's point of view.					
I do jobs or tasks automatically, without begin aware of what I am doing.					
I feel a connection with strangers.					
When I am upset at someone, I usually try to put myself in his or her shoes for awhile.					
I have the sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time.					
I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.					
I feel a connection to people of other races.					
I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.					
When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years.					