Anduli
Revista Andaluza de Ciencias Sociales
ISSN: 1696-0270 • e-ISSN: 2340-4973

CODE-SWITCHING AND THE FORCED CHOICE DILEMMA AS OBSTACLES IN IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF GIFTED ADOLESCENTS

CAMBIO DE CÓDIGO Y DILEMA DE LA ELECCIÓN FORZADA COMO OBSTACULOS EN EL DESARROLLO DE LA IDENTIDAD DE ADOLESCENTES SUPERDOTADOS

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Abstract

We start from research showing that adolescents with high abilities often code-switch or face a dilemma of forced choice as they seek security and connection in their social environment. These strategies lead them to hide their high cognitive abilities in an attempt to integrate into the sociocultural environment, which results in a loss, concealment or denial of their identity as gifted adolescents. The aim of this research is to characterize the favourable and unfavourable conditions for the development of the identity of highly gifted adolescents by means of a systematic review of selected publications on the subject. The conclusions show that cases of identity concealment by highly gifted adolescents tend to occur in the absence of recognition and facilitation of the development of their qualities in their family, school or peer environment. Also, we conclude that these cases are difficult to record or recover, so it is recommended to act by prevention and early support.

Keywords: Code-switching; forced choice dilemma; giftedness; high abilities; identity development.

Resumen

Partimos de investigaciones que muestran que los adolescentes con altas capacidades a menudo cambian de código o se enfrentan a un dilema de elección forzada cuando buscan seguridad y conexión en su entorno social. Estas estrategias les llevan a ocultar sus altas capacidades cognitivas en un intento de integrarse en el entorno sociocultural, lo que se traduce en una pérdida, ocultación o negación de su identidad como adolescentes superdotados. El objetivo de esta investigación es caracterizar las condiciones favorables y desfavorables para el desarrollo de la identidad de los adolescentes superdotados mediante una revisión sistemática de publicaciones seleccionadas sobre el tema. Las conclusiones muestran que los casos de ocultación de la identidad por parte de adolescentes altamente dotados tienden a producirse en ausencia de reconocimiento y facilitación del desarrollo de sus cualidades en su entorno familiar, escolar o de iguales. Asimismo, se concluye que estos casos son difíciles de registrar o recuperar, por lo que se recomienda actuar mediante la prevención y el apoyo precoz.

Palabras claves: *Dilema de elección forzada, cambio de código, sobredotación, altas capacidades, desarrollo de identidad.*

Cómo citar este artículo/ citation: Visser, Marlies; Hoogeveen, Lianne (2025). Code-switching and the forced choice dilemma as obstacles in identity development of gifted adolescents. ANDULI 27 (2025) pp.179-198. https://doi.org/10.12795/anduli.2025.i27.08

Recibido: 30.09.2024 Revisado: 13.11.2024 Aceptado: 13.12.2024

1. INTRODUCTION

Various sources suggest that the social needs of adolescents with high abilities are like those of their peers (Bakx et al., 2021; Cross et al., 2019; Pfeiffer, 2021). Cross et al. (2019) described that these adolescents want to be accepted by their peers, just like adolescents with average abilities. According to Zanolie et al. (2022), social experiences can influence the well-being of all adolescents. Close friends during adolescence are a protective factor for well-being, while the effects of rejection are the opposite. Adolescents with high abilities may feel different from their average peers (Coleman et al., 2015; Cross et al., 2019; Striley, 2014). They appear to feel more different or stigmatized when they have limited knowledge about their high abilities. (Wong & Jung, 2024). Their peers, parents, and teachers can influence this feeling of being different and how they view themselves (Bakx et al., 2021; Coleman et al., 2015; Steenberghs et al., 2023; Striley, 2014). Some adolescents with high abilities may adapt to the norms of their average-ability peers to feel a sense of belonging. This process of adapting to average among high-ability youngsters could be viewed as code-switching (Cross, 2023) or as facing a forced-choice dilemma (Gross, 1989)

Both code-switching strategies and the forced-choice dilemma seem to allow individuals to connect with their environment but also let them hide their intellectual capacities, partially or completely. Consequently, their environment might not sufficiently recognize their needs. If they employ these strategies over a long period, it could potentially impact the development of their identity as well as their talents. Van Horssen-Solie (2021) suggested that trying to 'fit in' while developing one's own identity can lead to challenges in that development. Cross (2012) indicated that the environment assists young people in creating and shaping their personal narratives.

Before describing the phenomena of code-switching and the forced choice dilemma, below is briefly explained what is meant by adolescents with high intellectual abilities, as the concept of high ability is interpreted in various ways.

High ability

According to Bakx et al. (2021), Renzulli and Reis (2017), and Subotnik et al. (2011), there are many definitions for adolescents with high abilities. Renzulli and Reis, as well as Subotnik et al. emphasized that we should look beyond IQ scores, as motivation and creativity also play roles in intellectual capabilities. According to them, adolescents with high abilities are multidimensional, heterogeneous, and diverse. Subotnik et al. described high ability as a process from potential to performance. According to Gagné (2017), achieving high levels of success is possible if psychosocial and educational circumstances are optimal for those with high abilities. In the above study, adolescents with the potential to become high achievers will be referred to as gifted adolescents.

Development of identity in adolescence

Several studies (Blakemore, 2015; Zanolie et al., 2022; Crone et al., 2022) indicate that the adolescent phase spans from ages 10 to 24. Adolescence is a period characterised by psychological changes and marks the transition from childhood to adulthood (Crone, 2012). During this time, they learn to control their cognitive skills and work with long-term goals needed in adulthood. Self-consciousness, identity development, and peer relationships become more important during adolescence (Blakemore, 2015; Crone et al., 2022; De Lise et al., 2023; Zanolie et al., 2022; Zhang & Qin, 2023). Social and affective processes play a crucial role in the transition

to adulthood. These changes, combined with cognitive flexibility, help adolescents potentially discover and develop their own identity (Crone, 2012). The extent to which adolescents establish a sense of identity is linked to their psychosocial functioning and overall well-being (De Lise et al., 2023). Educators may significantly influence identity formation by facilitating their students' processes of introspection and extrospection; consequently, they acquire a deeper understanding of both them and their surrounding environment (Reimer, 2024). According to Peterson et al. (2012), gifted adolescents seem to benefit from positive experiences, which play a role in developing new perspectives, confidence, social connections, and their own possibilities. Investing in their academic capabilities helps them grow personally and leads to a meaningful life. What should be considered, however, is that Park et al. (2023) suggests that when high-achieving adolescents place a high value on academic achievement, it may become an integral aspect of their identity. Nonetheless, this attachment may also evoke both positive and negative emotions.

The influence of the environment in adolescence

Acceptance by peers and social learning is essential for the well-being of adolescents (Zanolie et al., 2022). Moreover, peer relations are consistently linked to academic achievement. According to Zanolie et al., evidence from neuroimaging studies shows that adolescents have heightened neural responses in brain regions related to reward and motivation when they are in a peer context. Social learning involves adolescents learning to adapt to their social environment through peer interactions. Furthermore, adolescents are more sensitive to acceptance and rejection by their peers than children before adolescence because they focus less on their parents and more on their peers (Blakemore, 2015; Zanolie et al., 2022). According to Hoogeveen et al. (2009), feeling different could influence gifted students' academic and social achievements.

Nowadays, more emphasis is placed on the holistic view of gifted students. Academic achievement remains significant, but mental well-being has also become essential (Peterson & Jen, 2018; Casino-García et al., 2021; Mammadov & Ward, 2023). It is important to consider that gifted adolescents do not experience more mental health issues than their average peers, but their mental health challenges may be different (Aykutlu et al.,2024; Peterson & Jen, 2018). Peterson and Jen seem to capitalize on this with their Peterson Proactive Developmental Attention model (PPDA-Model). The goal of the PPDA-Model is to foster both academic achievement and mental well-being, as Peterson and Jen assert that both require equal attention.

Ultimately, negative stigmatization from the environment and peer rejection could prevent some gifted adolescents from demonstrating their capabilities at all (Baudson, 2016; Cross et al., 2019; Striley, 2014). This aligns with the observation that adolescents are particularly sensitive to peer acceptance and rejection. According to Baudson, failing to showcase their abilities could hinder gifted adolescents' development as they may not fully realize their potential. The above study examined gifted adolescents aged 10 to 18, as this is the age when they are on the verge of attending secondary school in the Netherlands. It is the moment when gifted students reach adolescence, and sensitivity to peer acceptance and rejection becomes more pronounced. Some may adapt to the group with average intellectual abilities, potentially engaging in code-switching (Cross, 2023) or facing a forced-choice dilemma (Gross, 1989). See below the meaning of the concepts of code-switching and forced choice dilemma in relation to high ability adolescents.

Code-switching

The concept of code-switching was originally used to describe people switching between languages in one conversation. Research shifted in the late 20th century; code-switching is not just about bilingualism. It can symbolize a range of social identities beyond linguistic facts. Identities include ethnic, regional, urban or rural, minority or majority, and other social categories (Auer, 2005; Cashman, 2005). Therefore, code-switching research is broad and complex (Auer, 2005; Cashman, 2015; Wei, 2005). According to Gafangra (2005) code-switching is a complex component of social identity, which could be used to reinforce identity (Tseng & Cashman, 2015). Those who interact with each other let each other know they belong to the same group or that they understand the codes of the group (Tseng & Cashman, 2015; Jørgensen, 2005). Thus, the sociological aspect of code-switching may include what people want to express with it (Tseng & Cashman, 2015). According to Jørgensen (2005), adolescents reinforce both their social relations with peers by code-switching and reinforce their own identity.

According to El Hadioui et al. (2021), this sociological aspect of code-switching is more observed in some groups. The study of El Hadioui et al. (2021). described code-switching among students in large urban areas in the Netherlands. According to this study, some students have a more challenging time in school because they must code-switch frequently. Also, code-switching in the study of El Hadioui et al. is not about the exact meaning of words but about context and social identity. “Language” at school differs from “language” at home or on the streets. According to El Hadioui et al., some students frequently navigate between languages, which can influence their schooling because these students from large urban areas must adapt frequently to different environments.

According to Cross (2023), this phenomenon of code-switching is also visible when gifted students are among their average peers. Cross mentioned that gifted students who are among peers with average abilities will adapt their language to a more appropriate language for the mixed group. Because the population of gifted people is smaller than those with average intellectual abilities, this code-switching could happen so frequently, that you may wonder whether this does not compromise one’s own identity, according to Cross.

As every adolescent, gifted adolescents are sensitive to peer acceptance and rejection (Blakemore, 2015; Zanolie et al., 2022) and want to be included in the group. However, stigmatisation can lead to feelings of rejection, which can influence their academic development (Cross et al., 2019; Peterson & Jen, 2018; Striley, 2014; Zanolie et al., 2022). Code-switching could be a way for gifted adolescents to feel accepted within a group with average abilities. However, as Cross (2023) described, their uniqueness may disappear if they code-switch frequently.

According to Peterson and Jen, gifted adolescents seem to experience more stress and a lack of self-confidence when their peers reject them. Code-switching seems an effective way for gifted adolescents to avoid peer rejection because they seem to become more readily part of the group with average abilities when they code-switch. However, losing one’s identity by code-switching could lead to other mental health issues. In their *Peterson Proactive Developmental Attention model* (PPDA), Peterson and Jen (2018) mention how important it is to nurture gifted adolescents’ cognitive and mental aspects for developing their potential.

The study by El Hadioui et al. (2021) shows us that those who have to code-switch a lot tend to have a more challenging time in school. Although the study of El Hadioui et al. (2021) is about minority groups in large urban areas in the Netherlands and not about gifted students, you can point out some parallels. El Hadioui et al. writes about a minority group who code-switch because they experience cultural differences between home, school and society.

Baudson and Ziemes (2016) use the *Cass Identity Model* (CIM) when looking into gifted students' identity development. The CIM is a model initially used for various minority groups to research identity development. Gifted students can be a minority group that experiences cultural differences between home, school and society, making them code-switch more than average and possibly suffer the disadvantages of doing so. Recognizing and acknowledging code-switching in gifted adolescents may contribute to developing their full potential because then one looks at the cognitive part of the gifted adolescent and at their mental well-being.

Another phenomenon of adaptation among gifted adolescents to be included in the group with average abilities is introduced by Gross (1989), who called it the forced choice dilemma. The forced choice dilemma is like code-switching, an adaptation strategy of gifted adolescents aiming to be included in the group with average abilities. The forced choice dilemma, however, is more than an adaptation strategy. In the forced choice dilemma, the gifted student chooses not to show their intellectual capabilities at all.

Forced choice dilemma

In this study, the forced choice dilemma refers to gifted adolescents' fear of not being included in groups with average abilities, leading them to adapt to these groups intellectually (Gross, 1989). Not all gifted adolescents experience such fear or face a forced choice dilemma. According to van Horssen-Sollie (2021), gifted students who face the forced choice dilemma feel the friction between the expectations of others, achievement, and finding their own identity. Gifted adolescents may experience stress when they become aware of others' expectations (Cross et al., 2019; Peterson & Jen, 2018; Striley, 2014). Furthermore, they can worry about how their average-ability peers perceive them and the expectations created in their environment due to their outstanding abilities (Cross et al., 2019; Striley, 2014). According to Cross et al., some gifted adolescents do not want to brag or hurt the feelings of classmates who struggle with tasks at school. Negative stigmatisation and peer rejection may lead some high-ability adolescents to hide their capabilities entirely (Baudson, 2016; Cross et al., 2019; Striley, 2014).

The aim of this research is to characterize the favourable and unfavourable conditions for the development of the identity of highly gifted adolescents in view of avoiding they fall in code switching or forced choice dilemma.

2. METHOD AND MATERIALS

The search focus is on the following:

a) what promotes or hinders the development of the identity of gifted adolescents.

b) which factors contribute to code-switching by gifted adolescents.

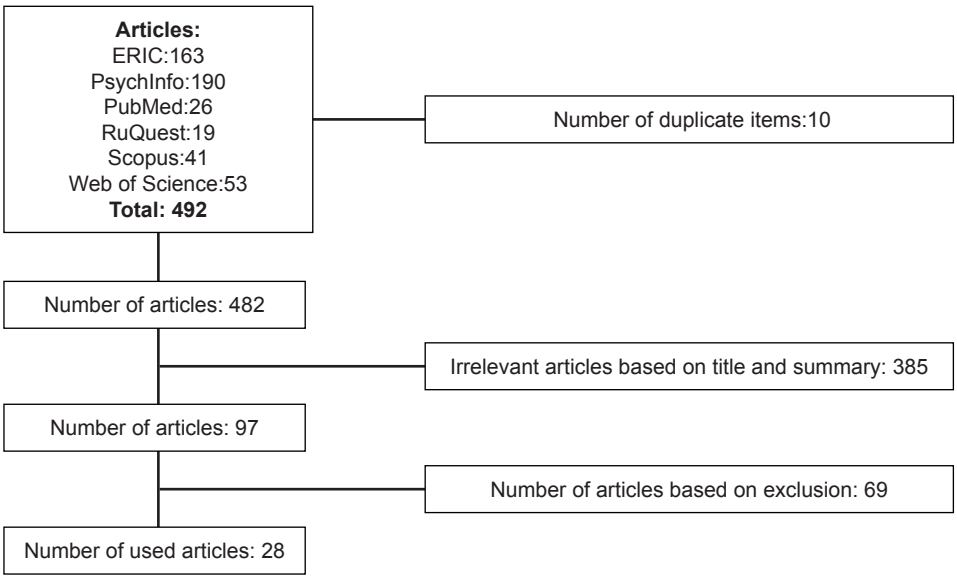
c) which factors contribute to ending up in the forced choice dilemma by gifted adolescents.

Recognizing these adaptation strategies and understanding their origins and influences may help professionals gain a better overview of the entire process of adjusting gifted students' behavior. This seems more important today, as more focus is placed on the holistic view of gifted adolescents, where professionals consider both academic achievement and mental well-being.

The methodology applied is a systematic bibliographic review. Literature is searched across six different databases using predefined keywords, their corresponding synonyms, and established inclusion criteria. This approach includes various study designs, providing the broadest overview of existing research. All studies or articles considered are no older than 15 years.

The databases examined are chosen from the fields of education and psychology because the questions in this integrative review are based on both disciplines. Figure 1 illustrates the literature search conducted in six databases: Eric, PsychInfo, PubMed, RuQuest, Scopus, and Web of Science. The keywords and synonyms used for the data search are detailed in Table 1.

Figure 1. Flowchart



Source: own elaboration

The keywords are established by listing subjects relevant to the research question and the inclusion criteria; these criteria are detailed in Table 2. The selection procedure consists of three steps: 1) exclusion of duplicates, 2) screening of titles and summaries, and 3) screening of the entire article. The included population comprised gifted adolescents aged 10 to 18, as these adolescents attend secondary education in the Netherlands and are in the adolescent phase. Three phenomena relevant to the inclusion criteria based on the research question are code-switching, the forced choice dilemma, and the identity development of gifted adolescents. The study designs included qualitative, quantitative, and/or mixed methods, systematic literature reviews, narrative reviews, and articles in reputable journals. All studies

or articles considered are not older than 15 years. The quality of the studies used is established by examining the validity of each study.

Table 1. Keywords and synonyms

Keywords	Synonyms used in the search
Gifted identity development	Gifted* and identity. High abilit* and identity. Gifted* and adolescent development. High abilit* and adolescent development. Talent* and identity development. Talent and Adolescent development.
Forced choice dilemma	Gifted* and forced choice dilemma. High abilit* and forced choice. High abilit* and forced choice dilemma. Talent* and forced choice. Talent* and forced choice dilemma.
Code-switching	Gifted* and code-switch. Gifted* and code-switching. High abilit* and code-switch. High abilit* and code-switching. Talent* and code-switch. Talent* and code-switching.

Source: own elaboration

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Population	• Gifted adolescents: age between 10-18 • Adolescents in gifted programs • Gifted students in secondary education	• Gifted students in primary- education • Non-gifted • Older than 18 • Twice exceptional
Phenomenon	• Code-switching. • Forced choice dilemma. • Identity development gifted adolescent (age 10-18)	• Code switching in non-gifted adolescents. • Identity development non gifted adolescent. • Forced choice dilemma in non-gifted adolescents?
Quality study	• Validity of the study. • Generalizable of the study.	
Outcome	• Data analyses support outcomes.	
Studies	Studies included: • Qualitative, quantitative, and/or mixed design study methods • Systematic literature review and narrative review • Articles in renowned magazines • Year 2009-present	• Before 2009

Source: own elaboration

A total of 28 studies are included based on the inclusion criteria. The studies included in this integrative review are detailed in Table 3. Most of the included studies are referred to the gifted identity development search. Only one article focused on code-switching

among gifted students, and two studies published after 2009 addressed the forced-choice dilemma. Based on our knowledge of the existing articles, we examined factors that encourage code-switching and the forced-choice dilemma to identify potential links between promoting and hindering factors of identity development in gifted adolescents.

Table 3: Overview of studies used

	Topic	Target Group	Country	Study group/ Comparison group	Inclusion criteria: Identified as gifted by	Inclusion criteria: Study conducted
Albright & Montgomery, 2023	Gifted/ Emotional development	Students M 11-15	UK	28 gifted	Identified as gifted via school system.	Q-Methodology
Barber & Wasson, 2015	HA/ comparison Peer relation	Adolescents	USA	Complementary sources:	Educational achievement	School Questionnaire Home Questionnaire
Baudson& Ziemes, 2016	Gifted/ Identity-Development.	Adolescents	UK	ADD database compared with AHAA database. 742 gifted	Standardized test - >130	Online Questionnaire
Bergold et al., 2015	Gifted/life satisfaction	Students M 16-17	CH	460 average SIS 75 gifted	Intelligence-Structure-Test 2000	General Life Satisfaction Scale (Dalbert , 2003)
Blackett & Webb, 2011	Gifted/ SENG model	-	AU	-	-	Article
Chen et al., 2018	Gifted/ Subjective well-being	Students M 15-17	USA	351 gifted	Top 10% students based on high school entrance examination.	Created Questionnaire with multiple scales that covers the constructs relevant for the broaden-and-build theory.
Coleman & Cross, 2014	Gifted/ Social experience	Students M 15-17	USA	99 gifted.	-Wechsler Intelligence Test for Children Revised. -Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test.	Qualitative interview.
Coleman et al., 2015	Gifted/Life experience	-	USA	-	-	Phenomenological Qualitative research.
Cross & Frazier, 2010	Gifted/Psychosocial development	-	USA	-	-	Article

	Topic	Target Group	Country	Study group/ Comparison group	Inclusion criteria: Identified as gifted by	Inclusion criteria: Study conducted
Cross et al., 2019	Gifted/ Social experience	Students M 8-18	USA	90 gifted Across five countries: USA, IR, UK, FR, KOR (18 participants per country)	Identified as gifted via school system.	Qualitative interview
Cross, 2023	Gifted/CS	-	USA	-	-	Article
Cross, 2024	Gifted/Psychological well-being	-	USA	-	-	Article
Guthrie, 2020	Gifted/Girlsin adolescence	-	USA	-	-	Article
Ishak, 2010	Gifted/Psychological problems	Students M 13-15	MY	180 Gifted	PERMATApintar UKM test 1 PERMATApintar UKM test 2	Questionnaire
Jung et al.,2012	Gifted/FCD	Students M 11-17	USA	450 Gifted	Standardized achievement test	Questionnaire
Jung et al, 2011	Gifted/FCD	Students M 11-18	UK	231 Gifted	Selected from previous studies	Self report Questionnaire
Kane, 2020	GiftedWellbeing	-	USA	-	-	Article
Lavrijsen & Verschueren, 2023	Gifted/ mental health	Students M 12-13	BE	Total 3409 students Average ability group (IQ90-110) compared with High ability group (>120)	Standardized test: CoVaT-CHC	Questionnaire
Lee et al., 2012	Gifted/ Interpersonal competence	Students M 11-18	USA	1526 Gifted	Trough: NUMAT and CTD	Created Questionnaire with multiple scales that covers social competence with foci on interpersonal competence and peer relation
Lee et al., 2012	Gifted/ social competence	Students M 12-18	KOR	740 Gifted	Trough: NUMAT, Classroom teachers (IQ >130)	Online and paper survey

	Topic	Target Group	Country	Study group/ Comparison group	Inclusion criteria: Identified as gifted by	Inclusion criteria: Study conducted
Maedows & Robinson, 2023	Gifted/experience of connection	Students M 12-13	USA	763 Gifted	Standardized achievement test	Quantitative survey
Mueller, 2009	Gifted/ Depression	Students M 12-18	USA	Trough ADD Health 762 gifted compared with 762 Non Gifted	-	Analysis from database
Peterson et al., 2012	Gifted/ positive life experience	-	USA	-	-	Longitudinal study
Peterson et al., 2009	Gifted/negative life experience	-	USA	-	-	Longitudinal study
Peterson & Jen, 2018	Gifted/ PPDA model	-	USA	-	-	Article
Wiley, 2020	Gifted/ Social emotional world	-	USA	-	-	Article
Winsor & Mueller, 2020	Gifted/Depression en suicide	-	USA	-	-	Article
Wood et al. (2024)	Gifted/development and developmental potential		CH	88 (parents of) gifted	Through: Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (IQ >140) Trough: qualifying report for the verification of a full-scale intelligence quotient or general ability index of Q >140)	Mixed method

ADD: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health; AHAA: The Adolescent Health and Academic Achievement Study; CoVaT-CHC = cognitive ability test; CS = code-switching; CTD= Center for Talent Development; FCD = forced choice dilemma; HA = high achieving; M = mean; NUMAT= Northwest University Midwest Academic Talent Search;WISC

Source: own elaboration

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results refer to the favourable and unfavourable conditions for the development of the identity of highly gifted adolescents and they are obtained through a systematic review of selected publications on the subject. Below, the sections discussing the factors that promote, or hinder identity development are organised to address the influence of family, school, and intrapersonal influences.

3.1. Factors that promote the development of the identity of gifted adolescents.

Six studies stated that safe family relations promote identity development. Parents of gifted adolescents should recognize and acknowledge their children's giftedness (Chen et al., 2018; Cross, 2024; Cross et al., 2019; Kane, 2020; Lee et al., 2012; Mueller, 2009). Chen et al. (2018) mentioned in their study that trust and engagement of both parents in the lives of their gifted child are essential for a positive relationship. Studies by Kane (2020), Lavrijsen and Verschueren (2023), Mueller (2009), and Peterson and Jen (2018) noted that when gifted adolescents feel connected with their peers and teachers at school, it promotes stable identity development.

Cross (2024) and Coleman et al. (2015) emphasized that for gifted adolescents, it is crucial for schools to understand their specific needs. This aligns with findings from Lee et al. (2012), Meadows and Robinson (2023), and Mueller (2009), which state that feeling challenged in school or extracurricular settings is vital for their identity development. Coleman et al. (2015) and Wood et al. (2024) also indicated that gifted adolescents thrive in environments with like-minded peers who share similar interests, fostering their identity growth. Gifted adolescents thrive in environments with peers who share similar interests, which fosters their identity growth. According to Meadows and Robinson (2023), this dynamic can greatly influence their overall motivation.

Feeling understood by peers and having their interests recognized can enhance gifted adolescents' self-esteem, as noted in studies by Cross, 2024, Cross and Frazier (2010), Lee et al. (2012), and Meadows and Robinson (2023). Studies by Kane (2020), Lavrijsen and Verschueren (2023), Mueller (2009), and Peterson and Jen (2018) noted that when gifted adolescents feel connected with their peers and teachers at school, it promotes stable identity development. Coleman et al. (2015) emphasized that for gifted adolescents, it is crucial for schools to understand their specific needs. This aligns with findings from Lee et al. (2012), Meadows and Robinson (2023), and Mueller (2009), which state that feeling challenged in school or extracurricular settings is vital for their identity development. Coleman et al. (2015) also indicated that gifted adolescents thrive in environments with like-minded peers who share similar interests, fostering their identity growth. According to Meadows and Robinson (2023), this dynamic can greatly influence their overall motivation. Feeling understood by peers and having their interests recognized can enhance gifted adolescents' self-esteem, as noted in studies by Cross and Frazier (2010), Lee et al. (2012), and Meadows and Robinson (2023).

Both Baudson and Ziemes (2016), and Chen et al. (2018) have stated that a positive perception of one's giftedness could contribute to the development of individual identity. Park et al (2023) indicate that gifted adolescents value academic achievement as a part of their identity.

3.2. Factors that are hindering identity development of gifted adolescents.

Studies by Cross et al. (2019) and Wiley (2020) showed that negative family relations hinder the identity development of gifted adolescents. These authors suggested that parents of gifted adolescents might have high or unrealistic expectations of their children. This could be experienced as negative and may increase stress. According to studies by Chen et al. (2018), Coleman et al. (2015), Cross et al. (2019), Ishak et al. (2010), and Peterson et al. (2009), gifted adolescents may feel compelled to comply with high expectations from both parents and peers. In contrast, the environments of gifted adolescents do not always have such expectations. Baudson and Ziemes (2016) noted that too many external stressors internalized by gifted adolescents can hinder their identity development. Coleman and Cross (2014) also discussed this in their study. In interviews with gifted adolescents, they expressed that they expect the world to view them in a particular way and adopt these perceptions. According to Coleman and Cross, the information they receive from others makes them hesitant to say something positive about themselves.

Coleman and Cross state that the sense of being different seems to be more prevalent in schools that do not fully understand the needs of gifted adolescents. Five studies showed that stigmatization by peers, teachers, or parents hinders identity development (Baudson, 2016; Cross et al., 2019; Peterson, 2009; Wiley, 2020; Winsor, 2020). According to Peterson (2009), a gifted adolescent may become an underachiever if peers, teachers, or parents view them negatively. Guthrie (2020) described in her study, specifically aimed at girls, how perfectionism can hinder emotional development. She defined perfectionism as being driven by internal desires or by expectations from the environment of gifted girls. The need to avoid failure is often associated with perfectionism and can become part of the girl's identity (Guthrie, 2020). Furthermore, Guthrie also mentioned that girls who grow up in cultures that value submissiveness or conforming to the group often tend to hide their abilities.

3.3. Factors that promote code-switching by gifted adolescents.

There is limited research on code-switching among gifted adolescents. Only Cross (2023) has published on this topic. Cross observed code-switching among gifted students when peers with average abilities surrounded them. Based on his observations, he suggested that gifted students often seek environments where they can be themselves. Cross stated that code-switching may provide a safe space for gifted students. He noted that these students seem to code-switch more flexibly when they are with like-minded peers and that code-switching is a valuable skill for everyone because it helps navigate social settings. However, he questioned whether gifted adolescents can fully develop their own identities if they are consistently focused on creating safe spaces through code-switching. According to Cross, this phenomenon of code-switching warrants further exploration. He asserts that increased understanding of this strategy is crucial so that the parents and counselors of gifted adolescents can teach them how to manage these adaptation strategies.

3.4. Factors that promote the forced choice dilemma.

There is also little recent research on the forced choice dilemma among gifted adolescents. Only two studies could be found in the last 15 years, and these do not clarify whether the forced-choice dilemma affects the identity development of gifted adolescents. Jung et al. (2011) and Jung et al. (2012) examined the forced choice dilemma in relation to the culture in which gifted adolescents grow up. Both studies referenced G. Hofstede's (2001) description of culture. Hofstede described six

dimensions of culture that aim to portray cultures without judgment. Jung et al. (2011) focused on the individualism versus collectivism dimension to determine whether growing up in an individualistic or collectivistic culture contributes to the forced choice dilemma faced by gifted adolescents.

Both studies examined who had a high need for peer acceptance and whether it contributed to the forced choice dilemma. They did not find convincing evidence that gifted adolescents in some cultures tend to encounter the forced choice dilemma sooner than those in other cultures. The authors stated that some highly gifted adolescents may face the forced choice dilemma earlier because their abilities are more advanced compared to non-gifted adolescents. Additionally, according to Jung et al. (2012), gifted adolescents growing up in a culture of vertical allocentrism appear more likely to experience the forced choice dilemma. In a vertically allocentric culture, people are generally hierarchical, and individual interests are subordinate to the collective (Jung, 2012). However, the authors of this research note that there is only an indirect significant difference in a mediating variable between vertical allocentrism and the forced choice dilemma (Jung et al., 2012). According to Barber et al. (2015), pullout classes or full-time gifted education may reduce the feeling of having to choose between one's high abilities and inclusion in the group. Barber et al. (2015) concluded that gifted adolescents among like-minded peers are better able to be themselves and, therefore, do not have to choose between adapting or being authentic. Lee et al. (2012) mentioned that verbally strong gifted adolescents seem to experience more social difficulties than mathematically gifted adolescents. Verbally assertive gifted adolescents stand out more due to their language use. As a result, verbally strong gifted adolescents may withdraw from the group more quickly. According to Lee et al. (2012), these adolescents could face more challenges when feeling they must choose between social adaptation and demonstrating their high abilities.

3.5. Factors contributing to code-switching and the forced choice dilemma that may affect identity development.

Three studies state that code-switching is about maintaining one's identity in social situations (Auer, 2005; Cashman, 2005; Gafaranga, 2005). According to these authors, this means that the social environment in which one finds oneself contributes to code-switching. Jørgensen (2005) argued that code-switching lets people know you belong to a group and shows that you understand the social norms of that group. Jørgensen also stated that adolescents form their social relations through code-switching. Six studies asserted that gifted adolescents need to experience a connection within their environment to develop their identity (Chen et al., 2018; Cross et al., 2019; Kane, 2020; Lavrijsen & Verschueren, 2023; Lee et al., 2012; Mueller, 2009).

At the same time, studies by Bakx et al. (2021), Coleman and Cross (2014), Cross et al. (2019), and Pfeiffer (2021) showed that the needs of gifted adolescents do not differ from those of their peers with average intellectual abilities; like their peers, they seek social connections. In three studies, it was argued that a connection with their parents, peers, teachers, and their high abilities is essential for the development of gifted adolescents' identity (Coleman et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2012; Mueller, 2009). These authors believe that if the environment does not meet the expectations of gifted adolescents, it hinders their identity development. Cross (2023) argued that if gifted adolescents do not feel safe in their environment, they may code-switch to create a safer place for themselves among peers with average abilities. However, Cross suggested that seeking connections with non-gifted peers through code-switching can compromise one's identity. Baudson and Ziemes (2016) stated that a positive

connection between gifted adolescents and their environment, where abilities are recognized and acknowledged, could lead to fewer adaptation strategies from gifted adolescents. Three studies indicated that sufficient intellectual challenge promotes identity development in gifted adolescents (Coleman et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2012; Mueller, 2009). This aligns with what Barber et al. (2015) mention in their study. They described that the forced-choice dilemma occurs less frequently when gifted adolescents are challenged in pull-out classes or adequately challenged at school. According to Barber et al. (2015), in such cases, adaptation seems unnecessary because they have enough like-minded peers.

3.6. Underachievement

Recognizing and acknowledging code-switching strategies and the forced-choice dilemma in gifted adolescents can help them develop their full potential by considering their cognitive abilities and mental well-being. Gifted adolescents seem to underachieve by applying these strategies because they conceal their abilities. Underachievement, in general, leads to negative consequences for the gifted individual, such as lower well-being, a negative attitude towards school, decreased academic performance, low value of their goals, and reduced overall quality of life (Jackson & Jung, 2022; Mofield & Parker-Peters, 2019).

Usually, underachievement is addressed through counselling and instruction aimed at helping students perform well again by, for example, improving their low motivation, low self-efficacy, and attitude towards school while developing their metacognitive skills (Siegle & McCoach, 2017). However, regarding code-switching strategies and the forced-choice dilemma, underachievement does not necessarily stem from an unstimulating environment but rather from a desire to connect.

A different approach to addressing this type of underachievement may be necessary. Learning more about these strategies is important for better understanding them. Recognizing these strategies might allow professionals to choose different methods when dealing with an underachieving gifted adolescent.

Snyder and Linnenbrink-Garcia (2013) recommended a person-centred approach in their study of underachievement, which is a holistic approach. This seems appropriate when a gifted adolescent is code-switching or faced with a forced-choice dilemma. The behaviors associated with code-switching and forced-choice dilemmas can arise from a social environment that is unable or unwilling to engage with the gifted adolescent, as well as from the inner needs of the connection-seeking gifted adolescent. According to Raoof et al. (2024), underachievement may be influenced by internal and external factors, which also appears to be the case here. It is advisable to examine the entire system surrounding the gifted adolescent and how that environment contributes to code-switching and the forced-choice dilemma.

3.7. Follow up research

Follow-up research should consider what Lavrijsen and Verschueren (2023) mention in their study about the mental health of gifted adolescents. They observe that gifted adolescents often recruited for surveys are typically those already enrolled in gifted programs. They questioned to what extent this group represents a true measure of well-being. After all, if their needs are met, it supports their well-being (Coleman et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2012; Meadows & Robinson, 2023; Mueller, 2009). Furthermore, it should also be considered that code-switching and the forced choice dilemma make this group of gifted adolescents less conspicuous due to these adaptation strategies. This could result in gifted adolescents not being sufficiently visible because, in practice,

little knowledge about these phenomena exists, and the behavior surrounding these phenomena will not be recognized.

Follow-up research should also study underachievement through code-switching and the forced-choice dilemma, examining where both phenomena occur in the pathways to the underachievement model (PUM) of Snyder and Linnenbrink-Garcia (2013). They describe that the pathway to underachievement often starts with not being challenged enough at a young age. Gifted adolescents may develop maladaptive beliefs about their academic abilities or devalue schoolwork (Snyder & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2013). In follow-up research, it might be interesting to explore how underachievement embedded in the adaptation strategies of code-switching and the forced-choice dilemma aligns with Snyder and Linnenbrink-Garcia's achievement types (2013). This could help us understand the processes leading to code-switching and the forced-choice dilemma. With this knowledge, we can investigate which interventions are most beneficial for professionals when a gifted adolescent feels compelled to use these adaptive strategies.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This integrative review aimed to gain broader and deeper knowledge about the development of the identity of gifted adolescents and the role of code-switching and the forced-choice dilemma in that development. Several factors, such as environment, safety, and connection within social relations, as well as their high abilities, seem to play a role in the identity development of gifted adolescents.

Factors that play a role in identity development also seem to influence code-switching strategies and the forced choice dilemma. It seems these adaptation strategies let gifted adolescents choose between two evils. It is the choice of the gifted adolescent not to showcase their high abilities to feel connected, which contributes to healthy identity development. However, hiding these abilities means their environment cannot recognise their potential, hindering their identity development. Nevertheless, it is difficult for their environment to respond appropriately if capabilities are hidden.

When gifted adolescents seek safety and connection in their environment through code-switching or the forced-choice dilemma, professionals may overlook what these gifted adolescents are capable of cognitively. It is recommended that professionals working with gifted adolescents gain more knowledge and recognise these strategies.

First, when adolescents with high abilities frequently adjust to their peers with average abilities, it may lead to their environment not recognizing them. Second, frequently adjusting could possibly hinder the development of one's identity, given that studies mention that if the needs of gifted adolescents are not sufficiently met, it could impede their identity development. Third, these adaptation strategies could be seen as underachievement, which does not contribute to developing one's potential.

Understanding these adaptation strategies helps better comprehend why gifted adolescents use them, enabling more targeted assistance to be offered. Interventions may need to focus less on concealing cognitive ability and more on the gifted adolescent's purpose, namely seeking safety and connection within their environment. Interventions that focus on the value of learning or academic achievement may not achieve their intended purpose because gifted adolescents often hide this aspect by using these adaptation strategies.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization, MarliesVisser; methodology, Marlies Visser and Lianne Hoogeveen; software, n.a..; formal analysis, Marlies Visser.; investigation, Marlies Visser.; resources, n.a..; data curation, n.a.; writing—original draft preparation, Marlies Visser; writing—review and editing, Marlies Visser and Lianne Hoogeveen.; supervision, Lianne Hoogeveen.; project administration, n.a..; funding acquisition, n.a.."

FUNDING

This research received no external funding

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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