

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.20008170

ACADEMIC IDENTITY STATUSES IN RELATION TO ACADEMIC SELF-HANDICAPPING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES: GROUP DIFFERENCES AND RELATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

Emadeldin M. Elsokkary¹, Abd elmureed Abd elgaber Kaseem¹, Saleh Saeed Alshihri¹,
Soliman, A. Alghadyan¹

*Department of Psychology, College of Social Sciences, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University
(IMSIU), Riyadh 13317, Saudi Arabia.*

Email: emelsokkary@imamu.edu.sa

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3606-0112>

Email: aamkasm@Imamu.edu.sa

Email: ssdalshihri@imamu.edu.sa

Email: saalghadyan@imamu.edu.sa

Received: 02/04/2026

Accepted: 23/04/2026

*Corresponding Author: Emadeldin M. Elsokkary
(emelsokkary@imamu.edu.sa)*

ABSTRACT

The present study examined academic identity status and academic self-handicapping among university students. Specifically, it sought to identify the most prevalent academic identity statuses, examine the associations between academic identity status and academic self-handicapping, investigate differences in both constructs as a function of gender and academic year, and determine the extent to which academic identity statuses accounted for variance in academic self-handicapping. The study used a cross-sectional descriptive-correlational design. The main sample consisted of 296 undergraduate students from the College of Social Sciences at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, including 137 males and 159 females. Academic identity status was assessed using the Academic Identity Status Scale developed by Was and Isaacson (2008), Arabic version by Mahasneh and Al-Adamat (2018). Academic self-handicapping was measured using the Academic Self-Handicapping Scale developed by Gupta and Geetika (2020), Arabic version translated by the author. The findings showed that achieved academic identity was the most prevalent status in the total sample, whereas diffused academic identity was the least prevalent. Diffused, moratorium, and foreclosed academic identity were positively associated with behavioral self-handicapping, claimed self-handicapping, and academic self-handicapping, whereas achieved academic identity was negatively associated with all three indicators. Significant differences were also found across gender and academic-year groups in both academic identity status and academic self-handicapping. Female students scored higher on achieved and foreclosed academic identity, whereas male students scored higher on diffused and moratorium academic identity. Male students also reported higher levels of academic self-handicapping than female students, and first-year students generally reported higher levels than final-year students. In addition, the four academic identity statuses jointly accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in academic self-handicapping. Overall,

the findings suggest that academic identity status is closely related to how university students respond to academic demands and self-evaluative threat. More mature and self-endorsed academic identities appear to be associated with lower reliance on academic self-handicapping, whereas less mature or unresolved academic identities appear to be associated with greater self-handicapping.

KEYWORDS: Academic Identity Status; Academic Self-Handicapping; Achieved Academic Identity; University Students; Higher Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Identity is one of the central constructs through which the individual's personality, beliefs, goals, and future orientations are organized. It is closely related to the person's capacity to define personal values, make consequential life decisions, and develop a coherent sense of self. In this sense, identity is not a marginal attribute, but a major developmental task that shapes how individuals answer fundamental questions about who they are, what they want, and what they seek to become. The theoretical foundation for this perspective is commonly associated with Erikson's psychosocial theory, in which development unfolds through a sequence of interrelated stages, each involving a developmental need and a corresponding psychosocial crisis. Within this framework, successful resolution of developmental crises enables progression to later stages, whereas unresolved conflicts may interfere with subsequent adjustment and development (Erikson, 1968).

Erikson's formulation gave rise to extensive empirical interest in identity development, especially during adolescence and the university years, when issues of commitment, self-definition, and future direction become especially salient. Building on Erikson's theory, Marcia (1980) proposed the identity status paradigm as a more operational and researchable framework for examining identity formation. Rather than reducing identity to a simple opposition between achievement and confusion, Marcia conceptualized identity in terms of four statuses that reflect different combinations of exploration and commitment: identity achievement, foreclosure, diffusion, and moratorium (Marcia, 1980; Marcia & Archer, 1993). Identity achievement reflects commitment following a period of exploration; foreclosure reflects commitment without adequate personal exploration; diffusion reflects the absence of both meaningful exploration and stable commitment; and moratorium reflects active exploration accompanied by unresolved commitment. This framework has been especially influential in studying late adolescents and university students because these groups are often in the process of negotiating educational, vocational, and ideological commitments.

In educational settings, identity assumes a more specific form in the construct of academic identity. Academic identity has been defined as the individual's view of the self in academic environments, formed on the basis of personal choices and commitment to school roles, values, and goals (Was & Isaacson, 2008). In related terms, it has also been associated with personal commitment to

standards of excellence, persistence in the face of challenge, and willingness to endure frustration during learning (Welch & Hodges, 1997). This makes academic identity particularly important during university study, which represents a period of major developmental transition. University students are expected to make decisions about their fields of study, academic priorities, goals, motivation, persistence, discipline, and responses to setbacks. Such decisions are not merely procedural or academic in a narrow sense; rather, they are deeply tied to how students define themselves as learners and how they position themselves within academic life (Was & Isaacson, 2008).

Academic identity is linked to a range of academic issues that require students to make identity-relevant decisions during their university years, including the selection of college and major, the reasons for those choices, the importance assigned to courses, academic priorities, academic goals, motivation, discipline, willpower, persistence, and responses to difficulty and failure. Accordingly, academic identity may be seen as one of the core psychological factors influencing how students engage with academic demands and how they interpret both success and failure. It is therefore closely connected to academic functioning, academic achievement, and broader educational adjustment. Recent research also indicates that academic identity remains dynamic in higher education, particularly when students encounter academic setbacks and are required to reconstruct their sense of self as learners. In a qualitative discourse analysis, Ige and Janse van Rensburg (2025) showed that students' identities were progressively repositioned through reflection, support, and adaptation following early academic difficulties, underscoring that identity development continues beyond initial university entry.

The distinction among academic identity statuses is theoretically important because each status reflects a qualitatively different way of relating to academic values, commitments, and decisions. Achieved academic identity refers to commitment to academic goals and values that has emerged after exploration and deliberate choice. Students in this status are described as more likely to adopt effective strategies for completing academic tasks, to show stronger planning and problem-solving abilities, to report higher self-esteem, and to demonstrate greater flexibility and better functioning under pressure. Foreclosed academic identity, by contrast, reflects commitment to academic values and goals that are adopted from significant others, such as parents or teachers, without sufficient personal exploration;

students in this status may appear committed, but they may also show rigidity and reduced flexibility under stress. Diffused academic identity reflects failure to explore academic values and goals and, consequently, weak commitment to them; students in this status may show lower engagement, weaker academic commitment, less autonomy, and poorer self-regard. Moratorium academic identity reflects a state of uncertainty, hesitation, and unresolved questioning about academic goals and values; students in this status may experience lower commitment, dissatisfaction, and heightened anxiety while still struggling toward a more stable academic self-definition (Was & Isaacson, 2008; Was et al., 2009; Hejazi et al., 2012; Chorba et al., 2012). These differences suggest that academic identity status is not merely descriptive, but may have meaningful implications for how students cope with academic demands.

One maladaptive way of coping with demanding or evaluative tasks is self-handicapping. Self-handicapping refers to actions or claimed impediments that increase the likelihood of failure or provide an excuse for it, thereby protecting self-worth and preserving favorable interpretations of the self (Berglas & Jones, 1978; Carlisle, 2015). The central logic of self-handicapping is defensive: rather than maximizing the chance of success, individuals introduce or claim obstacles that can later be used to attribute failure to external or unstable factors while preserving internal attributions for success. In this sense, self-handicapping is closely tied to self-evaluation, self-protection, and attributional processes (Snyder, 1990; Rhodewalt & Tragakis, 2002).

Self-handicapping has been studied across different contexts, including academic settings, sports, social interactions, and work environments, and has been examined in relation to a variety of psychological constructs such as personality, achievement orientation, effort evaluation, and self-esteem. In academic settings in particular, self-handicapping becomes especially salient because students repeatedly encounter tasks that evaluate their intelligence, competence, and future potential. Classrooms, examinations, graded assignments, and performance comparisons all make academic life a context in which ability is publicly and personally scrutinized. For this reason, academic settings are especially conducive to self-handicapping behaviors and claims (Urduan & Midgley, 2001).

The literature typically distinguishes between two forms of self-handicapping. Behavioral self-handicapping involves actual behaviors that

undermine performance, such as inadequate preparation, failure to use helpful resources, choosing poor performance conditions, or engaging in behaviors that interfere with success. Claimed self-handicapping involves reported excuses or nonbehavioral impediments, such as stress, illness, fatigue, or anxiety, that are invoked as explanations for possible poor performance (Arkin & Baumgardner, 1985; Leary & Shepperd, 1986; Clarke, 2018). Although both forms serve a self-protective function, behavioral self-handicapping is generally more damaging to academic outcomes because it involves genuine interference with performance, whereas claimed self-handicapping may be less directly damaging but also less effective in protecting self-worth (Ferradás et al., 2016; Tadik et al., 2017). Within the academic context, academic self-handicapping has been described as a commonly used strategy for managing threats to self-esteem arising from fear of academic failure (Gupta & Geetika, 2020).

The significance of academic self-handicapping lies in the fact that it is associated with a range of negative academic and psychological outcomes. Academic self-handicapping has been linked to reduced motivation for learning, weaker participation in academic activities, academic procrastination, lower self-esteem, maladaptive perfectionism, anxiety, and depression. Thus, academic self-handicapping is not simply an isolated tendency; rather, it appears to be part of a broader maladaptive pattern of academic coping and self-regulation. Identifying psychological variables associated with it may therefore contribute to a deeper understanding of students' academic difficulties and to the development of interventions aimed at improving educational adjustment. Recent evidence also suggests that academic self-handicapping is intertwined with broader self-regulatory processes in higher education. Yan et al. (2026) found that lower academic self-efficacy was associated with higher academic self-handicapping among university students, suggesting that self-handicapping may be sustained not only by self-protective motives but also by weakened beliefs in one's academic capability.

The theoretical relationship between academic identity status and academic self-handicapping is especially compelling because both constructs concern how students define themselves in academic settings and how they respond to evaluation, challenge, and the possibility of failure. Students with a well-developed academic identity, especially those with achieved status, may be expected to show

stronger commitment to academic goals and values, greater flexibility, stronger engagement, and more adaptive ways of responding to challenge. By contrast, students whose academic identity is less developed, unresolved, externally imposed, or weakly committed may be more vulnerable to uncertainty, low engagement, defensive coping, and self-protective strategies such as self-handicapping. Students with a more developed sense of academic identity may be less likely to rely on self-handicapping strategies, whereas students with less mature academic identities may be more likely to adopt such strategies in academic situations.

This position is supported by the limited prior evidence reviewed in the study. The available literature remains limited. Only two foreign studies were identified that examined the relationship between academic identity and self-handicapping. Chorba et al. (2012) investigated individual differences in academic identity and self-handicapping among undergraduate students and found that foreclosed, diffused, and moratorium academic identity statuses were positively related to self-handicapping, whereas achieved academic identity was negatively related to it. Their findings also indicated significant differences in self-handicapping across the four academic identity groups. Carlisle (2015), in a doctoral study, examined the relationship between academic identity and both behavioral and claimed academic self-handicapping. The findings indicated that achieved academic identity was negatively related to both forms of academic self-handicapping, whereas diffused and moratorium academic identity were positively related to both forms. Foreclosed academic identity showed a positive association particularly with claimed academic self-handicapping. Together, these studies suggest that academic identity status may be meaningfully related to how students manage academic self-threat and performance risk.

At the same time, the literature remains notably limited. According to the reviewed literature, no Arabic studies were identified that directly examined the relationship between academic identity status and academic self-handicapping. Moreover, even within the non-Arabic literature reviewed in the manuscript, the evidence base was very small and largely confined to studies conducted in the United States. One of the two identified studies examined self-handicapping in a broader sense rather than academic self-handicapping specifically, and the two studies differed in their operational focus and design. This leaves a clear research gap regarding the relationship between academic identity status and

academic self-handicapping in Arab university contexts and, more specifically, regarding whether this relationship is accompanied by differences across gender and academic year.

The present study was designed to address this gap by examining academic identity status and academic self-handicapping among university students. More specifically, it sought to identify the most prevalent academic identity statuses among male and female students and among first-year and final-year students; to examine the associations between academic identity statuses and academic self-handicapping; to investigate differences in academic identity statuses as a function of gender, academic year, and their interaction; to examine corresponding differences in academic self-handicapping; and to estimate the extent to which academic identity statuses account for variance in academic self-handicapping. In doing so, the study extends the limited literature on the academic identity–self-handicapping link and contributes evidence from a context that has been underrepresented in prior research.

1.1. Research Question and Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework and the empirical studies reviewed above, the study addressed the following research question and hypotheses:

RQ1. What is the rank order of the prevalent academic identity statuses in the total sample and across gender and academic-year groups?

H1. Academic identity statuses would be significantly associated with academic self-handicapping among university students, such that diffused, moratorium, and foreclosed academic identity would show positive associations with academic self-handicapping, whereas achieved academic identity would show a negative association.

H2. Academic identity statuses would differ significantly as a function of gender, academic year, and the interaction between gender and academic year.

H3. Academic self-handicapping would differ significantly as a function of gender, academic year, and the interaction between gender and academic year.

H4. Academic identity statuses would account for a significant proportion of variance in academic self-handicapping among university students.

2. METHOD

2.1. Study Design

The present study used a cross-sectional descriptive-correlational design to examine academic identity status and academic self-handicapping among university students. Specifically, the study aimed to identify the most prevalent academic identity statuses in the sample, examine the associations between academic identity statuses and academic self-handicapping, investigate differences in both constructs as a function of gender and academic year, and determine the extent to which academic identity statuses accounted for variance in academic self-handicapping.

2.2. Participants and Sampling

The main sample consisted of 296 undergraduate students from the College of Social Sciences at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University. Eligible participants were undergraduate students enrolled in the first or final academic year who agreed to participate voluntarily in the study. Participants were recruited using a stratified convenience sampling approach. Recruitment was limited to students enrolled in the first and final academic years, with representation from both male and female students across the two academic-year groups. The sample included 137 male students and 159 female students, with a mean age of 20.57 years ($SD = 4.25$). Of the total sample, 132 were first-year students and 164 were final-year students. The gender-by-year distribution was as follows: 62 first-year males, 70 first-year females, 75 final-year males, and 89 final-year females.

2.3. Procedure and Ethical Considerations

Data were collected during the second semester of the 1446/1447 academic year from undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Social Sciences at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University. Participants completed the study measures in their Arabic versions.

The study was conducted in accordance with applicable institutional ethical standards for research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, that their responses would be used for research purposes only, and that they could decline participation or withdraw at any time without penalty. No personally identifying information was collected, and all responses were treated confidentially and analyzed

in aggregate form.

2.4. Measures

2.4.1. Academic Identity Status Scale

Academic identity status was assessed using the Academic Identity Status Scale developed by Was and Isaacson (2008) and translated into Arabic by Mahasneh and Al-Adamat (2018). The scale consists of 40 items measuring four academic identity statuses: diffused academic identity, moratorium academic identity, foreclosed academic identity, and achieved academic identity, with 10 items for each status. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (does not apply) to 5 (applies completely), with higher scores indicating a stronger presence of the corresponding academic identity status.

Previous research reported acceptable evidence of validity and reliability for the original and Arabic versions of the scale (Mahasneh & Al-Adamat, 2018; Was & Isaacson, 2008). In the present study, internal consistency indicators supported the adequacy of the scale. Corrected item-total correlations for the items were above .30 across the four subscales. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .811 for diffused academic identity, .823 for moratorium academic identity, .815 for foreclosed academic identity, and .844 for achieved academic identity. The corresponding McDonald's omega coefficients were .821, .825, .822, and .851, respectively.

2.4.2. Academic Self-Handicapping Scale

Academic self-handicapping was measured using Academic Self-Handicapping Scale developed by Gupta and Geetika (2020) and translated into Arabic by the author. The translated version was reviewed by specialists in English language and psychology before administration. In its final Arabic form, the scale consisted of 22 items measuring two dimensions: behavioral self-handicapping (15 items) and claimed self-handicapping (7 items). Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater academic self-handicapping.

Evidence of structural validity supported the two-factor structure of the scale with a higher-order general academic self-handicapping factor. The model showed acceptable fit indices, $\chi^2 = 322.124$, $df = 202$, $\chi^2/df = 1.595$, $RMSEA = .047$, $RMR = .049$, $GFI = .909$, $AGFI = .901$, $NFI = .915$, $CFI = .951$, $IFI = .943$, and $TLI = .916$. Internal consistency indicators in the present study were satisfactory. Corrected item-total correlations for the items were above .30, and

corrected correlations between each subscale and the total score were .716 for behavioral self-handicapping and .716 for claimed self-handicapping. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .855 for behavioral self-handicapping, .820 for claimed self-handicapping, and .897 for the total scale. The corresponding McDonald's omega coefficients were .861, .827, and .905, respectively.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis proceeded in several stages. First, descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were computed to identify the most prevalent academic identity statuses in the total sample and across gender and academic-year groups.

Second, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the associations between the four academic identity statuses and behavioral self-handicapping, claimed self-handicapping, and academic self-handicapping.

Third, two-way analyses of variance (2×2 ANOVA) were conducted to examine differences in academic identity statuses and academic self-handicapping as a function of gender (male vs. female), academic year (first year vs. final year), and the interaction between gender and academic year. Before conducting these analyses, the assumptions of ANOVA were examined. Normality was evaluated using skewness and kurtosis as well as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, and homogeneity of variance was assessed using Levene's test. The assumptions were found to be adequately met for the analyzed variables. Effect sizes were reported using eta squared.

Fourth, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the relative contribution of the four academic identity statuses to variance in academic self-handicapping. Diffused, moratorium, foreclosed, and achieved academic identity were entered as predictors, and academic self-handicapping was treated as the dependent variable. The regression results were evaluated using the multiple correlation coefficient (R), coefficient of determination (R^2), the overall F statistic for the model, and the unstandardized regression coefficients, standardized beta weights, t values, and significance levels for the individual predictors.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Descriptive Statistics for Academic Identity Status

Descriptive statistics were first examined to identify the most prevalent academic identity

statuses in the total sample and across gender and academic-year groups. In the total sample, achieved academic identity had the highest mean score, followed by foreclosed academic identity, moratorium academic identity, and diffused academic identity. A similar pattern emerged across most subgroup comparisons, although the order of foreclosed and moratorium academic identity differed across some groups. Among male students and first-year students, moratorium academic identity ranked above foreclosed academic identity, whereas among female students and final-year students, foreclosed academic identity ranked above moratorium academic identity. Across all groups, diffused academic identity had the lowest mean score. The detailed descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Academic Identity Status by Gender and Academic Year.

Academic Identity Status	Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	First-Year M (SD)	Final-Year M (SD)	Total M (SD)
Diffused academic identity	21.14 (2.34)	20.15 (3.26)	21.45 (3.10)	19.93 (2.56)	20.61 (2.91)
Moratorium academic identity	28.65 (3.55)	27.20 (4.81)	28.88 (4.55)	27.06 (3.98)	27.87 (4.33)
Foreclosed academic identity	26.99 (6.30)	28.91 (4.44)	28.81 (5.90)	27.38 (5.01)	28.02 (5.46)
Achieved academic identity	36.31 (4.79)	39.11 (3.83)	37.17 (4.90)	38.34 (4.12)	37.82 (4.51)

4.2. Correlations Between Academic Identity Status and Academic Self-Handicapping

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine the associations between academic identity statuses and academic self-handicapping. Diffused, moratorium, and foreclosed academic identity were positively and statistically significantly associated with behavioral self-handicapping, claimed self-handicapping, and the academic self-handicapping. In contrast, achieved academic identity showed statistically significant negative associations with all three academic self-handicapping indicators. Overall, the correlation pattern indicated that the less mature or less resolved academic identity statuses were associated with higher levels of academic self-handicapping, whereas achieved academic identity was associated with lower levels of self-handicapping. The correlation coefficients are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlations Between Academic Identity Status and Academic Self-Handicapping.

Academic Identity Status	Behavioral Self-Handicapping	Claimed Self-Handicapping	Academic Self-Handicapping
Diffused academic identity	.635**	.551**	.644**
Moratorium academic identity	.613**	.545**	.627**
Foreclosed academic identity	.304**	.241**	.301**
Achieved academic identity	-.605**	-.637**	-.654**

Note. $p < .01$.

4.3. Differences in Academic Identity Status by Gender and Academic Year

A series of 2×2 analyses of variance (ANOVAs) was conducted to examine differences in academic identity status as a function of gender, academic year, and the interaction between gender and academic year. Descriptively, male students scored higher than female students on diffused and moratorium academic identity, whereas female students scored higher than male students on foreclosed and achieved academic identity. First-year students scored higher than final-year students on diffused, moratorium, and foreclosed academic identity, whereas final-year students scored higher on achieved academic identity. The cell means and standard deviations for the four interaction groups are reported in Table 3.

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations for Academic Identity Status by Gender and Academic Year.

Academic Identity Status	Male, First Year M (SD)	Male, Final Year M (SD)	Female, First Year M (SD)	Female, Final Year M (SD)
Diffused academic identity	22.30 (2.41)	20.18 (1.78)	20.70 (3.44)	19.71 (3.06)
Moratorium academic identity	30.28 (3.80)	27.30 (2.67)	27.63 (4.81)	26.85 (4.81)
Foreclosed academic identity	28.39 (6.99)	25.83 (5.44)	29.18 (4.74)	28.69 (4.21)
Achieved academic identity	34.45 (4.82)	37.85 (4.20)	39.57 (3.55)	38.75 (4.02)

The inferential results confirmed these patterns. For diffused academic identity, there was a statistically significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 292) = 10.19$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .034$, indicating higher scores among male students, and a statistically significant

main effect of academic year, $F(1, 292) = 23.02$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .073$, indicating higher scores among first-year students. The interaction between gender and academic year was not statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 3.09$, $p = .080$, $\eta^2 = .010$.

For moratorium academic identity, there was a statistically significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 292) = 10.08$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .033$, indicating higher scores among male students, and a statistically significant main effect of academic year, $F(1, 292) = 14.94$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .049$, indicating higher scores among first-year students. The interaction between gender and academic year was also statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 5.14$, $p = .024$, $\eta^2 = .017$.

For foreclosed academic identity, the main effect of gender was statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 8.58$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .029$, indicating higher scores among female students. The main effect of academic year was also statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 5.98$, $p = .015$, $\eta^2 = .020$, indicating higher scores among first-year students. The interaction between gender and academic year was not statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 2.74$, $p = .099$, $\eta^2 = .009$.

For achieved academic identity, the main effect of gender was statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 38.33$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .116$, indicating higher scores among female students. The main effect of academic year was also statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 7.03$, $p = .008$, $\eta^2 = .023$, indicating higher scores among final-year students. In addition, the interaction between gender and academic year was statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 18.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .061$. Across the four identity statuses, the largest effect size was observed for the gender effect on achieved academic identity ($\eta^2 = .116$), followed by the gender-by-year interaction for achieved academic identity ($\eta^2 = .061$). The full ANOVA results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Two-Way ANOVA Results for Academic Identity Status by Gender and Academic Year.

Outcome Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Diffused academic identity	Gender	77.83	1	77.83	10.19	.002	.034
	Academic year	175.84	1	175.84	23.02	<.001	.073
	Gender $\times$ Academic year	23.63	1	23.63	3.09	.080	.010
	Error	2230.14	292	7.64			
Moratorium academic identity	Gender	173.99	1	173.99	10.08	.002	.033
	Academic year	257.97	1	257.97	14.94	<.001	.049
	Gender $\times$ Academic year	88.81	1	88.81	5.14	.024	.017
	Error	5042.97	292	17.27			
Foreclosed academic identity	Gender	243.30	1	243.30	8.58	.004	.029
	Error	5042.97	292	17.27			

Foreclosed academic identity	Academic year	169.67	1	169.67	5.98	.015	.020
	Gender × Academic year	77.69	1	77.69	2.74	.099	.009
	Error	8283.70	292	28.37			
Achieved academic identity	Gender	658.58	1	658.58	38.33	<.001	.116
	Academic year	120.70	1	120.70	7.03	.008	.023
	Gender × Academic year	324.13	1	324.13	18.86	<.001	.061
	Error	5017.33	292	17.18			

Note. SS = sum of squares; MS = mean square; η^2 = eta squared.

4.4. Differences in Academic Self-Handicapping by Gender and Academic Year

Descriptive statistics were also examined for behavioral self-handicapping, claimed self-handicapping, and academic self-handicapping. Across the four interaction groups, male students showed higher mean scores than female students on all self-handicapping indicators. In addition, first-year students generally showed higher mean scores than final-year students. The cell means and standard deviations are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviations for Academic Self-Handicapping by Gender and Academic Year.

Outcome Variable	Male, First Year M (SD)	Male, Final Year M (SD)	Female, First Year M (SD)	Female, Final Year M (SD)
Behavioral self-handicapping	55.20 (5.09)	52.02 (7.00)	49.12 (8.70)	46.40 (11.00)
Claimed self-handicapping	27.01 (3.81)	24.78 (4.20)	22.53 (4.80)	23.34 (4.47)
Academic Self-Handicapping	82.20 (8.12)	76.79 (10.88)	71.65 (13.06)	69.75 (14.22)

The ANOVA results supported these descriptive trends. For behavioral self-handicapping, there was a statistically significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 292) = 34.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .105$, indicating higher scores among male students, and a statistically significant main effect of academic year, $F(1, 292) = 8.77$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .029$, indicating higher scores among first-year students. The interaction between gender and academic year was not statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 0.05$, $p = .818$, $\eta^2 = .000$.

For claimed self-handicapping, the main effect of gender was statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 33.47$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .103$, indicating higher scores among male students. The main effect of academic year was not statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 1.93$, $p = .166$, $\eta^2 = .007$. However, the interaction between gender and academic year was statistically significant, $F(1,$

$292) = 8.88$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .030$.

For academic self-handicapping, there was a statistically significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 292) = 38.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .117$, indicating higher overall self-handicapping among male students. There was also a statistically significant main effect of academic year, $F(1, 292) = 6.72$, $p = .010$, $\eta^2 = .022$, indicating higher scores among first-year students. The interaction between gender and academic year was not statistically significant, $F(1, 292) = 1.54$, $p = .216$, $\eta^2 = .005$. Among the self-handicapping outcomes, the largest effect size was observed for the gender effect on academic self-handicapping ($\eta^2 = .117$), followed by the gender effect on behavioral self-handicapping ($\eta^2 = .105$). The full ANOVA results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Two-Way ANOVA Results for Academic Self-Handicapping by Gender and Academic Year.

Outcome Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Behavioral self-handicapping	Gender	2483.73	1	2483.73	34.41	<.001	.105
	Academic year	633.09	1	633.09	8.77	.003	.029
	Gender × Academic year	3.84	1	3.84	0.05	.818	.000
	Error	21078.54	292	72.19			
Claimed self-handicapping	Gender	635.12	1	635.12	33.47	<.001	.103
	Academic year	36.59	1	36.59	1.93	.166	.007
	Gender × Academic year	168.55	1	168.55	8.88	.003	.030
	Error	5541.04	292	18.98			
Academic Self-Handicapping	Gender	5630.79	1	5630.79	38.83	<.001	.117
	Academic year	974.06	1	974.06	6.72	.010	.022
	Gender × Academic year	223.24	1	223.24	1.54	.216	.005
	Error	42344.04	292	145.01			

Note. SS = sum of squares; MS = mean square; η^2 = eta squared.

4.5. Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which the four academic identity statuses accounted for variance in academic self-handicapping. The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(4, 291) = 117.15$, $p < .001$, with a multiple correlation coefficient of $R = .785$ and a coefficient of determination of $R^2 = .617$. Thus, the four academic identity statuses jointly accounted for 61.7% of the variance in academic self-handicapping. The model summary is reported in Table 7.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Model Summary for Academic Self-Handicapping.

Dependent Variable	N	R	R ²	F	P
Academic Self-Handicapping	296	.785	.617	117.15	<.001

Examination of the individual regression coefficients showed that all four academic identity statuses made statistically significant unique contributions to the model. Diffused academic identity was positively associated with academic self-handicapping, $B = 0.892$, $\beta = .201$, $t = 2.42$, $p = .016$. Moratorium academic identity also made a positive contribution, $B = 1.178$, $\beta = .396$, $t = 4.26$, $p < .001$. Foreclosed academic identity showed a smaller but still statistically significant positive contribution, $B = 0.403$, $\beta = .171$, $t = 3.29$, $p = .001$. In contrast, achieved academic identity was negatively associated with academic self-handicapping, $B = -1.268$, $\beta = -.444$, $t = -10.96$, $p < .001$. Based on the standardized coefficients, achieved academic identity showed the strongest unique association with academic self-handicapping in the negative direction, followed by moratorium academic identity, diffused academic identity, and foreclosed academic identity in the positive direction. The full regression coefficients are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 Regression Coefficients for Predicting Academic Self-Handicapping from Academic Identity Status.

Predictor	B	β	t	p
Constant	82.633	—	12.17	<.001
Diffused academic identity	0.892	.201	2.42	.016
Moratorium academic identity	1.178	.396	4.26	<.001
Foreclosed academic identity	0.403	.171	3.29	.001
Achieved academic identity	-1.268	-.444	-10.96	<.001

Note. The fitted regression equation was: *Academic Self-Handicapping* = $82.633 + (0.892 \times \text{Diffused Academic Identity}) + (1.178 \times \text{Moratorium Academic Identity}) + (0.403 \times \text{Foreclosed Academic Identity}) - (1.268 \times \text{Achieved Academic Identity})$.

4.6. Discussion

4.6.1. Overview of the Findings

The present study examined academic identity status and academic self-handicapping among

university students, with particular attention to the prevalence of academic identity statuses, the associations between academic identity status and academic self-handicapping, differences as a function of gender and academic year, and the extent to which academic identity statuses accounted for variance in academic self-handicapping. Overall, the findings indicated that achieved academic identity was the most prevalent status in the total sample, whereas diffused academic identity was the least prevalent. The results also showed that diffused, moratorium, and foreclosed academic identity were positively associated with academic self-handicapping, whereas achieved academic identity was negatively associated with it. In addition, significant differences emerged across gender and academic-year groups in both academic identity status and academic self-handicapping. Finally, the four academic identity statuses jointly accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in academic self-handicapping.

Taken together, these findings support the view that academic identity status is meaningfully related to how students respond to academic demands, self-evaluative threat, and the possibility of failure. More specifically, the pattern of findings suggests that more mature and self-determined forms of academic identity are associated with lower reliance on maladaptive self-protective strategies, whereas less mature, unresolved, or externally determined forms of identity are associated with greater academic self-handicapping.

4.6.2. Prevalence of Academic Identity Statuses

One of the main findings of the study was that achieved academic identity had the highest mean score in the total sample, followed by foreclosed academic identity, moratorium academic identity, and diffused academic identity. This general pattern also appeared across most subgroup analyses, although the relative ordering of foreclosed and moratorium academic identity varied somewhat by gender and academic year. This finding suggests that, within the present sample, commitment to academic goals and values following exploration was more prominent than the less mature or less resolved forms of academic identity.

This result can be understood in light of Erikson's (1968) view that identity formation is a major developmental task during adolescence and emerging adulthood, and in light of Marcia's (1980) proposition that identity development proceeds through statuses that differ in the degree of exploration and commitment. From this perspective,

university life may be viewed as a developmental context in which students are required to confront identity-relevant decisions concerning their academic goals, values, and future directions. The prominence of achieved academic identity in the present sample may therefore reflect the fact that many students, particularly in a university context, have already moved toward more stable academic commitments.

This interpretation is also consistent with the academic identity framework advanced by Was and Isaacson (2008), who conceptualized academic identity as the student's view of the self in academic settings as shaped by choices and commitments related to school roles, values, and goals. Because university students must make decisions concerning academic major, academic priorities, persistence, discipline, and responses to setbacks, academic identity is likely to become increasingly salient during this period. The present finding is broadly consistent with Chorba et al. (2012), who also found achieved academic identity to be the most prominent status, although the relative order of foreclosed and moratorium identity differed in some groups. Thus, the current result not only aligns with developmental theory but also reproduces a general descriptive trend reported in earlier work.

At the same time, the continued presence of foreclosed and moratorium academic identity in some subgroups is theoretically important. According to Marcia (1980) and Marcia and Archer (1993), identity development is not uniform, and individuals may show commitment without adequate exploration or remain in an unresolved state of active questioning. This variability appears to characterize academic life as well. In the present study, the persistence of foreclosed and moratorium academic identity suggests that a considerable proportion of students had not yet reached a fully self-determined and internally consolidated academic identity. This is educationally relevant because students' academic choices may appear stable on the surface while still differing substantially in the degree to which they are personally explored and endorsed.

4.6.3. Academic Identity Status and Academic Self-Handicapping

A central finding of the study was that diffused, moratorium, and foreclosed academic identity were all positively associated with behavioral self-handicapping, claimed self-handicapping, and academic self-handicapping, whereas achieved academic identity was negatively associated with all

three indicators. This pattern provides strong support for the theoretical expectation that academic identity status is closely linked to how students manage academic challenge, self-threat, and fear of failure.

Theoretically, this result is highly plausible. Berglas and Jones (1978) conceptualized self-handicapping as a strategy through which individuals create or claim obstacles that can later serve as excuses for failure while preserving favorable self-evaluations in the event of success. Snyder (1990) similarly described self-handicapping as a defensive process aimed at protecting the self-concept under conditions of uncertainty regarding performance. In academic settings, this logic is especially relevant because students repeatedly encounter evaluative situations in which their competence, intelligence, and future success are implicitly or explicitly judged (Urdan & Midgley, 2001). If students are uncertain about their academic capacities or weakly committed to their academic roles and goals, they may be more likely to resort to self-handicapping as a way of managing anticipated threat. Recent evidence is consistent with this interpretation. Yan et al. (2026) found that lower academic self-efficacy was linked to higher academic self-handicapping among university students, suggesting that self-handicapping is sustained not only by defensive self-protection but also by weakened confidence in one's academic capability.

The findings can also be interpreted in light of the defining features of the four academic identity statuses. As summarized by Was and Isaacson (2008) and Was et al. (2009), achieved academic identity reflects commitment to academic goals and values following exploration and is characterized by more effective task strategies, planning, problem-solving, flexibility, and the ability to function under pressure. By contrast, diffused academic identity reflects limited exploration and weak commitment, moratorium reflects unresolved questioning and uncertainty, and foreclosed identity reflects commitment adopted from significant others without sufficient personal exploration. These less mature or less autonomous forms of academic identity are therefore likely to be accompanied by reduced flexibility, lower autonomy, weaker academic engagement, and greater vulnerability to anxiety and dissatisfaction. From this standpoint, the positive associations between diffused, moratorium, and foreclosed academic identity and academic self-handicapping, and the negative association involving achieved academic identity, are theoretically coherent. This interpretation is also

compatible with recent work showing that student identities continue to be repositioned following academic setbacks, with adaptation and reflective reconstruction shaping how students redefine themselves as learners over time (Ige & Janse van Rensburg, 2025).

These findings are also consistent with the limited prior evidence reviewed in the literature. Chorba et al. (2012) found that foreclosed, diffused, and moratorium academic identity were positively related to self-handicapping, whereas achieved academic identity was negatively related to it. Likewise, Carlisle (2015) reported that achieved academic identity was negatively associated with both behavioral and claimed academic self-handicapping, whereas diffused and moratorium academic identity were positively associated with both forms. Carlisle (2015) also found that foreclosed academic identity was positively linked to claimed academic self-handicapping. The present findings therefore extend this line of evidence by reproducing the overall direction of these relationships in a context that has been underrepresented in prior research.

The regression findings reinforce this interpretation. All four academic identity statuses made statistically significant unique contributions to academic self-handicapping, and together they accounted for 61.7% of its variance. Among the four predictors, achieved academic identity showed the strongest unique association in the negative direction, whereas moratorium academic identity showed the strongest positive association. These results suggest that academic self-handicapping is not associated with only one problematic identity status but is tied more broadly to the developmental quality of students' academic commitments. Particularly important is the protective role of achieved academic identity. Students who have explored and internalized their academic commitments may have less need to defend the self through excuse-making or self-imposed obstacles, because they are better equipped to cope with challenge directly and to maintain self-worth through effort, planning, and persistence rather than defensive avoidance.

4.6.4. Gender and Academic-Year Differences in Academic Identity Status

The study also found significant differences in academic identity status as a function of gender and academic year. Female students scored higher than male students on achieved and foreclosed academic identity, whereas male students scored higher on

diffused and moratorium academic identity. In addition, first-year students scored higher than final-year students on diffused, moratorium, and foreclosed academic identity, whereas final-year students scored higher on achieved academic identity. Significant gender-by-year interaction effects emerged for moratorium and achieved academic identity, indicating that the relationship between academic year and these two identity statuses differed somewhat by gender.

The academic-year differences are strongly consistent with the developmental model underlying the study. Erikson (1968) viewed identity formation as a central developmental task, and Marcia (1980) proposed that individuals move through statuses that reflect varying degrees of exploration and commitment. University students in later academic years have had more time to encounter academic demands, evaluate alternatives, test their commitments, and develop greater clarity regarding their educational goals. This helps explain why final-year students in the present study showed higher achieved academic identity, whereas first-year students showed higher levels of the less mature or less resolved statuses. In this sense, the present findings fit well with the expectation that academic identity becomes more consolidated over the course of university study.

The gender differences may also be interpreted through the status framework. The higher scores of female students on achieved academic identity suggest that female students in the present sample may have shown greater academic consolidation and stronger internalization of academic commitments. At the same time, their higher scores on foreclosed academic identity indicate that commitment does not always emerge solely through autonomous exploration; in some cases, it may also reflect stronger adherence to externally shaped expectations. Conversely, the higher levels of diffused and moratorium academic identity among male students suggest greater uncertainty, weaker commitment, or more prolonged exploration. Although these interpretations should be made cautiously, the findings indicate that gender is associated with meaningful variation in the structure of academic identity.

The interaction effects for moratorium and achieved academic identity are also noteworthy. These results suggest that the developmental course of academic identity may not unfold identically for male and female students. The effect sizes indicate that the strongest identity-related differences were observed for achieved academic identity, both for

gender and for the gender-by-year interaction. This suggests that the achieved status may be especially sensitive to how developmental timing and gender-related experiences intersect in university life. Such findings point to the need for future research to examine more closely how academic identity evolves over time and how this process may differ across student groups.

4.6.5. Gender and Academic-Year Differences in Academic Self-Handicapping

The results further showed that male students reported higher levels of behavioral self-handicapping, claimed self-handicapping, and academic self-handicapping than female students. First-year students also reported higher behavioral self-handicapping and higher academic self-handicapping than final-year students, although the academic-year difference in claimed self-handicapping was not statistically significant. A significant interaction between gender and academic year emerged only for claimed self-handicapping.

These results can be interpreted in light of self-handicapping theory and the study's identity findings. Self-handicapping has been conceptualized as a defensive response to the possibility of poor performance, especially when performance outcomes are self-relevant (Berglas & Jones, 1978; Snyder, 1990). In academic settings, students who are less secure in their academic commitments or less confident in their ability to cope with evaluation may be more likely to use behavioral or claimed obstacles to protect self-worth (Urdu & Midgley, 2001). The present findings are consistent with this logic because the groups that tended to score higher on less mature or less resolved academic identity statuses also tended to show higher levels of academic self-handicapping.

The higher levels of academic self-handicapping among first-year students are especially understandable from this perspective. First-year students are still in the early stages of academic adjustment and may be facing greater uncertainty regarding their academic roles, capacities, and future expectations. In such circumstances, self-handicapping may function as a strategy for coping with evaluative pressure before more stable academic commitments and more effective coping patterns have developed. The fact that final-year students showed lower behavioral and total self-handicapping is consistent with the broader developmental interpretation of the study, namely that students become more settled in their academic identities over time and, as a result, may rely less on

maladaptive defensive strategies.

The gender differences in academic self-handicapping are also meaningful. Male students reported higher levels across all self-handicapping indicators, which is consistent with their higher scores on diffused and moratorium academic identity and lower scores on achieved academic identity. This pattern suggests that gender differences in academic self-handicapping may be partly understood through differences in the maturity and stability of academic identity. At the same time, the significant interaction effect for claimed self-handicapping suggests that nonbehavioral forms of self-handicapping may follow a somewhat more complex pattern across gender and academic year. Claimed self-handicapping may be more sensitive than behavioral self-handicapping to differences in how students interpret and verbalize academic strain, difficulty, or self-threat.

The present finding that male students reported higher academic self-handicapping differs from the result reported by Momeni and Radmehr (2018), who found no significant gender differences in academic self-handicapping among medical students. This inconsistency may be due to differences in sample composition, educational field, academic context, or measurement characteristics. It also suggests that the relation between gender and academic self-handicapping may not be uniform across all educational settings. Accordingly, the current findings should be interpreted as context-specific rather than universally generalizable.

4.7. Theoretical and Educational Implications

The present findings have several implications for theory and practice in higher education. Theoretically, the results support the usefulness of academic identity status as a framework for understanding how students respond to academic evaluation and self-threat. The findings suggest that academic self-handicapping is not simply an isolated academic behavior but is linked to the broader developmental organization of the academic self. This supports the view that academic identity is not merely a descriptive characteristic; rather, it has meaningful implications for students' coping patterns, self-regulation, and educational adjustment.

The findings also help clarify why academic self-handicapping may emerge more strongly in some students than in others. Students with weakly developed, unresolved, or externally determined academic commitments may be more likely to

manage academic risk through defensive strategies, whereas students with achieved academic identity may be more likely to confront challenge directly through planning, persistence, and adaptive engagement. This interpretation is consistent with the view that self-handicapping serves a self-protective function when individuals anticipate the possibility of failure but are uncertain of their capacity to succeed (Snyder, 1990; Rhodewalt & Tragakis, 2002).

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that efforts to reduce academic self-handicapping may benefit from addressing academic identity development itself. Academic advising, mentoring, and student support services may be strengthened by helping students clarify their educational goals, explore alternatives, and develop stronger ownership of their academic commitments. Such efforts may be particularly useful for first-year students, who in the present study showed comparatively higher levels of less mature identity statuses and higher self-handicapping. Likewise, interventions aimed at reducing self-handicapping may be more effective if they do not focus only on surface behaviors, but also address the underlying uncertainty, weak commitment, or externally imposed academic orientations that may help sustain those behaviors.

4.8. Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. First, the study used a cross-sectional design, which does not permit causal inference or conclusions about developmental directionality. Although academic identity statuses were associated with academic self-handicapping and accounted for a substantial proportion of its variance, the results do not establish temporal precedence. Alternative directional interpretations remain possible, and longitudinal research is needed to clarify how academic identity and academic self-handicapping influence one another over time. This caution is consistent with the methodological principle of avoiding strong causal or predictive language in cross-sectional work.

Second, the sample was drawn from students in the College of Social Sciences at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other faculties, institutions, or student populations. The study

therefore provides evidence from a specific university context rather than from university students in general.

Third, the study relied on self-report measures. As a result, the findings may be influenced by shared method variance, response tendencies, or self-presentation concerns, particularly for a construct such as self-handicapping that involves potentially undesirable academic behaviors.

Fourth, although the study examined gender and academic year, other relevant variables were not included, such as academic achievement, field-specific academic demands beyond the sampled faculty context, or additional contextual influences that may shape academic identity development and self-handicapping. Future studies would benefit from incorporating a broader range of academic and contextual variables.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study contributes to the limited literature on academic identity status and academic self-handicapping by examining their relationship among university students in an underexamined context. The findings showed that achieved academic identity was the most prevalent status in the sample, whereas diffused academic identity was the least prevalent. Diffused, moratorium, and foreclosed academic identity were positively associated with academic self-handicapping, whereas achieved academic identity was negatively associated with it. Significant differences also emerged across gender and academic-year groups in both academic identity status and academic self-handicapping. In addition, academic identity statuses jointly accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in academic self-handicapping.

Overall, the findings suggest that academic identity status is closely related to how students respond to academic demands and self-evaluative threat. Students with more mature and self-endorsed academic identities appear less likely to rely on maladaptive self-handicapping strategies, whereas students with less mature or unresolved academic identities appear more vulnerable to such strategies. These findings support the importance of considering academic identity development as part of efforts to better understand and support student adjustment in higher education.

REFERENCES

- Arkin, R. M., & Baumgardner, A. H. (1985). Self-handicapping. In J. H. Harvey & G. Weary (Eds.), *Attribution: Basic issues and applications* (pp. 169–202). Academic Press.
- Berglas, S., & Jones, E. E. (1978). Drug choice as a self-handicapping strategy in response to noncontingent

- success. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36(4), 405–417. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.36.4.405>
- Carlisle, B. L. (2015). The relationship between academic identity and self-handicapping [Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Riverside]. eScholarship. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4329v6cm>
- Chorba, K., Was, C. A., & Isaacson, R. M. (2012). Individual differences in academic identity and self-handicapping in undergraduate college students. *Individual Differences Research*, 10(2), 60–68. <https://doi.org/10.65030/idr.10006>
- Clarke, I. (2018). Individual differences in self-handicapping modelled as a two-factor construct [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Sydney]. Sydney eScholarship Repository. <http://hdl.handle.net/2123/18088>
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. W. W. Norton.
- Ferradás, M. D. M., Freire, C., Valle, A., & Núñez, J. C. (2016). Academic goals and self-handicapping strategies in university students. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 19, e24. <https://doi.org/10.1017/SJP.2016.25>
- Gupta, S., & Geetika, M. (2020). Academic Self-Handicapping scale: Development and validation in Indian context. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(4), 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.1346a>
- Hejazi, E., Lavasani, M. G., Amani, H., & Was, C. A. (2012). Academic identity status, goal orientation, and academic achievement among high school students. *Journal of Research in Education*, 22(1), 291–320. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1098413.pdf>
- Ige, B. O., & Janse van Rensburg, V. (2025). Students' identity repositioning after academic setbacks: A discourse analysis. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 131, 102614. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2025.102614>
- Leary, M. R., & Shepperd, J. A. (1986). Behavioral self-handicaps versus self-reported handicaps: A conceptual note. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1265–1268. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.51.6.1265>
- Mahasneh, A., & Al-Adamat, O. (2018). The academic identity styles prevailing among Hashemite University students in light of Was and Isaacson scale and its relationship with academic achievement. *Jordan Journal of Educational Sciences*, 14(2), 191–207. <https://jjes.yu.edu.jo/index.php/jjes/article/view/722>
- Marcia, J. E. (1980). Identity in adolescence. In J. Adelson (Ed.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology* (pp. 159–187). Wiley.
- Marcia, J. E., & Archer, S. L. (1993). Identity status in late adolescents: Scoring criteria. In J. E. Marcia, A. S. Waterman, D. R. Matteson, S. L. Archer, & J. L. Orlofsky (Eds.), *Ego identity: A handbook for psychosocial research* (pp. 205–240). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4613-8330-7_9
- Momeni, K., & Radmehr, F. (2018). Prediction of academic engagement based on self-efficacy and academic self-handicapping in medical students. *Research in Medical Education*, 10(4), 41–50. <https://doi.org/10.29252/rme.10.4.41>
- Rhodewalt, F., & Tragakis, M. (2002). Self-handicapping and the social self: The costs and rewards of interpersonal self-construction. In J. P. Forgas & K. D. Williams (Eds.), *The social self: Cognitive, interpersonal, and intergroup perspectives* (pp. 121–143). Psychology Press.
- Snyder, C. R. (1990). Self-handicapping processes and sequelae: On the taking of a psychological dive. In R. L. Higgins, C. R. Snyder, & S. Berglas (Eds.), *Self-handicapping: The paradox that isn't* (pp. 107–150). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-0861-2_4
- Urdu, T., & Midgley, C. (2001). Academic self-handicapping: What we know, what more there is to learn. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13(2), 115–138. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009061303214>
- Was, C. A., & Isaacson, R. M. (2008). The development of a measure of academic identity status. *Journal of Research in Education*, 18(3), 94–105.
- Was, C. A., Al-Harthy, I., Stack-Oden, M., & Isaacson, R. M. (2009). Academic identity status and relationship to achievement goal orientation. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*, 7(2), 627–652. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ869197>
- Welch, O. M., & Hodges, C. R. (1997). *Standing outside on the inside: Black adolescents and the construction of academic identity*. SUNY Press.
- Yan, C., Qian, M., & Sun, T. (2026). Parental rearing styles and academic self-handicapping among Chinese university students: The mediating role of academic self-efficacy. *Acta Psychologica*, 262, 105997.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105997>