Jewish Identity Formation Processes within Reform Adolescents

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Within this culture of choice, there is a need for a new, more helpful and descriptive model of adolescent Jewish identity formation that portrays the crucial role individual choices play in the development of one's Jewish identity. The intent of this research is to construct this new model of adolescent Jewish identity development. The primary research method for this study is a mixed method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research. Data collection included a personal narrative, two descriptive identity surveys, and a semi-structured open-ended interview. From this, themes were analyzed integrating the common experiences and perceptions of prevailing Jewish identity formation models. Data was then further analyzed using relative frequencies and a Kendall Tau C test. Through this systematic process, the interpretation of the data ultimately reflected the essence of the identity development process Jewish adolescents experience. The thematic analysis of the participants' processes yielded results justifying the creation of a generalized model of adolescent Jewish identity formation focused around individual choice. Throughout the various identity formation processes, there were seven commonalities amongst participants that held the most influence. The statistical analysis then further justified the creation of this model, showing the statistical significance of the relative frequencies and correlation coefficients. Based on the findings, five stages of development an adolescent goes through when developing their Jewish identity were formed. These stages were based on the correlation coefficients, the qualitative responses from the interviews, and the frequencies of major themes.

Awards Won:
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