

**IDENTITY STYLES, MEDIATED BY COMMITMENT AND
SYNCRETISM, AS PREDICTORS OF UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD SELECTED
DISCIPLESHIP PRACTICES AT VALLEY VIEW UNIVERSITY
IN GHANA IN 2015: IMPLICATIONS FOR
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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Problem

The study of student life on campus has attracted numerous social-science enquiries, especially in the areas of spirituality, religiosity, and meaning-making in life. Of particular interest has been the attempt to restore value-based education in Christian institutions of higher learning, taking cognizance of the need for cultural contextualization and the influence of postmodern ideology. This present study sought to examine the possible predictive role of identity styles, mediated by commitment and syncretism, in the attitudes toward discipleship practices among undergraduate students of Valley View University in Ghana, West Africa in 2015.

Method

The study employed the principles of a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional survey. Non-random convenient sampling method was used to collect data. Eight hundred students were sampled from the second- to the fourth-year groups. The study used path analysis as the main technique to examine the data.

Results

All the endogenous variables were significantly predicted (Commitment [$R^2 = .400$], Syncretism [$R^2 = .278$], Satisfaction [$R^2 = .020$], and Involvement [$R^2 = .482$]) in their respective hierarchical path models. However, the overall hypothesized model did not fit the data. The total effects of the exogenous variables (i.e., informational identity style, normative identity style, and diffuse-avoidant identity style) on satisfaction (.118; .009; and .028, respectively) and on involvement (.082; .006; and .019, respectively) were weak. However, there were significant relationships between some variables, which have important implications for discipleship and religious education in higher education.

Conclusion

The results of the study show that students' self-reported identity styles did not significantly predict their satisfaction and involvement in discipleship

practices at Valley View University. These results are in line with the biblical perspective of discipleship, in that Christian discipleship does not primarily depend on who the prospective disciples are at the point of their calling, but on the way in which they are led to encounter Jesus Christ.