

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL IDENTITY AND ACHIEVEMENT
FOR LATINO YOUTH IN OREGON: AN EXPLANATORY STUDY

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: The Relationship Between Cultural Identity and Achievement for Latino Youth in Oregon: An Explanatory Study

Since 2011, the Latino K-12 population has been the fastest growing racial-ethnic group in our Oregon schools, representing 22.7% of the statewide student population (n = 131,089) in 2017 and 72.6% of the growth of 18,001 total students from 2011-12 to the 2016-17 school years (Oregon Department of Education, 2017). The rapid and large increase in the number and proportion of Latino students should translate into changes in school systems, structures, and practices. Outcome evidence shows that Oregon's educational systems and services have not adjusted to the cultural and linguistic diversity reflected in our school communities. Oregon's 2016-17 Statewide Report Card reflects disparity between Latino students and all students across multiple metrics: lower state assessment proficiency rates in English Language Arts and math, discipline disproportionality with 5.9% receiving one or more disciplinary referrals as compared to all students at 5.2%, and a 5.4% lower graduation rate, hovering at 69.4% (Oregon Department of Education, 2017). Though the overall dropout rates have remained relatively stable since 2005, the percentage of Latino students dropping out of school still exceeds their white counterparts despite high school attendance rates. Freshman on track reports show that Latinos are 77% are on track to graduate (as measured by credits earned)

as compared to all students at 88% (ODE, 2017). These trends reveal inequities in our statewide systems, districts, and schools across the state, showing an even higher probability of poor outcomes for Latino students.

This proposed study will use a descriptive, non-experimental design to examine the relationship between cultural identity of Latino adolescents, their sense of self-efficacy, and academic success. I will analyze quantitative data from the Adolescent Latino Acculturation Study (Martinez, McClure, Eddy, and Wilson, 2011) to explore the relationship between ethnic-cultural identity, self-efficacy, and academic achievement for Latino middle school students in Oregon. Findings from the study will contribute to the body of literature on cultural identity and support the development of effective interventions to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for students.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Racially, ethnically, linguistically diverse students have historically experienced predominantly deficit-based schooling and denied opportunities to leverage relevant cultural connections and assets they bring to the learning experience (Nieto, 2006; Yosso, 2005). The history and practice of deficit-based schooling has had a detrimental impact on the learning experiences and outcomes for students of color (Noguera, 2003). The following troubling statistics show replication of bias in the American educational system, a system designed to meet the needs of the dominant culture and assimilate the less powerful (Sadovnik, 2007):

- In 2015 the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment showed the White-Hispanic gaps in in reading at grade 4 (24 points) and grade 12 (20 points) was not measurably different from the gaps in 1992 (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).
- NAEP Math Assessment White-Hispanic gaps at grade 4 (18 points) and grade 8 (22 points) are not measurably different than the gaps in 1990 (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).
- Black and Hispanic males constitute almost 80 percent of youth in special education programs (The Schott Foundation, 2011).
- Ten percent of Latino students earned the highest possible math credit in Calculus as compared to 45% of the Asian and 18% of the White students (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).
- In 2015, Latino students were 1.6 times likely to be retained than White students (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).
- In 2014, the percentage of adults age 25 and older who had not completed high school was higher for Hispanic adults (35 percent) than for adults in any other racial/ethnic group (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Enacting instructional methods that affirm a student's cultural-ethnic identity increases their cultural capital and serves as a protective factor against the negative impact of discriminatory systems. Studies on positive cultural and ethnic identity development show an increase in mental and emotional well-being (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; Wakefield & Hudley, 2007), resilience in the face of discrimination (DeGruy, Kjellstrand, Briggs, & Brennan, 2012; Ai, Aisenberg, Weiss, & Salazar, 2014), and cognitive and academic growth (Steel & Aronson, 2004; Faircloth, 2009). According to Noguera (2003), cultural identity development in schools constitutes a practice and production that results from and influences connections within school. Building upon student assets, like cultural identity, is vital in implementing culturally responsive practices, reduce systemic inadequacies, and increase access and opportunities for students to reach their potential (DeGruy et al., 2012; Ai et al., 2014; Noguera, 2003; Steel & Aronson, 2004; Faircloth, 2009). The following literature review will highlight how cultural and ethnic identity affirmation and development can serve as one component of a systemic response to address educational inequities and positively affect academic outcomes.

Even in light of the expansive, prior research on cultural identity development, further research is needed to understand the relationship between more aspects of cultural identity and self-efficacy that lead to school and life success. A more detailed understanding of the relationship between these variables could be used to improve effectiveness of interventions, daily practices, and school experiences for Latino students.

As will be described in the coming sections, the proposed quantitative, explanatory study will examine the specific aspects of cultural identity of the Latino adolescent population in Oregon and the relationship of their cultural identity development to academic achievement.

Project Overview

In this study, I will use a descriptive, non-experimental design to examine the relationship between cultural development of Latino adolescents and their sense of efficacy, and academic success. My proposal continues with three sections. The following section reviews the literature on cultural identity development of various racial-ethnic groups and academic outcomes, self-efficacy, and school outcomes. Then I connect the theoretical framework to the research questions and methodology, followed by research methods, including data types and sources, validity constraints, and the analyses conducted. These sections are followed with data analyses, discussion on the results, and the conclusion.

Research project. The proposed study will employ a quantitative analysis of the Adolescent Latino Acculturation Study (ALAS) longitudinal survey data, specifically the self-reporting Ethnic Identity (MEIM, Phinney, 1992) and Youth Confidence sub-scale, to examine the relationship between ethnic identity, self-efficacy, and academic achievement (as measured by grades and state assessments) of Latino students in grades six through eight.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adolescence is a stage of significant social, emotional, physical and cognitive changes, a developmental stage typified by increasing independence and social awareness (Steinberg, 1999). This stage of development is vulnerable to emotional stressors, like environmental and social change, shown to negatively affect academic performance and increase high-risk behaviors (Martinez, McClure, Eddy, & Wilson, 2011). The transition between traditional levels of schooling (e.g. elementary to middle school, middle school to high school) has been identified as an environmental and social change in a student's educational experience susceptible to academic decline, particularly for African American and Latino students (Simmons, Black, and Zhou, 1991). A strong sense of cultural identity during the vulnerable stage of adolescence could prove to be a protective factor against academic decline and related factors such as conflict with adults leading to disciplinary exclusion (being removed from the classroom or school). The literature search followed an electronic search process on the impact of racial and ethnic identity development on academic achievement in transition from one level of schooling to another for African-American and Latino students, two historically underserved populations in American schools. In the following section, I explain my search process that resulted in the pool of selected literature pertinent to my study, followed by an explanation of the criteria for my article selection.

Literature Search Description

To select the literature relevant to my study, I followed several steps. I selected social sciences and education fields in the following online databases: Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), JSTOR, SAGE, and Wiley Online Library. Then I selected eight key phrases for my initial search: a) cultural-ethnic identity development, b) school transitions, c) social belonging, d) students of color, e) African American, f) Latino, g) transitions to middle school, h) transitions to high school. The eight phrases individually generated a total of 1,028,379 possible resources. I made additional adjustments to my search parameters and key phrase combinations to filter the resources down to a reasonable number and increase focus and relevance.

First, to gather research that reflects current and relevant school system and policy contexts, I narrowed the search by filtering the range of publication to the years 2000-2017 and to schools in the United States. To increase research rigor, I filtered for peer-reviewed journal articles. With those parameters, I ran the search for cultural-ethnic identity development, reducing the potential sources for review to 1656.

Second, I narrowed my search further to by alternating a combination of key phrases in my search. Those phrase combinations included:

- (a) cultural-ethnic identity development and school transitions, resulting in 402 articles,
- (b) cultural-ethnic identity development, school transitions, and students of color, resulting in 0 articles,

- (c) cultural-ethnic identity development, school transitions, and African American, resulting in 297 articles,
- (d) cultural-ethnic identity development, school transitions, and Latino, resulting in 140 articles,
- (e) cultural-ethnic identity development, transitions to middle school, African American, resulting in 275 articles,
- (f) cultural-ethnic identity development, transitions to middle school, and Latino, resulting 133 articles,
- (g) cultural-ethnic identity development, transitions to high school, and African American, resulting in 287 articles, and
- (h) cultural-ethnic identity development, transitions to high school, and Latino, resulting in 135 articles. The multiple key phrase combinations resulted in 562 references.

Third, I added the key phrase ‘social belonging’, to include the theorized outcome of cultural identity development, to the eight previously used search parameters. As a result, I identified 208 articles containing the search words and phrases in the titles, abstracts, and article descriptions. The pool of 208 articles reflect studies on the relationship between cultural identity development and student academic achievement.

Literature Selection

With the aim of systematically reducing the number of articles to the most relevant studies, I reviewed the titles and abstracts of all 208 articles for the following content: (a) cultural identity, (b) cultural identity development, (c) the effects of cultural

identity development on learning, (d) the impact of cultural identity development on social belonging, (e) cultural identity development strategies and interventions. I eliminated articles that did not provide context for my study. This process reduced the 208 articles I started with to 36 articles for further review.

I continued the review process by screening for the following: (a) suburban and urban school settings, (b) racial-ethnic diversity, specifically Latino and mixed socio-economic demographics, (c) large sample sizes, (d) school or community-based interventions, and (e) quantitative, qualitative and mixed method research designs. Filtering by these five criteria increased relevance to the context of my study and my population of interest (suburban, Latino) and reduced the pool of literature to 23 articles.

From the remaining 23 articles, nine studies examined cultural-ethnic identity development, one focused on the relationship between race and school transitions, eight articles examined cultural-ethnic identity development strategies or interventions, and five articles on cultural-ethnic identity development as a moderator of academic slide in school transitions. The selected articles encompass a variety of school settings, sample sizes and demographics, research designs, and analyses on the relationship between cultural-ethnic identity development and academic outcomes and engagement variables like discipline for African American and Latino adolescents, discussed in the next sections.

Summary of Research

The 23 studies selected for this review focus on the relationship between racial-ethnic identity development and academic achievement. First, I reviewed and

categorized the literature by *type of research design*: qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. The second section examines *subjects*, detailing race-ethnicity, grade or role, *and setting* that includes the school level (middle or high school) or type of organization and the geographical setting. In the third section, I provide information about the studies' *measures and instruments* and *results*, highlighting various themes and gaps that emerge from the literature review to show the need for my research on the impact of cultural identity development on student academic outcomes.

Types of Research

Table 1 summarizes the pool of research on the relationship between cultural identity development and academic achievement. Of the 23 studies, eleven were *quantitative, quasi-experimental* studies, five of which were longitudinal. Eight of the studies were qualitative and involved the use of interviews and surveys to examine student, parent or practitioner perceptions, reflecting some positive outcome related cultural identity exploration. Four studies were mixed methods, employing focus groups, interviews and surveys, supporting more in depth insights like “how middle school students experienced and made meaning of stereotypes and their identities” (Way, Hernández, Rogers, and Hughes, 2013).

Research Themes

Six of the articles focused on the impact of ethnic and cultural identity on academic achievement from increases in grade point averages to academic self-efficacy (Akos et al., 2008; Altschul et al., 2006; Burchinal et al., 2008; Gutman et al., 2000; Hanselman et al., 2014; Irving et al., 2008). For example, Hanselman et al. (2014) studied

the impact of a self-affirmation intervention in high and low-threat school environments with low numbers of students of color. Researchers found “estimates based solely on the buffering effects of self-affirmation imply that social identity threat processes explain at least 12.5 percent of the racial/ethnic achievement gap in high-potential-threat-school contexts in the sample” (p. 119).

Table 1

Research Designs

| Citation | Research Approaches | | | Design | |
|----------|---------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | Quantitative | Qualitative | Mixed Methods | Longitudinal | Cross-Sectional |
| 1 | | X | | X | |
| 2 | X | | | X | |
| 3 | X | | | | X |
| 4 | X | | | X | |
| 5 | | X | | | X |
| 6 | | X | | | X |
| 7 | | X | | | X |
| 8 | X | | | X | |
| 9 | | X | | | X |
| 10 | | | X | | X |
| 11 | | X | | | X |
| 12 | X | | | | X |
| 13 | | X | | | X |
| 14 | X | | | | X |
| 15 | X | | | | X |
| 16 | X | | | | X |
| 17 | X | | | | X |
| 18 | | X | | | X |
| 19 | X | | | X | |
| 20 | X | | | | X |
| 21 | | | X | | X |
| 22 | | | X | | X |
| 23 | | | X | X | |

Seven of the articles describe the relationship between cultural and/or ethnic identity to socio-emotional outcomes like bonding with others, engagement, and a sense

of belonging (Boston et al., 2017; Dotterer et al., 2009; Faircloth, 2009; Kiang and Fuligni, 2010; Martinez et al, 2011, Mello et al., 2012; Porta et al., 2016; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2008). For example, Mello et al.'s (2012) study of 301 adolescents from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds, such as African American, American Indian, and Latino, "reported lower school belonging scores than their counterparts when stereotype threat was activated" (p. 12). When Mexican American youth experienced equal status and value of bicultural and bilingual competence in the school environment, they felt a renewed commitment to learning and social connection (Gonzalez, 2009). The stage of adolescence magnifies the effect of negative identity influences in academic settings, increasing academic and social vulnerability (Aronson & Cook., 2002).

Subjects and Settings

Table 2 summarizes the demographics, sample size and settings of the studies in the literature pool. The literature focuses mainly on urban settings and racial-ethnic groups who are under-served in our school systems: African American, Latino, and American Indian. For my particular study, I will focus on Latino middle school students to fill the gap in the research and literature.

Articles from the literature pool included a subject sample ranging between 62 to 144 subjects in primarily urban settings and focused on the relationship between identity development and achievement during school transitions from elementary to middle school or middle to high school (Burchinal, Roberts, Rowley, & Zeisel, 2008; French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2000; Gutman & Midgley, 2008). Burchinal et al.'s (2008) study included 74 fourth through sixth grade African American students to identify

mediators and protective factors to increase academic achievement and decrease emotional stress. French et al. (2000) focused on the transition to high school with an eye on racial congruence between staff and students regarding social transactions, as an experience that heightens consciousness and racial-ethnic identity.

African American Cultural Identity. The seven research articles in my study that focused on African American adolescents included a participant sample ranging from 48 to 420 in urban middle or high school settings (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006; Boston, & Warren, 2017; Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009; French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2009; Gullan, & Hoffman, 2011; Irving & Hudley, 2008; Way, Hernández, Rogers, & Hughes, 2001). Altschul et al. (2008) found a positive academic outcome related to at least one of three aspects of racial-ethnic identity development: Feeling connected to one's racial-ethnic group (connectedness), being aware that other may not value the in-group (awareness of racism), and feeling that one's in-group is characterized by academic attainment (embedded achievement). Irving & Hudley's (2008) study of 112 African American 11th and 12th graders focused on the relationship between cultural mistrust, identity development, and academic achievement.

Urban School Settings. Eight articles from the literature pool include a participant range from 41 to 674 students from 5th to 12th grade in urban school settings (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006; French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2000; French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006; Gonzalez, 2009; Hernandez, Conger, Robins, Bacher, & Widaman, 2014; Kiang, & Fuligni, 2010; Mello, Mallett, Andretta, & Worrell, 2012; Umaña-Taylor, Garcia, & Gonzales-Backen, 2008). Two of the eight articles explore the

relationship between racial stress and school belonging and coping. For example, Umaña et al. (2008) facilitated a longitudinal study on the impact of coping with discrimination on ethnic identity and self-esteem. The researchers found that components of ethnic identity were positively associated with concurrent measures of adolescent self-esteem.

Life Change. Life change was another theme among the literature specifically focused on Latino adolescent cultural identity development. Four of the eight articles highlighted change and coping with change. For example, Hernandez et al. (2014) studied the relationship between cultural socialization and ethnic pride during the transition to middle school for 674 Mexican American fifth graders. They found that parental cultural socialization had significant effects on ethnic pride from the transition from elementary to middle school.

Table 2.

Subjects and Settings

| Citation | Subjects | Sample (N) | Setting |
|----------|--|------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | African American, 8 th Grader | 1 | Urban |
| 2 | African American, 9 th Graders / Latino, 9 th Graders | 98 / 41 | Urban-Detroit, MI |
| 3 | African American, HS | 105 | Urban |
| 4 | African American, MS | 74 | NA |
| 5 | African American, 6 th through 12 th Graders | 148 | NA |
| 6 | African and European American, and Latino/a, 9 th Graders | 83 | Urban-SE, USA |
| 7 | Black, White, and Latino Students | 144 | Urban |
| 8 | African, Latino, and European American, Adolescents | 420 | Urban-East Coast, USA |
| 9 | Mexican American, 10 th Graders | 122 | Urban-Northern CA |
| 10 | African American, Adolescents | 48 | Urban |
| 11 | African American, 5 th to 6 th graders / African American Families | 738 /62 | Urban-SE MI |
| 12 | 7 th Graders | 910 | Madison, WI |
| 13 | Mexican, 5 th Graders | 674 | Urban-Northern CA |
| 14 | African American, 11 th / 12 th Grade Males | 115 | Urban-Southern CA |
| 15 | Latin, Asian, and European American, HS | 579 | Urban-Los Angeles, CA |
| 16 | African, Asian, and European American, American Indian, Latino, HS | 301 | Midwest/West, USA |
| 17 | Students of Color, HS | 197 | Urban-Northeast, USA |
| 18 | Professionals | 30 | Urban-MN |
| 19 | Latino, HS | 323 | Urban-Illinois |
| 20 | African American Male, HS | 67 | Urban-Southern CA |
| 21 | MS | 1,032 | USA |
| 22 | African, Asian, European American, Latino Adolescents | 877 | Urban-Los Angeles, CA |
| 23 | Latino Adolescents and Family Members | 225 | Willamette Valley, OR |

Note. Citation 13^a, Mexican, 5th Graders in Public/Catholic Schools.

Citation 18^{ba}, Professionals who work with Latino youth in clinics, schools, and community-based settings.

HS = High School Students; MS = Middle School Students

Instruments and Measures

Table 3 summarizes the type of measures administered in the 23 studies included in my literature pool. Eighteen studies directly measured ethnic identity and sixteen of the 23 studies included measures of racial-ethnic identity influences like racial experience or racial socialization.

Fifteen studies utilized more than one measure to examine the complexity of cultural identity. For example, Irving and Hudley (2008) measured African American mistrust of dominant culture using The Revised Cultural Mistrust Inventory (Irving, 2002), outcome expectations and values using African American Academic Outcome Expectations Scale (Irving & Hudley, 2005), ethnic identity with the Affirmation and Belonging subscale of the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (Roberts et al., 1999), and oppositional cultural attitudes with Self-Perception of School, Peers, and Achievement Survey (Ford, 1993). Those four measures combined provided data regarding a sense of self for African American adolescents in schools with historical and institutional bias.

Nine studies included measures developed by Phinney of which the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) was most prevalent. Gullan and Hoffman (2011) administered the MEIM to assess youth engagement and pride in their ethnic identity to study two distinct components of identity, the self as an individual and the self in relation to others.

Four studies adapted existing measures to make sense of cultural identity. For example, French, Seidman, Allen, and Aber (2006) adapted Phinney's original ethnic identity interview (1989) to gather qualitative data to guide a subsequent survey. The

altered measure and process allowed researchers to be open to other defining characteristics of cultural identity and cultural identity development (French et al., 2006).

Researchers created protocols for open-ended or semi-structured interviews in six of the qualitative studies in the literature pool. In their longitudinal, qualitative study on how stereotypes inform adolescents’ ethnic and racial identities, Way, Hernández, Rogers, and Hughes (2013) conducted semi-structured interviews with questions they developed with follow-up questions and probes to each adolescent. The researchers directly asked about ethnicity or race with questions such as, “How would you describe your ethnicity or race?” and “What do you like about being your ethnicity or race?” They also asked indirect questions like “How would you describe yourself to someone you have never met?”

Table 3

Measures in Studies on Identity Development

| Measures | Citation |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Racial-Ethnic Identity | 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 |
| Sense of Belonging | 1, 3, 6, 10, 11, 16, 23 |
| Racial Experience | 4, 6 |
| Discrimination | 4, 5, 6, 7, 19, 21 |
| School Engagement | 5, 6, 17 |
| Racial Socialization | 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 |
| Self-Esteem/ Racial-Ethnic Pride | 15, 16, 20 |

Results

I grouped the results from the research literature pool into four themes organized in Tables 4-7 below: (1) Cultural-ethnic identity development and academic outcomes, (2) Racial-Cultural Identity Development and Self or Group Esteem, (3) Belonging, and (4) School Level Transitions.

The research literature shows consistent, but inconclusive results regarding the relationship between aspects of cultural identity and academic achievement. Six out of 23 articles focused on and found a positive relationship between cultural identity development and academic achievement (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006; Gonzalez, 2009; Gullan & Hoffman, 2011; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Hanselman, Bruch, Gamoran, & Borman, 2014; & Porta, Allen, Hurtado, Padilla, Arboleda, Svetaz, Balch, & Sieving, 2016). For example, Gutman and Midgley's (2000) study of 62 African-American families living in poverty found a significant correlation between students' sense of belonging in 6th grade and GPA in 5th and 6th grade. Seven out of the 23 articles describe the relationship between racial-cultural identity development and self or group esteem (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009; French, Seidman, Allen, Aber, 2000; French, Seidman, Allen, Aber, 2006; Hernandez, Conger, Robins, Bacher, Widaman, 2014; Umaña-Taylor, Garcia, & Gonzales-Backen, 2008; & Wakefield & Hudley, 2005; Way, Hernández, Rogers, & Hughes, 2013). A study by Umaña-Taylor et al. (2008) showed a positive correlation between ethnic identity exploration, resolution, and affirmation and self-esteem. Two articles describe the connection between self or group esteem and achievement (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009; & French, Seidman, Allen, Aber, 2006), eight articles describe the effect of self-esteem on achievement (Akos & Ellis, 2008; Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006; Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2009; Faircloth, 2009; Gonzalez, 2009; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Irving & Hudley, 2008; Mello, Mallett, Andretta, & Worrell, 2012), and two articles describe the impact on transitions between levels of schooling and school success (Burchinal, Roberts, Rowley, & Zeisel, 2008; Gutman & Midgley, 2000).

Cultural-Ethnic Identity and Academic Outcomes. Six of the studies found that students of color who have the opportunity to develop or sustain positive cultural-ethnic identity have higher levels of academic achievement than students who do not have supports or access to do so (Altschul et al., 2006; French et al., 2006; Gonzalez, 2009; , Gullan & Hoffman, 2011; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Mello et al., 2012). For example, in a two-year study of 139 African American and Latino youth in three low-income urban schools, Altschul et al. (2006) found a connection between three aspects of racial-ethnic identity as measured by the Racial Ethnic Identity Scale (Racial Ethnic Identity Connectedness, Racial Ethnic Identity Awareness of Racism, and Racial Ethnic Identity Embedded Achievement) and academic achievement. Researchers found that sense of identity remained relatively stable by mid-adolescence and predicted grades for low-income African American and Latino youth at each assessment point in the school year. In another study, Gonzalez (2009) included 122 Mexican-American 10th graders in urban northern California and found that students from a high poverty background who were able to identify positive racial-ethnic encounters in high school had higher academic achievement and engagement as measured by the Feelings of Valuing School and School-Related Outcomes scale than students without these positive encounters. Importantly, in many of these studies above, behaviors indicating that students felt a high sense of belonging and value also mirrored positive discipline within the school and fewer disciplinary referrals.

Table 4

Theme 1: Cultural-Ethnic Identity Development and Academic Outcomes

| Citation | Results |
|----------|---|
| 2 | REI connectedness, awareness of racism, and achievement predict grades for low-income African American and Latino youth. |
| 8 | Four out of seven interviewees who described positive identity encounters in HS had high academic achievement and engagement. |
| 9 | Two primary barriers to personal success: (1) difficulty remaining focused and around peers who lack the motivation to achieve, and (2) balancing the expectations and norms of two cultures |
| 10 | Academic achievement decreased across transitions. Academic self-efficacy and feelings of school belonging were significantly correlated with GPA. Parental involvement was not correlated to GPA. Perceived teacher support correlated to self-efficacy. |
| 11 | Brief, targeted writing exercises led to a noticeable reduction in racial achievement gaps. Effects were concentrated in specific types of schools. |
| 16 | Vocational exploration and racial identity function as critical sources of school engagement for urban minorities |

Racial-Cultural Identity Development and Self or Group Esteem.

Adolescence is a critical age for identity development, a time when a strong sense of cultural identity can have a positive impact on psychosocial well-being (French et al., 2006; Erikson, 1968). The research from my review confirmed marginalization of various racial-ethnic groups and the impact on life success (Jones, 1997). Despite historical societal patterns, African Americans who were predicted to suffer from negative internalized oppression have consistently reported higher self-esteem than European Americans (Twenge & Crocker, 2002). French et al.'s (2006) study of 420 African-American, Latino, and European American adolescents on identity development found that group esteem rose in early and middle adolescence and identity exploration increased for only middle adolescents. Despite lower levels of group-esteem, African Americans and Latino Americans had greater increases than European Americans across school transitions (French et al., 2006). Similarly, in contrast, Dotterer et al.'s (2009)

study of 148 sixth through 12th grade African-American students showed that discrimination was negatively related to school self-esteem, school bonding, and engagement factors like discipline but not related to school grades.

Table 5

Theme 2: Racial-Cultural Identity Development and Self or Group Esteem

| Citation | Results |
|----------|--|
| 4 | Discrimination was negatively related to school self-esteem and bonding. Racial socialization increased self-esteem and school bonding, but did not moderate discrimination. |
| 6 | Change in congruence with student body was not a significant predictor of group esteem. A decrease in staff racial congruence increased student esteem. |
| 7 | Group-esteem rose for early and middle adolescent kids, over the transition year and change in ethnic congruence. Exploration rose for middle adolescent cohort. Black and Latino experience experienced the most change in group-esteem over the 3 yrs. White student esteem rose and was the most stable over the transition and time. |
| 12 | Parental cultural socialization predicted development of ethnic pride in seventh grade. Neither father nor mother warmth predicted later ethnic pride. |
| 18 | Ethnic identity exploration, resolution, and affirmation were all positively correlated with assessments of self-esteem, with later assessments of proactive coping, and positively associated with positive psychosocial outcomes. |
| 19 | As ethnic identity increased, participants were less likely to respond passively. |
| 20 | Stereotypes about race and ethnicity intersected with gender, sexuality, social class, and/or nationality. Intersecting stereotypes shaped adolescents' ethnic and racial identities. |

Belonging. A sense of school belonging is critical in students' school success, but inadequately understood and confounded by other life variable (Faircloth, 2009). Ten studies highlighted the relationship between belonging and academic and/or social

success with five of the studies highlighting the negative impact of discrimination, lack of trust in adults, lower expectations, stereotype threat, and other negative experiences. In an exploratory, qualitative study of 83 racially diverse ninth graders, Faircloth (2009) explored the relationship between adolescents' sense of school belonging and integration of their identity with 9th grade English assignments. Researchers identified two dimensions of belonging: the students' relationship with the teacher and peer relationships. Three dimensions emerged in support of students' sense of belonging at school: relating school experiences to who they were as individuals, the empowerment they felt from being able to "speak" their identity, and drawing on their personal cultural backgrounds.

One article highlighted how time in residency or the duration of time a student lives in the US significantly related to social, behavioral, and emotional adjustment (Martinez, McClure, Eddy, Wilson, 2011). Students with less time in residency, though they may have experienced heightened stress, were more likely to do better academically and behaviorally than their US born counterparts with similar sociodemographic backgrounds (Vega, Kolody, Aguilar-Gaxiola, Alderete, Catalano, Caraveo-Anduaga, 1998) but also, due to life stressors, were more likely to drop out of high school (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009).

School Level Transitions. Students often experience a decline in grades in the transition from one level of school to the next with the severity of decline predictive of school failure and school dropout (Gutman and Midgley, 2000). Research on specific protective and mediating factors are inconsistent. Two articles on cultural-ethnic identity and transitions showed that the pattern of decline has been broken when schools focus on

Table 6

Theme 3: Belonging

| Citation | Results |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Working with systems in the client's life and positive peer relations are significant for racial identity development. |
| 2 | REI ^a connectedness and awareness of racism predict grades for low-income African American and Latino youth. |
| 4 | Discrimination was negatively related to school self-esteem and bonding. Racial socialization increased self-esteem and school bonding, but did not moderate discrimination. |
| 5 | Two dimensions of belonging were identified--relationship with teacher, peer relationships. |
| 8 | Four out of seven interviewees who described positive identity encounters in HS had high academic achievement and engagement. |
| 10 | Academic achievement decreased across transitions. Academic self-efficacy and feelings of school belonging were significantly correlated with GPA. Parental involvement was not correlated to GPA. Perceived teacher support correlated to self-efficacy. |
| 13 | As African American males' mistrust increases, their academic outcome expectations decrease and oppositional cultural attitudes increased. |
| 15 | Adolescents from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds reported lower school belonging scores than their counterparts when stereotype threat was activated. |
| 23 | Duration of time lived in the US is associated with social, emotional, and behavioral adjustment. |

^a *Racial-Ethnic Identity*

interventions like transition programs and language development. Gutman and Midgley's (2000) study of 62 African American families living in poverty found the risk is even higher for students of color navigating poverty with academic self-efficacy serving as a protective factor against academic slide during transitions from elementary to middle school. In this study, parental involvement, perceived teacher support, and feelings of school belonging did not significantly predict GPA across the same transition

though students having parental involvement and teacher support had higher GPAs than students who did not.

Burchinal et al. (2008) found that African American students exposed to social risk have increased risk for decreased academic achievement. This study found that the severity of risk exposure to academic achievement and adjustment between 4th and 6th grade but could be mediated by developed language skills and parenting. Overall, it suggests that educators focus on supporting parental involvement and language development and reducing student expectations of racial discrimination to promote academic success for African American students in transition from elementary to middle school (Burchinal et al., 2008).

Table 7

Theme 4: School Level Transitions

| Citation | Results |
|----------|--|
| 3 | Exposure to multiple social risks is related to lower academics and problem behaviors between grades 4-6. Parenting and language skills were mediating factors between risk and academics/social skills, and a protective factor for academic achievement. Transitions to middle school related to lower academics and increased risk. |
| 10 | Academic achievement decreased across transitions. Academic self-efficacy and feelings of school belonging were significantly correlated with GPA. Parental involvement was not correlated to GPA. Perceived teacher support correlated to self-efficacy. |

Gaps in Research

In consideration of the literature review results on the impact of racial-ethnic identity development on academic achievement and discipline, I identified three gaps that my proposed study could address. First, there was considerable literature on racial ethnic identity development focused on high school age students of multiple racial-ethnic

groups. In my literature pool, eight of the 23 studies specifically focused on students between 5th and 8th grade and of those seven articles, only five focused on Latino students (French, Seidman, Allen, Aber, 2006; Hanselman, Bruch, Gamoran, & Borman, 2014; Hernandez, Conger, Robins, Bacher, Widaman, 2014; Martinez et al, 2011; Umaña-Taylor, Garcia, & Gonzales-Backen, 2008), a student population that is rapidly growing in Oregon, warranting further study. Second, seven of the studies occurred in urban, low-income areas outside of Oregon, opening up the opportunity for additional study in Oregon suburban areas. Finally, studies within the literature pool covered a range of racial ethnic identity components including identity awareness and exploration, with fewer studies examining the development of self-efficacy as by-product of a strong sense of racial-ethnic identity. As a result, my study will focus on the relationship between racial-ethnic identity, self-efficacy, and academic achievement (as measured by grades, state assessments, attendance, and discipline) for Latino middle school students in Oregon. Findings from my study will add to the body of literature on the aspects of racial-ethnic identity development that could prevent academic slide for some of our most underserved students that predictably occurs in the middle school years.

Summary and Conclusion

The studies included in the literature review reflect racial-ethnic cultural identity as a complex, multifaceted construct, impacted by contextual factors like school systems/culture and academic opportunities, parental racial-socialization, peer relations, and self-awareness. Findings show a negative pattern in achievement for adolescents of color during transition years and a positive relationship between racial-ethnic cultural identity to factors like psychosocial well-being, self-esteem, and sense of belonging.

These studies also found that these factors are not static and, in fact, can be changed by educators', peers', and family members' behaviors.

In consideration of the overall patterns in the literature pool results, development of positive racial-ethnic identity has the potential of improving academic outcomes for Latino students, particularly those navigating poverty. Few studies connect effective practices to or application of these results. Additional research would further the understanding regarding how affirmation of racial-cultural identity could be leveraged to counter historical bias and exclusionary practices in our education system. In the following section, I describe how the literature review findings integrate into my theoretical framework and how particular cultural identity factors identified in the literature have meaning to my study.

An Integrated Theoretical Framework

This proposed study is grounded in a theoretical framework (Figure 1) that pulls from three seminal theories: Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977), Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and Ethnic Identity Development Theory (Phinney, 1989; 1992). I consolidated these models to hypothesize a relationship between contextual influences, social adjustment, and stages of ethnic identity development. More specifically, it hypothesizes the mediation of self-efficacy through cultural identity development, affecting behaviors and performance, specifically academic achievement.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) emphasizes the importance of understanding the psychological development of youth in context and the network of influences between multiple environments that encompass life norms, roles, and rules. In this model, the *chronosystem* includes broad, expansive patterns of environmental

changes like socio-historical circumstances or family structure (e.g. divorce) over a life course. The *macrosystem* involves cultural ideologies and attitudes like political and economic systems they live in that influence a youth's cultural patterns and values. The *exosystem* pertains to connections between two or more settings that influence youth like mass media, neighborhood, extended family, etc. The *mesosystem* represents the interaction of microsystems that surround youth, like connections between home and school, peer group and family, or family and community organizations. Lastly, the *microsystem* includes the most proximal institutions or groups that immediately and directly impact youth like the biology, family, school, or peers. My model *includes time in residency*, the duration of time a student lives in the US, translating to exposure to social systems. Time in residency influences, but is distinct from acculturation, a change in cultural patterns due to exposure to individuals from different cultures. The microsystem level includes mutual interaction between the development of youth and the environment; the more nurturing the environment, the higher the probability of positive development which increases probability of a nurturing response from adults in the environment around youth.

My consolidated model considers the ecological system influences on the progression of cultural identity development (Phinney, 1997). The Ethnic Identity Development Theory (1997) describes adolescent ethnic identity development in non-linear stages, influenced by exposure and other life circumstances. It starts with the *unexamined ethnic identity stage* when little thought is given to ethnicity characterized by simplistic thoughts that ethnic identity is derived from others rather than self. This stage

centers on socialization when identity is a result of absorbing or adopting the behaviors versus critical interaction and examination of values, beliefs, attitudes of others.

The second stage, *ethnic identity search* is typified by evidence of identity exploration, inquiry about personal ethnicity, and personal implications of ethnic identity (Cross, 1978). Youth in the *ethnic identity achievement* stage demonstrate internalized clarity about their ethnic identity, including secure, confident, stable sense of self within environmental contexts. This stage, not necessarily experienced by all, reflects the highest of the three stages of development, exploration, and commitment to one's ethnic group, can be cyclical and involve re-examination based on various experiences over time.

The last component of the integrated model poses a mediating relationship between a youth's psychosocial and ethnic identity development and self-confidence (i.e. agency, sense of empowerment) ultimately translating to a level of self-efficacy. Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) outlines an optimistic self-belief in competence and achieving a favorable outcome as a result of four sources of efficacy beliefs: *Mastery Experiences*-direct experiences of mastery that increase self-efficacy; *Vicarious Experiences*-observation of people around us, especially role models, succeed through sustained effort; *Verbal Persuasion*-encouragement and influence of important people (e.g. parents, teachers, etc.); *Emotional and Physiological States*-the state of mind that impacts confidence (e.g. depression, stress, or anxiety).

My research questions address the associations between these variables and connections between theories, contributing to research and literature focused on the effects of cultural identity on school outcomes.

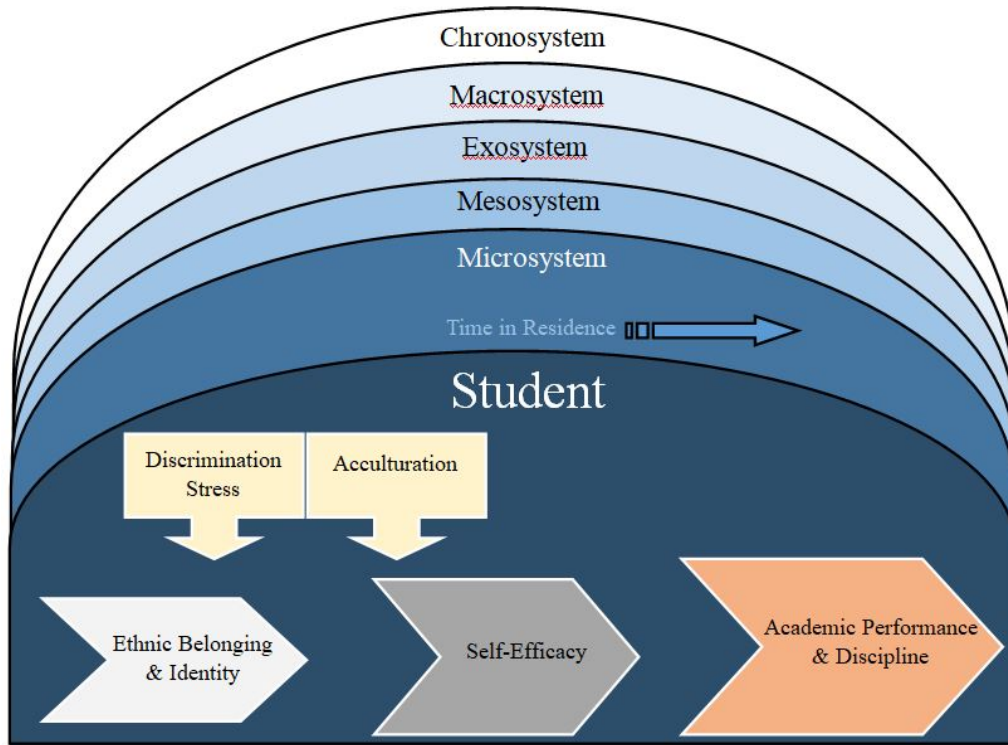


Figure 1. Integrated Theoretical Framework

Research Questions

This study will assess the relationship between ethnic-cultural belonging and self-efficacy on academic achievement for Latino middle school students in Oregon. My research questions are as follows:

- **Research Question 1 (RQ 1):** What is the relationship between discrimination stress, acculturation, ethnic identity, and self-efficacy and academic performance and discipline for Latino middle school students in Oregon?
- **Research Question 2 (RQ 2):** Does the pattern of the relationship between discrimination stress, acculturation, ethnic identity, and self-efficacy and academic performance and discipline vary when controlling for time in residency?

CHAPTER III

METHODS

My study utilized extant data from two sub-scales from the Adolescent Latino Acculturation Study (ALAS), a comprehensive study that includes data assessing six key aspects of acculturation: a) social contexts, b) social support process, c) acculturation process, d) family environment, d) parenting practices, and e) youngster adjustment (Martinez et al, 2011). ALAS data was fitting to examine as it included measures that addressed the constructs and variables in my study. I selected a sub-set of questions to specifically focus on ethnic-cultural identity from the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1997) and a sub-set of questions that addressed self-efficacy from a measure of youth confidence called the Youth Confidence Questionnaire (Oregon Social Learning Center, 2011). Upon confirmation of internal reliability, I examined these two sub-scales in conjunction with discipline and attendance data, as well as grades and state assessments to define the relationship between self-efficacy as a potential by-product of cultural identity development, producing positive school outcomes.

Unit of Analysis and Time

Babbie (2013) defines “the what or who being studied” (p.97) as the unit of analysis. My study was focused on individual students as the unit of analysis with the aim that the results could be used to generalize about the population (Babbie, 2013). It was a non-experimental study (Creswell, 2014), analyzing extant survey data from the Adolescent Latino Acculturation Study (ALAS) as conducted by Martinez, McClure, Eddy, & Wilson (2011).

Research Design

In this section I describe the design, setting, participants, and sampling logic, variables and instruments of the original ALAS study, the work in which my study is nested. Following is a description of how the data was used in my study.

Adolescent Latino Acculturation Study

Setting and Participants. The 2011 Adolescent Latino Acculturation Study (Martinez et al., 2011) involved 225 Latino middle school youth and their family members with two to ten years of U.S. residency who lived on the I-5 corridor in Oregon, the geographic area where Latino communities were clustered at the time. Families in their first year of residency were excluded due to life stressors often experienced during significant transitions, confounding the data. A summary of state level and two sample school district (from the I-5 corridor) demographics are included below (Table 8) to provide the general context of the general student population that subjects were recruited from.

Table 8

2016-17 School Year School Demographics

| | Total Enrollment | Free/Reduced | Hispanic/Latino | Students of Color | Teachers of Color | Ever ELL ^a |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| District A | 17,126 | 48% | 15% | 30% | 12% | 5% |
| District B | 5,598 | >95% | 81% | 82.5% | 30% | 71% |
| Oregon, K-12 | 578,947 | 49% | 23% | 37% | 9% | 10% ^b |

Source: Oregon Department of Education, 2017

a. ELLs-English Language Learners

b. Defined as English Learner Enrollment, not Ever ELLs

My study included ALAS results for both male and female youth as studies have shown little difference in acculturation between adolescent males and females (Padilla,

1980). Additionally, the ALAS researchers were careful in balancing gender in their study, again to maximize external validity. Researchers collected survey responses from 225 recruited Latino families with one middle schooler and at least one self-identified focal parent, resulting in the analysis of 217 youth and families who were able to complete all assessments and measures.

The participant samples were stratified into three groups of 75 to equally distribute students and parent(s) of varying levels of time in residency (TR) in the United States: TR1 (time in residency group 1) delineated two to four years of residency, TR2 five through seven years of residency, and TR3 eight to ten years of residency.

Sampling logic. The population frame involved a convenience, single-stage, sampling technique where “the researcher ha(d) access to names in the population and can sample the people (or other elements) directly” (Creswell, 2014). Researchers used multiple recruiting methods to invite voluntary participants. At the time of the study, about 26% of the families were single-mother households, mirroring national statistics (Martinez et al., 2011). The ALAS researchers determined that they would not restrict sampling to one or two parent households to ensure a generalizable sample size. Given the statistical consistency across the local area, state and country, researchers estimated that 158 families would be two-parent households and 67 would be single-parent households.

ALAS researchers experienced prior success in recruiting subjects from the Latino community for previous studies and replicated the process of word-of-mouth and person-to-person invitations at community events and locations as opposed to ineffective paper recruitment methods like fliers and letters. Though limited in approach, these

methods previously resulted in a representative cross-section of the population.

The large, purposeful sample increased generalizability to the overall state population, providing data that could inform action research. According to Babbie (2016), samples are not required to represent the population at large in every aspect, but rather “representativeness is limited to those characteristics that are relevant to the substantive interests of the study” (p. 196).- The representativeness of Latino middle school immigrant students varied in time in residency, generalizing to the population of interest, students across the Willamette Valley who were experiencing acculturation and a heightened sense of cultural identity exploration.

Variables and Instruments

In my study of the relationship between cultural identity development and academic achievement, the independent variables were as follows:

- a) discrimination stress as measured by the Perceived Discrimination instrument (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999),
- b) acculturation as measured by the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans questionnaire (ARSMA, adapted to include reference to all Latin American and Spanish-speaking Caribbean origin nations; Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995),
- c) cultural identity as measured by a sub-scale of four questions from the Ethnic Belonging measure, derived from the ALAS Ethnic Identity measure (Martinez et al., 2011), derived from the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992),
- d) self-efficacy as measured by three sub scale questions from the Youth Confidence measure (Oregon Social Learning Center, 2011),

e) time in residency stratified in three groups-two to four, five to seven, and eight to ten years of residence in the US (Martinez et al., 2011).

The dependent variables were state math assessment results and discipline contacts, both retrieved from student records. The subject of math was specifically selected due to research on its significant predictability of graduation status and increased accuracy of identifying drop out before graduation (Larson, Pesch, Surapaneni, Bonitz, Wu, & Webel, 2014). Discipline contacts represented the number of times a student had documented discipline contacts with an educator within the course of the school year. This measure indicates a level of negative engagement with school expectations.

Discrimination Stress. Perceived discrimination was measured by an adapted version of the Perceived Discrimination instrument (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999). This 18-item measure asked respondents whether they experienced discrimination in the last three months and if they did, to rate the degree of stress experienced on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all stressful* to 5 = *extremely stressful*). The Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .78 with 51% of ALAS respondents reporting no discriminatory event (Martinez et al., 2011). There were multiple ALAS discrimination stress measures available to select from. I determined that this measure was more reliable over another variable that measured stress level only for students who experienced stress given its underpowered sample of n=102.

Acculturation. ALAS researchers measured four factors of acculturation using the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II or ARSMA-II (Cuellar, Arnold & Maldonado, 1995): 1) language use and preference, 2) ethnic identity and classification, 3) cultural heritage and ethnic behaviors, and 4) ethnic interaction. The

factors were assessed separately for US ($\alpha = .86$ and $.83$) and Mexican culture ($\alpha = .77$ and $.85$), measuring acculturation through positive and negative statements like “I like to identify myself as a Mexican”. Researchers subtracted Latino from Anglo orientation for a score that reflects cultural orientation of the youth on a continuum between Latino and US culture. Per the ARSMA II guidelines, the measure of acculturation was calculated by subtracting Anglo orientation scores from Mexican orientation scores. Thus, a composite score reflecting overall acculturation indicates relative Anglo-ness with positive scores and relative Mexican-ness with negative scores. Acculturation implied a level of adjustment to life in the United States and served as a proxy for language, with Anglo-ness implying increased comfort in English language use (Martinez et al, 2011).

The Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure. This 20-item questionnaire (see Appendix A) assesses various aspects of *ethnic belonging* in adolescents. Four conceptual subscales were obtained from this measure: positive ethnic attitudes and sense of belonging, ethnic identity achievement, ethnic behaviors and practices, and other group orientation. Overall, alpha reliability for the total scale was $.81$ for high school-aged adolescents.

Jean S. Phinney (1992) developed the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measures (MEIM) to measure a sense of ethnic belonging of adolescents and young adults as generalized across ethnic groups in the United States. The fourth MEIM subscale, which I will not be using, is the Other Group Orientation (OGO) measure, consists of six items and details attitudes about interactions with people from other ethnic groups, considered a mediator of perceptions of personal ethnic and social identity (Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Stracuzzi, & Saya, 2003).

The ethnic belonging sub-scale of the MEIM has been known to be altered in the various studies in the literature pool and was typically administered by paper-pencil and asked respondents to rate themselves on a four-point Likert scale from four (strongly agree), 3 (agree), 2 (disagree), to 1 (strongly disagree) for each. The authors worded four of the 21 items negatively (and reverse-scored the items) to control for response bias. A low mean score within the range of one to four for both subscales meant a low level of ethnic belonging and negative attitudes toward other groups. Scores can be low for one subscale and not the other, though less common. My study involved the ethnic belonging portion of the MEIM.

For six college and four high school samples, MEIM showed a similar internal consistency coefficient alpha range of .81 to .92 for the ethnic identity measure across a wide range of ethnic groups and ages, increasing with age (Ponterro et al, 2003). Researchers modified the MEIM for fourth and fifth graders resulting in lower ethnic identity alphas of .72 and .59 for two different administrations and no administration of the OGO measure. These studies showed that the internal consistency was stronger for the ethnic identity subscale and for high school to college-age respondents.

Two studies reviewed validity through factor analysis and convergence with measures of parallel constructs. Two studies of factor analysis, one of 417 high school students, the other of 136 college-age students, showed marginal associations of .20 and .31, respectively. To test for construct validity, researchers compared the MEIM to acculturation, ethnic self-concept, self-esteem and multicultural orientation, and racial identity development. Cohen's *d* showed the effect size correlations to be moderate, ranging from $r < .30$ to .49.

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test the goodness of fit of Phinney's two-factors model (1992) to a Reese's global factor model (1998) using the AMOS 4.0 (Arbuckle, 1999) stat program for structural equation modeling. Results showed relative factor independence with a correlation of .07. The MEIM had a better fit than the global model and a mediocre fit when judged by the rigorous, exact fit, chi-square test. The MEIM had a general mediocre fit with a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of .84 (with .90 indicating an acceptable level) due to the low OGO factor analysis (Ponterotto et al., 2003).

ALAS researchers called the MEIM measure *ethnic belonging* in their set of measures. From the ethnic belonging measure, I selected a sub-scale of four questions that most directly reflected a sense of ethnic-cultural belonging and pride:

- I am happy I am member of the group I belong to.
- I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments.
- I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
- I feel good about my cultural ethnic background.

This ethnic belonging sub-scale reflected an acceptable range of internal consistency ($\alpha = .736$).

Self-Efficacy Questionnaire. This measure asked participants to rate their *self-efficacy* in six distinct areas on a five-point scale (from "very confident" to "not confident at all") in response to the following six questions:

- 1) How have you been feeling about your physical appearance?
- 2) How have you been feeling about your ability to do well in activities such as sports, school clubs, scouts, music, etc.?
- 3) How have you been feeling about making friends and getting along well with other your age?
- 4) How have you been feeling about cooperative with adult expectations?
- 5) How have you been feeling about doing a good job on schoolwork?
- 6) How confident are you that you will become a successful adult?

To increase focus on the construct of self-efficacy, I analyzed and selected questions four through six from the questionnaire, questions that more precisely related to a sense of self-efficacy, a positive self-belief in competence, and achieving a favorable outcome. Using SPSS, this sub-set of questions reflected acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .749$).

Performance and Discipline Data. ALAS researchers also collected data from student records like grades and grade point average, annual state assessment results, attendance, and discipline. Annual state math assessments results and discipline (as measured by the number of documented discipline contacts with school staff in a school year) will serve as respective achievement and engagement dependent outcomes in my study.

Time in residency. Youth who participated in the ALAS study were placed in one of three groups upon inclusion in the study. Youth in group 1 were between their 2nd and 4th year of US residence. Group 2 was in the 6th through 8th and group 3 was in the 10th through 12th year of US residency. This key grouping variable allowed researchers to distinguish outcome differences for youth based on length of US residency. For the purposes of my study, I selected students in TR group 1. TR group 1 had an average arrival age of 11.1 years ($SD = 1.8$) and average time in residence of 2.3 years ($SD = 1.1$). Time in residency measured students' exposure to the nuances of US social systems like schooling such that TR group one first became exposed to the US school system around the ages of 10-12 years old, TR group two first became familiar with the US school system around kindergarten or first grade, and TR three students were present in the US at preschool ages and were more likely to have consistently attended US schools from

kindergarten on. As middle school students often engage in extensive identity exploration which is influenced by peer group affiliation and belonging, more recently arrived immigrant students may experience more vulnerability as the newer students in an unfamiliar school and system, with related ripple effects for their ethnic belonging, self-efficacy and achievement.

Procedures

My study employed an explanatory design involving an analysis of extant data from the ALAS study, focusing on discrimination stress, acculturation, the subscale measures of Ethnic Belonging and Youth Confidence (a proxy for self-efficacy), state math assessment outcomes, the number of discipline contacts in a school year, and time in residency. The benefit of utilizing a quantitative method design was multifold. It allowed me to examine the topic of cultural identity through an objective examination of variables (Creswell, 2014). The large sample size of the ALAS study supported validity, reliability, and generalizability of the results. I used one wave of the three-wave, longitudinal data set to reduce any measurement and attrition error.

Surveys. Following recruitment, a bilingual/bicultural staff member visited families in their homes to discuss the project, answer questions, and confirm on-going, informed consent. This visit included a brief assessment training, exposing families to a sample questionnaire, preparing them for the assessment and minimizing concerns due to unfamiliarity with research procedures. ALAS staff administered all measures in participating families' homes or project offices unless another location was preferred. Extant school data (e.g., math state assessment scores from the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills [OAKS] and disciplinary contacts) were collected annually by

ALAS staff directly from school office records.

Trained staff assessed individual families using multiple methods every three months for three years for a total of twelve assessments. Every year, participants completed one major, in-home assessment and three minor assessments (administered by telephone). Though less efficient, in person and phone assessment eliminated any technological or literacy challenges subjects may have had responding to questions.

Analysis for Research Question 1: What is the relationship between discrimination stress, acculturation, ethnic identity, and self-efficacy and academic performance and discipline for Latino middle school students in Oregon?

To answer this question, I conducted SPSS descriptive analyses (IBM, 2015) of the following response data: 1) discrimination stress, 2) acculturation, 3) ethnic belonging, 4) self-efficacy, 5) math achievement, 6) discipline, and 7) time in residency. Incomplete student survey data was eliminated from the data sets to reduce response bias.

Following descriptive analysis, I generated bivariate correlational analyses (Creswell, 2014) to determine the significance of the relationship between variables. To establish adequate power for this study 142 out of the total possible 225 Latino student respondents would have needed to complete the survey to with +/- 5% margin of error and a confidence interval of 95% (Creswell, 2014). A total of 217 students completed the study.

To explore my hypothesis (as expressed in my theoretical framework) that discrimination stress, acculturation, and ethnic belonging influence self-efficacy, I ran a three-step hierarchical regression with discrimination stress, acculturation, and ethnic belonging as independent variables and self-efficacy as a dependent variable. Next, I ran

a four-step hierarchical regression to determine if there were any correlations between independent variables of (a) discrimination stress, (b) acculturation, (c) ethnic belonging, and (d) self-efficacy and state math assessment results as the dependent variable. Lastly, I tested the full four-step model again, to explore the relationship between discrimination stress, acculturation, ethnic belonging, and self-efficacy as the independent variables with discipline contacts as the dependent variable.

Analysis for Research Question 2: RQ 2: Does the pattern of the relationship between discrimination stress, acculturation, ethnic identity, and self-efficacy and academic performance and discipline vary when controlling for time in residency?

For research question 2, I analyzed the relationships between the factors articulated in the previously stated theoretical framework while controlling for length of time the student was living in the US. First, I ran a five-step hierarchical regression analysis to determine if there were any correlations between the independent variables of (a) discrimination stress, (b) acculturation, (c) ethnic belonging, (d) self-efficacy, and (e) time in residency and state math assessment outcomes as the dependent variable. I also examined the output to identify changes in significance and correlations between models and state math assessment outcomes with and without controlling for time in residency. To determine the relationship between the independent variables of (a) discrimination stress, (b) acculturation, (c) ethnic belonging, (d) self-efficacy, and (e) time in residency and discipline contacts, I ran another in the five-step hierarchical regression. Lastly, I compared the differences in significance, direction, and magnitude between the modeling

with and without time in residency to determine if and how time in residency changed the relationships.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the relationship between ethnic identity, self-efficacy, and academic achievement for Latino middle school students in Oregon. In this chapter, I report demographics of the participants, followed by findings and conclude with in depth discussion and implications of the results in the final chapter. For each of my research questions, I used IBM *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) to produce descriptive statistics and data output to report results. I conducted hierarchical regression using the following modeling:

- Model 1-discrimination stress and acculturation,
- Model 2 discrimination stress, acculturation, ethnic belonging, and
- Model 3- discrimination stress, acculturation, ethnic belonging, and self-efficacy.

Table 9 displays demographic information for participants in the study that shows predominant Mexican nativity, self-reported Hispanic/Latino/Mexican race/ethnicity, and bilingual (Spanish/English) communication.

Table 9

Target Youth Demographics, (N = 217)

| Age (years) | Gender | Self-Reported Spanish Speaking Proficiency | Self-Reported Spanish Reading/Writing Proficiency | Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity | Birth Country | Time in Residency in the U.S. | Religion | Parental Monthly Income After Taxes* |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mean = 13.4 (SD) = 1.4 | Male, 56.6%, (n = 123) | Spanish Only, 2.7%, (n = 6) | Spanish Only, 4.6%, (n = 10) | Asian/API, 1%, (n = 2) | Mexico, 94%, (n = 204) | 2-4 years, 33.2%, (n = 72) | Protestant, 1.3%, (n = 38) | \$0-500, 19.8%, (n = 43) |
| | Female, 76.4%, (n = 94) | More Spanish than English, 19.4%, (n = 42) | More Spanish than English, 17.0%, (n = 37) | Hispanic/Latino/ Mexican, 88.5%, (n = 192) | Central America, 3.2%, (n = 7) | 5-7 years, 35.9%, (n = 78) | Catholic, 74.7%, (n = 162) | \$501-1000, 31.3%, (n = 68) |
| | | Both Spanish and English, 57.1%, (n = 124) | Both Spanish and English, 41.0%, (n = 89) | White, .46%, (n = 1) | South America, 2.3%, (n = 5) | 8-10 years, 30.9%, (n = 67) | Mormon, .46%, (n = 1) | \$1001-1500, 28.1%, (n = 61) |
| | | More English than Spanish, 15.6%, (n = 34) | More English than Spanish, 22.1%, (n = 48) | Multiracial, 1%, (n = 2) | Caribbean, 1.4%, (n = 2) | None, 5.5%, (n = 12) | \$1501-2000, 11.0%, (n = 24) | |
| | | English Only, 1.3%, (n = 3) | English Only, 11.5%, (n = 25) | Other, .46%, (n = 1) | Other, 1.8%, (n = 4) | | | \$2001-2500, 2.3%, (n = 5) |
| | | Missing, 3.7%, (n = 8) | Missing, 3.7%, (n = 8) | Missing, 8.8%, (n = 19) | Missing, 9.7%, (n = 21) | | | \$2501-3000, 0.0%, (n = 0) |
| | | | | | | \$3001-3500, .46%, (n = 1) | Missing, 6.9%, (n = 15) | |

*Note. *average per capita family size = 4.8 people*

Descriptive Statistics

To address the research questions, I calculated descriptive statistics for all variable measures from the ALAS study, including the mean and standard deviation for each measure (Table 10). Overall, the averages were high for the whole sample for the ethnic belonging and youth confidence sub scales. The acculturation mean was more *Mexican-oriented*, showing that student participants embraced practices and cultural identification of their home countries. The discrimination stress mean score had a mean of .22 on an overall scale of 01 (no stress or *not at all stressful*) to 5 (*extremely stressful*) and a standard deviation of .39, reflecting the 49% of participants who reported experiencing no discrimination in the past three months and showing that the remaining 51% of respondents who did report experiencing discrimination stress reported generally low related stress levels.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

| Independent Variables | <i>n</i> | <i>min</i> | <i>max</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---|----------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Ethnic Belonging | 209 | 1.5 | 4 | 3.56 | 0.53 |
| Self-Efficacy | 207 | 1 | 5 | 4.13 | 0.81 |
| Time In Residency | 217 | .8 | 14.3 | 6.34 | 3.52 |
| Acculturation Score (AOS ^b -MOS ^c) | 202 | -3.46 | 2.51 | -.63 | 0.98 |
| Discrimination Stress | 209 | 0 | 2.94 | .22 | .39 |
| Dependent Variables | | | | | |
| Math State Assessment | 67 | 206 | 250 | 227.64 | 8.843 |
| Discipline Contacts (in a school year) | 185 | 1 | 3 | 1.55 | .691 |

Note. ^aYears in the United States; ^bAnglo Orientation Scale; ^cMexican Orientation Scale

RQ 1: What is the relationship between discrimination stress, acculturation, ethnic identity, and self-efficacy and academic performance and discipline for Latino middle school students in Oregon?

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis (Table 11) revealed significant, positive correlations between ethnic belonging and self-efficacy ($r = .327, p < .01$) as well as the state math assessment ($r = .291, p < .05$). Ethnic belonging had a significant, negative correlation with acculturation score ($r = -.235, p < .01$) meaning the more ethnic belonging Latino middle school students felt, the stronger their orientation toward Mexican cultural practices and norms. Ethnic belonging was unrelated to discrimination stress, time in residency (TR), and school outcomes.

The self-efficacy measure showed a significant, negative correlation with discrimination stress ($r = -.222, p < .01$) and acculturation ($r = -.146, p < .05$), implying that students who felt more efficacious experienced or felt less stress and more aligned with their “Latino-ness”. Self-efficacy was unrelated to TR, discipline contacts, and state math assessments. Time in residence was negatively related to discipline contacts ($r = -.167, p < .05$), meaning students who lived in the United States had fewer disciplinary incidents.

The acculturation scale results showed a positive correlation with TR ($r = .414, p < .01$) and a significant negative correlation with disciplinary contacts ($r = -.190, p < .05$), meaning as Anglo orientation increased, the number of disciplinary contacts decreased. Correlation outputs confirmed the need for deeper analyses regarding the relationship between ethnic belonging, self-efficacy, acculturation and TR and the

relationship between these variables and school outcomes, specifically math state assessment and discipline.

Table 11

Correlation Matrix for Independent and Dependent Variables

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---------|---------|--------|-------|-------|--------|---|
| 1. Discrimination Stress (1-5) | - | | | | | | |
| 2. Acculturation Score (AOS ^a -MOS ^b) | -.038 | - | | | | | |
| 3. Ethnic Belonging | .025 | -.235** | - | | | | |
| 4. Self-Efficacy | -.222** | -.146* | .327** | - | | | |
| 5. State Math Assessment | -.152 | .060 | .291* | .145 | - | | |
| 6. Discipline Contacts | -.025 | -.190* | -.094 | -.108 | -.102 | - | |
| 7. Time In Residency | -.040 | .414** | -.020 | -.051 | -.020 | -.167* | - |

Note. ^aAnglo Orientation Scale; ^bMexican Orientation Scale

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

To test my theory that the effects of discrimination, acculturation, and ethnic belonging would have strong relationship with self-efficacy, an important factor in school success, I conducted hierarchical linear regression analyses (Table 12) starting with the relationship between discrimination stress and acculturation scores with self-efficacy (Model 1). This model showed a significant, negative relationship, meaning an increase in stress and acculturation (i.e. an increase in US assimilation) reflected a drop in sense of self-efficacy and explained 7% of the variation, $R^2 = .070$, $F(2,197) = 7.423$, $p < .001$. The addition of ethnic belonging ($p < 0.001$) in Model 2 increased the impact of discrimination stress on self-efficacy while rendering acculturation non-significant. Results indicated that variables in model 2 explained 15.6% of the variance in self-efficacy, $R^2 = .156$, $F(3, 196) = 12.038$, $p < .001$.

Table 12

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis with Self-Efficacy as the Dependent Variable

| Variables | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| | B | SE B | β | B | SE B | β |
| Discrimination Stress | -.456 | .142 | -.221** | -.473 | .136 | -.229*** |
| Acculturation Score (AOS ^a -MOS ^b) | -.120 | .057 | -.145* | -.064 | .056 | -.078 |
| Ethnic Belonging | | | | .448 | .100 | .300*** |
| R ² | | .070*** | | | .156*** | |
| ΔR^2 | | .070 | | | .086 | |

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

SE B: Standard Error; all β represent standardized betas

a. Anglo Orientation Scale - Mexican Orientation Scale

Table 13 reflects ethnic belonging as the only variable with a significant association with state math assessments showing that as a sense of ethnic belonging increased, so did state math assessment results. Of the three models, Model 2 was the only significant one explaining 13.6% of the variance, $R^2 = .136$, $F(3, 59) = 3.102$, $p < .01$.

Table 13

Summary of Hierarchical Regression with State Math Assessments as the Dependent Variable

| Variable | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | | Model 3 | | |
|----------------------------------|---------|-------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| | B | SE B | β | B | SE B | β | B | SE B | β |
| Discrimination Stress | -3.466 | 2.995 | -.147 | -4.594 | 2.873 | -.195 | -4.583 | 2.970 | -.195 |
| Acculturation Score ^a | .581 | 1.200 | .062 | 1.570 | 1.194 | .167 | 1.570 | 1.205 | .167 |
| Ethnic Belonging | | | | 5.720 | 2.079 | .352** | 5.706 | 2.261 | .351* |
| Self-Efficacy | | | | | | | .022 | 1.286 | .002 |
| R ² | | .025 | | | .136** | | | .136 | |
| ΔR^2 | | .025 | | | .111 | | | .000 | |

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

SE B: Standard Error; all β represent standardized betas

a. Anglo Orientation Scale - Mexican Orientation Scale

The same set of regression models were analyzed with discipline contacts as the dependent variable (Table 14). Of all models, Model 1 was significant, $R^2 = .049$, $F(2, 167) = 4.261$, $p < .05$, reflecting a negative association between acculturation and discipline, $\beta = -.220$, $p < .05$. Acculturation had a similar relationship with key variables across all models. The pattern indicated that students who reported higher levels of US assimilation had fewer disciplinary incidents as recorded by the school and that ethnic belonging and self-efficacy may have influenced the association. Model 2 and 3 were not significant.

Table 14

Summary of Hierarchical Regression with Discipline Contacts as the Dependent Variable

| Variable | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | | Model 3 | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|----------|-------------|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β |
| Discrimination Stress | .014 | .134 | .008 | .014 | .133 | .008 | -.026 | .137 | -.015 |
| Acculturation Score ^a | -.170 | .058 | -.220** | -.193 | .059 | -.251*** | -.196 | .059 | -.254*** |
| Ethnic Belonging | | | | -.196 | .104 | -.143 | -.160 | .109 | -.117 |
| Self-Efficacy | | | | | | | -.084 | .073 | -.094 |
| R ² | | .049* | | | .068 | | | .076 | |
| ΔR^2 | | .049 | | | .209 | | | .008 | |

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

SE B: Standard Error; all β represent standardized betas

a. Anglo Orientation Scale - Mexican Orientation Scale

RQ 2: Does the pattern of the relationship between discrimination stress, acculturation, ethnic identity, and self-efficacy and academic performance and discipline vary when controlling for time in residency?

Within the frame of ecological systems theory and my theoretical model, I situated time across the microsystem, representing students' duration of exposure to and

familiarity with social systems, potentially influencing their ability to navigate social support networks. My hypothesis was that the length of time a student was in the US would influence acculturation. As shown in the correlations table (Table 11), TR positively correlated to acculturation ($r = .414, p < .01$) and negatively correlated with discipline ($r = -.167, p < .05$).

Next, I employed hierarchical modeling to answer research question 1 with TR groups added as an ordinal variable to examine its potential influence on the predictor and outcome variables (e.g. state math assessment and discipline). Table 15 presents Model 1 for state math assessments as the dependent variable as not significant, $R^2 = .030, F(3, 59) = .600, p > .05$. Model 2 was significant, with ethnic belonging reflecting a positive relationship with state math assessments, $R^2 = .140, F(1, 58) = 7.480, p < .01$. Variable associations in Model 2 accounted for 14% of the variance in state math assessment outcomes. Discrimination stress, acculturation and, self-efficacy were not significant.

Table 15

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Including TR with State Math Assessments as the Dependent Variable

| Variable | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | | Model 3 | | |
|--------------------|----------|-------------|---------|----------|-------------|---------|----------|-------------|---------|
| | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β |
| Discrimination | | | | | | | | | |
| Stress | -3.624 | 3.031 | -.154 | -4.753 | 2.906 | -.202 | -4.728 | 3.001 | -.201 |
| Acculturation | | | | | | | | | |
| Score ^a | .757 | 1.256 | .080 | 1.745 | 1.246 | .185 | 1.746 | 1.257 | .185 |
| TR Group | -.796 | 1.575 | -.068 | -.797 | 1.495 | -.068 | -.800 | 1.509 | -.068 |
| Ethnic | | | | | | | | | |
| Belonging | | | | 5.720 | 2.092 | .352** | 5.687 | 2.275 | .350* |
| Self-Efficacy | | | | | | | .051 | 1.296 | .005 |
| R2 | | .030 | | | .140** | | | .140 | |
| $\Delta R2$ | | .030 | | | .111 | | | .000 | |

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

SE B: Standard Error; all β represent standardized betas; TR: Time in Residency
a. Anglo Orientation Scale - Mexican Orientation Scale

Table 16 reflects significant correlations between predictor variables and discipline contacts for Model 1, $R^2 = .056$, $F(3, 166) = 3.303$, $p < .05$. Across all models, acculturation had a significant, negative relationship with discipline contacts ($p < .05$), meaning when students' US assimilation increased, the number of disciplinary incidents in school decreased. Ethnic belonging and self-efficacy were added in Model 2 and 3 respectively, both non-significant ($p > .05$).

Table 16

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Including TR with Discipline Contacts as the Dependent Variable

| Variable | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | | Model 3 | | |
|--------------------|----------|-------------|---------|----------|-------------|---------|----------|-------------|---------|
| | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β |
| Discrimination | | | | | | | | | |
| Stress | .009 | .134 | .005 | .009 | .133 | .005 | -.034 | .137 | -.019 |
| Acculturation | | | | | | | | | |
| Score ^a | -.138 | .064 | -.179* | -.163 | .065 | -.212* | -.164 | .065 | -.213* |
| TR Group | -.084 | .072 | -.097 | -.077 | .072 | -.089 | -.082 | .072 | -.095 |
| Ethnic Belonging | | | | -.189 | .105 | -.139 | -.151 | .109 | -.111 |
| Self-Efficacy | | | | | | | -.089 | .073 | -.100 |
| R2 | | .056* | | | .075 | | | .083 | |
| ΔR^2 | | .056 | | | .018 | | | .008 | |

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

SE B: Standard Error; all β represent standardized betas; TR: Time in Residency

a. Anglo Orientation Scale - Mexican Orientation Scale

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I first present a summary of my study findings for each research question and discuss how my findings contribute to the literature on cultural identity development and academic achievement. I will then discuss limitations of this study and suggestions for future research followed by specific policy and practice implications for education in Oregon. Finally, I will discuss my plan for dissemination of the findings from this research study aimed toward supporting educational equity and access.

Summary of Results

RQ1: What is the relationship between discrimination stress, acculturation, ethnic identity, and self-efficacy and academic performance and discipline for Latino middle school students in Oregon?

For this part of my study, I conducted three regression analyses, one for each self-efficacy (Table 12), state math assessments (Table 13), and discipline contacts (Table 14) as dependent variables. Regressions showed three noteworthy findings on self-efficacy and school outcomes: (1) despite an increase in discrimination stress, ethnic belonging had a significant, positive relationship with self-efficacy, (2) an increase in ethnic belonging had a significant, positive relationship with state math assessments, and (3) an increase in Anglo-orientation (e.g. positive acculturation) had a significant negative relationship with discipline contacts.

Regression Model with Self-Efficacy as the Dependent Variable

The output results examining the microsystem influences of discrimination stress, acculturation, and ethnic belonging on self-efficacy (Table 12) showed that discrimination stress and acculturation had a significant, negative relationship with self-efficacy. These results were consistent with my hypothesis and previous research on the effect of discrimination stress and pressures to assimilate on students' sense of confidence and school outcomes (Mello et al., 2012; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Aligned studies have posited that stereotype threat and discrimination stress can decrease confidence and working memory due to psychological stress (Schmader & Johns, 2003), a result of considering how performance may confirm negative racial-ethnic stereotypes.

Model two (Table 12) output showed that the addition of ethnic belonging ($\beta = .300, p < .001$) increased (more than doubled) the variance in self-efficacy. With ethnic belonging in the modeling, discrimination stress maintained a significant, negative relationship with self-efficacy, while acculturation was rendered non-significant. I predicted these results, especially in light of previous research on the impact of three dimensions of cultural belonging at school: school experiences that connect to students' identity, empowerment students felt from being able to "speak" their identity, and drawing on personal cultural backgrounds (Faircloth, 2009). My hypothesis was that while an increase in sense of cultural pride and belonging may heighten awareness of difference and discrimination, it would simultaneously serve as a buffer against pressures to assimilate to be successful as well as motivation for positive social and academic school engagement.

These results align with findings from previous studies that showed the effects of cultural identity and belonging on mental and emotional well-being and resilience (Corenblum & Armstrong, 2012; Wakefield & Hudley, 2007), particularly in the face of discrimination (DeGruy, Kjellstrand, Briggs, & Brennan, 2012; Ai, Aisenberg, Weiss, & Salazar, 2014). Additionally, research also showed that as ethnic identity increased, students were less likely to passively respond to their environment (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2008), implying an increased level of risk taking and confidence, possibly countering the pressure to assimilate to more anglo-oriented behaviors. These results imply the potential of ethnic belonging as a protective factor against school stressors, and possibly a catalyst for positive academic outcomes.

Regression Model with State Math Assessments as the Dependent Variable

In addition to the theory that microsystem influences impact discrimination stress and acculturation, my theoretical framework poses a relationship between ethnic belonging and self-efficacy on two school outcomes-state math assessments. Output results show that ethnic belonging was the only variable that consistently reflected strong, positive associations with state math assessments across modeling, with only model two (with independent variables of discrimination stress, acculturation score and ethnic belonging) as significant. There was no difference in non-significant beta scores for discrimination stress ($\beta = -.195, p > .05$) and acculturation score ($\beta = .167, p > .05$) between model two and three and self-efficacy (added in model 3) was also non-significant. Of the four independent variables, ethnic belonging was the only variable with a significant, positive relationship with math assessments. This implies the

importance and power of ethnic belonging as a protective factor against school stressors and a catalyst for positive academic outcomes. These results align with findings from previous studies that showed positive effects of cultural identity on academic outcomes (Altschul et al., 2006; Boston & Warren, 2017; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Irving & Hudley, 2008).

These results elicit questions regarding why only ethnic belonging has such an impact on math considering the significant, positive relationship between ethnic belonging and self-efficacy. One hypothesis is that the sub-scale questions selected for the self-efficacy measure was not sensitive enough to show significance. Another hypothesis, given the strong, positive correlation between ethnic belonging and self-efficacy, is it may take more time for students' academic confidence to show up in official measures, particularly if they are developing Spanish and/or English language skills. I used the first wave of data, collected earlier in students' residency (when English language was likely not as developed), possibly impacting students' level of academic confidence.

Regression Model with Discipline Contacts as the Dependent Variable

Higher US assimilation levels of acculturation were significantly associated with lower discipline contacts. In the presence of ethnic belonging and self-efficacy, the negative association between US assimilated orientation and discipline increased (Table 14). One hypothesis for the drop in disciplinary contacts is that Latino students engaged in more assimilated behaviors to navigate classroom and school expectations that likely reflected Anglo-American cultural values and norms given the predominantly white,

monolingual English speaking educator population across the state of Oregon at the time (Oregon Department of Education, 2017). In other words, students adjusted their behaviors to match the expectations of predominantly white, monolingual English speaking teachers.

Another possible explanation is that students engaged in code switching, adjusting their behavior to accommodate environments and adult expectations in order to achieve school 'success' while holding on to their Latino-ness. Code switching is a widely observed adaptive phenomenon particularly present in multilingual, multicultural communities that involves the use of two or more languages and behavioral adaptation within interaction (Molinsky, 2007). Regardless of students' level of acculturation and consciousness regarding their behavioral choices at school, it suggests educator bias toward rewarding more US assimilated behaviors. This kind of cultural bias, whether it manifests in micro or macro ways, has been proven to negatively affect students' mental and physical health (Ai et al., 2014). Research has shown that students who have a strong sense of cultural identity were more likely to proactively cope and respond to discrimination using effective strategies, like discussion (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2008), again supporting the importance of ethnic belonging in school success.

In regards to my first research question, these first three analyses partially support the theory that contextual, microsystem influences impact students' sense of cultural belonging and identity, which in turn mediates self-efficacy, effecting school outcomes. Though linear, predictive relationships could not be established using one wave of data, a summary of significant relationship patterns are as follows:

1. Students' self-reported self-efficacy decreased when discrimination stress and US assimilated levels of acculturation increased.
2. Students' self-reported self-efficacy increased when ethnic belonging increased, even in the presence of discrimination stress.
3. State math assessment results increased when students' self-reported sense of ethnic belonging increased.
4. Discipline contacts decreased when students self-reported acculturated rates were more US assimilated.

RQ 2: Does the pattern of the relationship between discrimination stress, acculturation, ethnic identity, and self-efficacy and academic performance and discipline vary when controlling for time in residency?

In my study, time in residency represented exposure to school and other social systems (Martinez et al, 2011) and served as a proxy for language and socio-cultural adjustment to living in the US. The differences between acculturation, defined as the “phenomena resulting from continuous contact between groups of individuals from different cultures, including subsequent changes in the cultural patterns of one or both groups” (Berry, 1998; Carter-Pokras & Bethune, 2009; Thomson & Hoffman-Goetz, 2009) and time in residency, length of time a student lived the US, warranted differentiation in data analyses because acculturation reflects cultural preferences and the use of particular cultural lifeways whereas time in residency reflects the approximate age at which and degree of exposure of educational systems, norms, values, and procedures. As extensive studies have shown, a student’s academic success may be determined to a

large degree by the extent to which they are able to navigate the educational system and the culture of school, above and beyond their mastery of academic content.

Research question two examines the relationship between and the degree to which linguistic, sociocultural adjustment, and exposure to social systems interact with the established independent variables and school outcomes. To answer research question two, I compared the output generated when controlling for time in residency to output generated when not controlling for time in residency.

Regression Model Controlling for TR with State Math Assessments as the Dependent Variable

Time in residency was not significant in any of the modeling for state math assessments. Model 2 (Table 15) was the only significant model ($R^2 = .140$, $F(1, 58) = 7.480$, $p < .01$), reflecting a positive relationship between ethnic belonging and math outcomes ($\beta = .352$, $p < .01$), showing the same results whether controlling or not controlling for time in residency. These results suggest that length of residency does not influence the significant, positive relationship between ethnic belonging and math outcomes.

Model 3 (with the addition of self-efficacy) was not significant, $R^2 = .140$, $F(1, 57) = .002$, $p > .05$. The self-efficacy variable was not significant in any of the modeling and had non-significant betas when controlling ($\beta = .005$, $p > .05$) and not controlling ($\beta = .002$, $p > .05$) for time in residency. This indicates that time in residency did not influence self-efficacy and self-efficacy had no significant relationship with math assessment results. These outcomes were unexpected, as I hypothesized that self-

efficacy, no matter the duration of residency, would have a significant, positive relationship with math, particularly given previous studies on the promotion of resilience and self-esteem through ethnic-belonging (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2008).

Regression Model Controlling for TR with Discipline Contacts as the Dependent Variable

Time in residency was not significant in any of the modeling for discipline. With and without time in residency and across all modeling, only acculturation consistently presented significant, negative associations with (a decrease in) discipline. The non-significant relationship between time in residency and ethnic belonging means that duration of residency did not influence the sense of affinity students had toward their own ethnic culture, and therefore less to do with academic success that originally hypothesized.

Model 1 was significant when not controlling for TR ($p < .05$) and controlling for TR ($p < .05$). The acculturation variable was significant across model 1 ($\beta = -.179$, $p < .05$), model 2 ($\beta = -.212$, $p < .05$), and model 3 ($\beta = -.213$, $p < .05$), a decrease in betas and significance across models as compared to output when not controlling for time in residency. This means that when language development, social adjustment, and growing understanding of US systems are constant, the relationship between acculturation and discipline decreases in significance and association, though still significant. Those findings make logical sense given the strong, positive correlation between time in residency and acculturation ($r = .414$, $p < .01$) and their distinct definitions. Results imply, regardless of how long a student has lived in Oregon, that

acculturation makes meaningful a difference in discipline students experience in Oregon schools.

Research Limitations

Time period. The ALAS data included three years of longitudinal data. I utilized one year of the data from a seven-year old study and, therefore, was limited in causation, interpretation, and generalization of the research results across time-period. This is important for this study because school and community conditions that impact school life can change substantially from year-to-year. As such, the conclusions I drew from this study should be considered isolated snapshots that describe the factors of student ethnic belonging and self-efficacy during a specific time period and should be specific to students in 2011.

Student demographics. The ALAS data was not examined for differences between student demographics like gender, grade, economic status, country of origin, or assessed language proficiency (self-reported by students). Future research could include comparisons between student demographic groups to explore the potential differences due to cultural, and other socio-cultural, political, economic, and educational contextual factors.

Political climate. The 2011 Adolescent Latino Acculturation Study (ALAS) was conducted within a different socio-political context. Being an immigrant in Oregon and across the United States in today's context has become increasingly precarious given recent legislative activity (Library of Congress, 2018) and anti-immigration climate (CNN, 2018), potentially influencing students' psychological and physical well-being.

As such, interpretation of findings in reference to today's context was done with caution. Given the current day context, students may be more reluctant to reveal ethnic-cultural pride and affinity toward their culture of origin and academically effected by unsafe community conditions, which would again inform how we conduct and interpret the research. Conducting a current day study of Latino adolescents in Oregon would resolve this issue and contribute to my findings.

Internal Validity Threats. Researcher bias and reactivity are threats (Maxwell, 2012) to validity. ALAS researchers conducted interviews personally in the course of their study, even when collecting survey responses. Researchers addressed bias by employing a number of strategies listed in Maxwell's validity checklist (2012): 1) committed to long term involvement and repeated interviews, 2) collected varied, rich data by typing up literal notes, 3) asked for respondent validation or member checks, 4) transparently addressed change in the observations the presence of the researcher may cause, 5) searched for discrepant and negative cases, 6) triangulated data from variety of sources and participants, 7) turned qualitative data into numbers (e.g. charts, tables), 8) compared results from multiple interviewers.

External Validity Threats. ALAS involved nonprobability, convenience sampling increasing the probability of external validity threat, meaning the participants selected from Latino youth and families in Oregon's I-5 corridor may not have reflected the overall Latino population across the state or country. All students voluntarily participated in the ALAS study, introducing the possibility of volunteer bias, which

increases in probability with self-selected participants who tend to be more educated and have fewer life stressors, skewing responses (Rosenthal and Rosnow, 2009).

Most student participants in the ALAS study were born in Mexico with the few born in Central America, South America and the Caribbean. Diversity in birth country introduces variation in experience, cultural norms, roles, and rules. As a result, responses from the subjects may not generalize to the overall Latino adolescent population in Willamette Valley, an area that is home to range of families who are recent immigrants to those have resided in the U.S. for generations.

Sampling. The ALAS research team critically established inclusion criteria that increased applicability of research outcomes to the population of study in Oregon. From three waves of measures, I selected the first wave of assessment, making my study cross-sectional, automatically limiting interpretation and rendering my study non-causal. Outcomes from my study are appropriately situated to inform future theories, studies, and research, but would have more causal implications if I were able to take advantage of the longitudinal data set.

Instruments. For the purposes of focusing measures of ethnic belonging and self-efficacy, I selected four and three questions from the MEIM (Phinney, 1997) and the Youth Confidence (Oregon Social Learning Center, 2011) instruments respectively. To ensure that they were reliable, I conducted an internal consistency test for both new subscales ($\alpha = .736$ and $\alpha = .749$, respectively). In addition, the perceived discrimination stress measure asked respondents whether they experienced discrimination in the last three months and if they did, to rate the degree of stress experienced on a 5-point scale (0

= no stress or *not at all stressful* to 5 = *extremely stressful*). Students who did not experience discrimination stress were still included in the total number of participants, lowering the mean and skewing the distribution of results. This measure was selected to protect a larger participant sample size, but compromised any inferences that can be made related to the relationship between discrimination stress and other variables.

Future Research

Replicate and expand to age groups. Given the changing socio-political landscape and restricted applicability of outcomes, I recommend replication of the study and expansion of research to elementary and high school students as well as areas outside of Oregon's I-5 corridor.

Within group study. ALAS focused on social adjustment among Latino youth in varying times of residency. The extant ALAS data utilized for my study focused further on the impact of ethnic belonging and identity on school outcomes without taking into consideration potential contextual school variables that could contribute to higher levels of ethnic belonging like the racial-ethnic-cultural congruence with the student body or staff, or school climate and culture. Additional research on students in culturally congruent or inclusive environments and pedagogy (e.g. dual language immersion) would distinguish how and why contextual factors affect students as well as inform school systems change.

Instrument development. To focus data on the constructs of ethnic identity and belonging and self-efficacy, I selected questions from each the MEIM and the Youth Confidence measures. Future research could focus on development of measures that are

sensitive enough to monitor changes in acculturation, confidence, or ethnic identity to inform school, family, and community intervention.

Triangulating data. Another interesting and valuable extension of this study would be to triangulate ethnic belonging data with instructional observations and teacher interviews. This kind of data would allow us to explore school level interactions that effect students' sense of self and efficacy. For example, the effects of culturally affirming instructional content, pedagogy, or programs on academic achievement.

On a final note for future research implications, my study barely touches the surface of what could be a powerful lever for engaging our Latino youth and other youth of color in school. Further research is needed to understand students across developmental stages, explore the impact of environmental contexts, improve construct measures, and understand how instruction and other school factors influence ethnic-cultural identity.

Implications for Practice

This study was conducted with the purpose of learning more about the relationship between cultural identity and academic achievement. As well-intentioned educators continue to struggle to close the service gap for our Latino students and other students of color, knowing more about the relationship between identity and school outcomes could prevent gaps 'upstream' and in fact, foster academic growth and social-emotional resiliency. This study offers preliminary evidence regarding the relationship between ethnic belonging and identity, self-efficacy, and academic outcomes.

District and school implications. Affirming and providing opportunities for Latino students to develop a sense of positive cultural identity could have a powerful, positive impact on their school engagement and academic achievement. Findings from my study show significant relationships between ethnic identity and school outcomes for Latino middle schoolers in Oregon. Given the consistency of the research and the historical outcomes for Latino students in Oregon, schools and districts cannot afford to ignore the critical value of cultural identity and belonging. Given the disproportionality of white teachers in Oregon schools whose instruction reflect anglo-centric culture and the dominant culture that prevails, it would require a transformation of the content and method of professional learning that focuses on developing culturally inclusive, asset-based pedagogy and school culture, and an interrogation of policies and practices that perpetuate inequities and bias.

School districts and schools are positioned to allocate resources toward professional learning and programming that support cultural belonging and identity to increase resilience and self-efficacy for all students. For example, professional learning could include pedagogical awareness, knowledge, and skill building in the following areas:

- building a classroom culture of community and belonging with students;
- integrating student identity into instructional content and practices;
- curriculum development and auditing;
- culturally inclusive instructional moves.

Additionally, results from my study suggest that behavioral norms and expectations in schools are biased toward more Anglo-oriented behaviors, known to have detrimental effects on our racially and ethnically diverse students, negatively affecting their educational success and psychosocial well-being. Research and training on bias and discipline has increased across the country in response to the impact of disproportionate discipline, including disconnection to positive peer groups, increase in drop out and school-to-prison rates. This can be addressed through policy changes, re-structuring of behavioral systems that hold educators accountable for developing relationships with and between students, and professional learning on topics like implicit bias and culturally responsive restorative practices.

Many schools are already implementing multi-tiered systems of support, a conceptual framework for data-driven, responsive instructional practices. Schools must include culturally inclusive and responsive instruction and programming as a critical component of foundational, core instruction (tier I), centering it as an essential value and practice for all educators that is monitored and improved to increase engagement and outcomes. Studies show that cultural belonging and positive identity increase in schools when instruction promotes high-level thinking and application (Cooper, 1998).

Community Implications. Studies have found that social support from family and friends (microsystem influences) may be a mechanism by which ethnic identity is developed, leading to a higher level of self-esteem (Blash & Unger, 1995). Stress on families, particularly families newly immigrated to the United States, often effects the support provided in the home (Smokowski, Chapman, & Bacallao, 2007). Community

organizations could more effectively serve families by creating a collaborative network that supports effective coordination of services and resources to alleviate familial stress and promote community, strengthening protective factors, and building upon strengths and assets of the community.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The purpose of my research was to examine the relationship between the cultural identity of Latino youth in Oregon, their sense of self-efficacy, and school outcomes. My theoretical framework hypothesized an influence of contextual factors like time in residency, discrimination stress and acculturation on cultural identity. My study showed that discrimination stress and acculturation were important regardless of how long students were in Oregon. Discrimination stress and US assimilated levels of acculturation negatively interacted with identity and efficacy in critical ways, warranting further study.

Ethnic identity is a salient factor in academic achievement for Latino youth. Strongly tied to self-efficacy, my study shows that it could serve as a buffer against the effects of discrimination stress while positively influencing math outcomes. Findings from this study prompts additional questions regarding how and why, particularly in light of the weak link between self-efficacy and math outcomes in the regression outputs, counter to findings in the literature.

In light of the historical outcomes for Latino students and student life stressors like discrimination stress and assimilation, my study underscores a significant point--- culture matters. Given the propensity for learning by all students, my study implicates that it is not the students who need to be altered in some way but in fact, the inadequacies and biases in our school systems. By valuing and integrating students' cultural identities

and assets into school culture and practice, we may bridge a gap in our practice and change the trajectory for our students.

APPENDIX A
ALAS ETHNIC IDENTITY

FAM ID: AL ___ ___
 RESP: **1** TC Male **8** TC Female
 WAVE: 1A 1B 1C 1D 2A 2B 2C 2D 3A 3B 3C 3D
 DATE: ___ / ___ / _____
 INT ID: ___
 INT LOC: **1**-OSLC **2**-Home **3**-Telephone

Data checked: ___
 (assessors initials)___

Adolescent Latino Acculturation Study (ALAS)

Ethnic Identity

In this country, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe their different backgrounds or ethnic groups. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Mexican-American, Hispanic, Black, Asian-American, American Indian, European, and American. An ethnic group refers to a group of people who share traits or customs. The following questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

1. In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be _____

1. Asian or Pacific Islander
2. White
3. Hispanic/Latino/ Mexican
4. Native American or Aleutian Islander/Eskimo
5. Black/African-American
6. Other (specify)
7. Multiracial

Use the numbers given below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

| | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Strongly agree disagree | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

2. I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs. _____
3. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group. _____
4. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me. _____

5. I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own. _____
6. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership. _____
7. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to. _____
8. I sometimes feel it would be better if different ethnic groups didn't try to mix together. _____
9. I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life. _____
10. I often spend time with people from ethnic groups other than my own. _____
11. I really have not spent much time trying to learn more about the culture and history of my ethnic group. _____
12. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group. _____
13. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me, in terms of how to relate to my own group and other groups. _____
14. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group. _____
15. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments. _____
16. I don't try to become friends with people from other ethnic groups. _____
17. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs. _____
18. I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups. _____
19. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group. _____
20. I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own. _____
21. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background. _____

The End

APPENDIX B
ALAS YOUTH CONFIDENCE – YOUTH REPORT

FAM ID: AL ___ ___
 RESP: ___ 1 TC Male 8 TC Female
 WAVE: 1A 1B 1C 1D 2A 2B 2C 2D 3A 3B 3C 3D
 DATE: ___ / ___ / _____
 INT ID: _____
 INT LOC: 1-OSLC 2-Home 3-Telephone

| |
|--|
| Data checked: ___ (assessors initials)___ |
|--|

Adolescent Latino Acculturation Study (ALAS)

Youth Confidence—Youth Report

Many people feel unsure about themselves in some areas. We'd like to know how you have been feeling about yourself in the following areas over the last 6 months. By confident, we mean feeling sure about yourself or satisfied with yourself. If this is summer, please think about how you felt during the last school term before summer and answer questions about that time.

Over the last 6 months (or if this is summer, during the school term), how have you been feeling about:

Scale: Very Confident = 5, Somewhat Confident= 4, Somewhere in the Middle = 3, Not too Confident = 2, Not at all Confident = 1

1. your physical appearance 5 4 3 2 1

2. your ability to do well in
 activities such as sports, 5 4 3 2 1
 school clubs, scouts, music,
 etc.?

3. making friends and getting
 along well with others your 5 4 3 2 1
 age?

4. cooperating with adult
 expectations? 5 4 3 2 1

4.a. Do you go to school (now or you will return after summer holidays)?

- 1—Yes **If “yes”, continue to #5**
- 2—No **If “no”, skip to #6**

5. doing a good job on
schoolwork? 5 4 3 2 1

6. How confident you are that
you'll become a successful 5 4 3 2 1
adult?

The End

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