Family Support Mediating the Effect of Ethnic Identity on Academic Self-Concept
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Introduction

- First-generation college students tend to struggle more academically and have lower academic achievement in comparison to other generations of college students (Stephens, et al., 2012).
- Academic self-concept and academic achievement are positively associated and mutually reinforcing (Marsh & Martin, 2011).
- Self-concept is one’s self-perceptions formed through experience with and interpretations of one’s environment (Shavelson, et al., 1976).
- There are not a lot of studies that focus on the relationship between ethnic identity and academic self-concept for all ethnic minority first-generation students.
- Ethnic identity refers to one’s sense of belonging, perceptions, feelings, and behavior through membership in an ethnic group, usually one in which there is heritage, ancestry, or kinship (Stuart & Jose, 2014).
- Ethnic identity is significantly correlated with both academic self-concept and academic achievement among first-generation Mexican Americans, but not other generations of Mexican Americans. This may be attributed to family support (Aguayo, et al., 2011).
- The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between ethnic identity and academic self-concept and whether family support would mediate that effect of ethnic identity on academic self-concept.

Methods

- Participants
  - 133 ethnic minority students (41.4% African American/Black, 13.5% Latino/Hispanic, 26.3% Asian American, 15.8% mixed, 3.0% other; 70.7% female, 39.3% male); M age = 18.32 (SD = 0.43), ranging from 17 to 22.
- Procedure
  - Anonymous web-based longitudinal survey.
- Measures

Data Analysis

Bivariate regressions were run first to test zero-order correlations. A hierarchical linear regression was used with academic self-concept as the dependent variable. The independent variable, ethnic identity, was entered into the first block and the proposed mediator, family support, was entered into the second block.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Bivariate Zero-Order Correlations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Academic Self-Concept</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Family Support</td>
<td>0.31* (p &lt; 0.01)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean 48.67 35.83 19.65
Std. Deviation 12.10 7.95 6.32

α = 0.93 0.93 0.92

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Hierarchical Linear Regression Models</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1 (R²=0.010)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2 (R²=0.096)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>0.59*</td>
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</table>

Note: N = 133; *p < 0.01

Discussion

- First study to examine the relationship between ethnic identity and academic self-concept mediated by family support for first-generation college students.
- Contrary to previous studies, ethnic identity is not significantly related to academic self-concept. The impact of the students’ first-generation status may be the explanation for this change.
- Although family support does not function as a mediator in the model, family support is positively related to both ethnic identity and academic self-concept.
- These findings suggest that targeting family support may help raise academic self-concept and, ultimately, raise academic achievement among first-generation college students.

Future Directions

- Future research should further examine the influence of family support on the academic success, specifically for first-generation college students; as these students are likely to have closer relationships with their families and often experience a tremendous amount of financial obligation to them.
- More research should assess why first-generation status would change the relationship between ethnic identity and academic self-concept because existing research has been inconclusive regarding this association.

Acknowledgements

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