

# 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
- ❖ **Ethnic Identity.** The *Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure* (Phinney, 1992).
  - ❖ **Academic Self-Concept.** The *Academic Self-Concept Scale* (Cokley, et al., 2003).
  - ❖ **Family Support.** The family support subscale of the *Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support* (Zimet, et al., 1988).
- 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.

## 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.

## Results

Table 1 Bivariate Zero-Order Correlations				Table 2 Hierarchical Linear Regression Models				
	1	2	3		B	SE	$\beta$	t
1. Academic Self-Concept	-			Model 1 ( $R^2=0.010$ )				
2. Ethnic Identity	0.10	-		Ethnic Identity	0.15	0.13	0.10	1.15
3. Family Support	0.31*	0.28*	-	Model 2 ( $R^2=0.096$ )				
Mean	48.67	35.83	19.65	Ethnic Identity	0.02	0.13	0.02	0.17
Std. Deviation	12.10	7.95	6.32	Family Support	0.59*	0.17	0.31	3.51
$\alpha$	0.93	0.93	0.92					

Note: *N* = 133; \**p* < 0.01

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## 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.

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