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Foreword

Dr. Ronald E. McNair was a mission specialist on the Challenger space shuttle, and 25 years ago, his legacy for exploration and knowledge was memorialized. By an act of the U.S. Congress, our nation’s universities were gifted a program to provide access to graduate education to underserved and under-represented students. The McNair Scholars Program on our campus has served as the beginning of an academic enterprise for numerous groups of talented individuals. Many have completed not only baccalaureate degrees, but also master’s and doctoral degrees as well. These individuals are a part of Dr. McNair’s legacy to open the avenues of academic inquiry to all.

On behalf of the university, I congratulate the McNair Scholars whose research is reflected in this year’s California State University, Sacramento McNair Scholars Journal and I salute the faculty and staff who have worked to encourage our students to pursue academic excellence. The McNair Program is a wonderful treasure and our students have certainly reaped the benefits of this wonderful investment.

Chevelle Newsome, Ph.D.
Dean of Graduate Studies
McNair Director and Principal Investigator
Fall 2011
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Beyond College Enrollment: The Experiences and Strategies of Academically Successful First Generation Latinas

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Dr. Julie Lopez Figueroa, faculty mentor

ABSTRACT
The Latino population in the United States has grown dramatically, except on college campuses. Only eleven percent of Latinos over the age of 25 hold a college or graduate degree; the majority of these degree holders are females (NCES 2010). While the Latino population is the largest growing population in the United States, Latino enrollment in college is among the lowest of most racial/ethnic groups in the United States. This statistic is cause for concern. The disproportionate number of Latinos in higher education, and the fact that Latinas are a majority within that minority, informs the researcher's two-fold purpose: 1) to examine the defining educational experiences of Latinas in higher education, and 2) to examine the strategies these women use in order to succeed academically while maintaining their ethnic identity. In order to answer the research question, the researcher first examined the history of Latinos in education in an attempt to find the root cause of the Latino crisis in higher education.

In 1848, the United States and Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The treaty ended the Mexican-American War and legally stipulated that the Mexicans living within the newly annexed territories of the Southwest were to be incorporated into the United States and considered “White” by law (Menchaca 1999). Within a year, the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was violated, which ignited a process of racialization. Mexicans began to live within a social structure that popularized the belief that Mexicans were inferior to Whites. Mexicans were labeled as “Others” and treated as less than human (Menchaca 1999). Through the process of racial formation (Omi and Winant 1994), the U.S. government set into motion an institutionalized legacy of discrimination against Mexicans and all people who were labeled as ‘Other’ (Menchaca 1999). To this day, discrimination permeates popular consciousness and U.S. practices towards Latinos, specifically Mexicans which can be seen through subtractive schooling practices and other forms of dealing with the “Mexican Problem.”
Although “subtractive schooling,” (a term coined by Angela Valenzuela in 1999), is a modern concept, its practice first began for Mexican children after 1848 with the expansion of Catholic schools in the Southwest. The main goal of these schools was to remove “ignorance” through education (San Miguel 1999). The slow resolve to the “Mexican Problem” (Gonzalez 1999) created national concern given a new formation of the United States that demanded a unified sense of what it meant to be a citizen within its new borders. In this regard, Americanizing students (San Miguel 1999) overshadowed Catholic conversion. During the 1880s and 1890s, Mexican children in rural and urban areas attended segregated schools; this educational policy imposed learning conditions that suppressed learning. The public discourse that Mexicans were inferior to Whites (San Miguel 1999) was now being expressed through public action. English-only policies and other subtractive schooling practices were defining aspects of schooling development during this time period, especially with support from social scientists who embraced the doctrine of racial distribution of intelligence (Gonzalez 1999; San Miguel 1999).

According to Gonzalez (1999), the inferiority of Mexicans and Mexican children was further developed by social scientists such as William James, Lewis Terman, Henry Goddard, and E.L. Thorndike, who embraced the doctrine of racial distribution of intelligence, and believed that intelligence, was inherited. Therefore, the IQ test scientifically legitimized unequal outcomes and social inequalities, such as the belief that Mexican children had defective or inferior brains (Gonzalez 1999). As long as cultural deficit thinking continues to serve as a useful reference to explain Latino achievement, historical perceptions and the practices that originated from those perceptions will continue having long term impacts on Latinos today. Certainly, there were important educational strides, but considering the disproportionate representation of students to the number of college age individuals of Latino descent leads to the realization, that the educational system needs to be repaired.

Latino enrollment in higher education increased between 1980 and 2000, but completion and enrollment rate remains proportionally lower in comparison to White and African American students (Nevarez 2001; Chiang et al. 2004; Figueroa 2006). In fact, Latinos only receive 12 percent of college degrees, a number much lower than the 67 percent attained by Whites (NCES 2010). The lack of Latinos in higher education causes concern not only because the Latino population is the largest growing minority group in the United States, but because Latinos continue to have the largest dropout rate from high school and they remain underrepresented in institutions of higher education (Garcia 2001; Figueroa 2006).
Although Latinos in general continue to be underrepresented in institutions of higher education, Latinas are making some educational gains by entering college and completing their degrees at a higher rate than Latino males (Figueroa 2006), which makes Latinas a majority within a minority. The success of first generation Latinas is significant because most do not have parental guidance or assistance in admission and retention strategies (Achor and Morales 1990; Gandara 1995). This research seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge by building upon prior research through an exploration of the experiences and strategies of first generation Latina college students who academically succeed while maintaining their ethnic identity. This researcher will attempt to answer the following question: What experiences and specific strategies do first generation Latinas at California State University Sacramento use in order to academically succeed while maintaining their ethnic identity?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic success is not mediated solely by skill mastery but is rather, a social experience (Rendon 2006). Stanton-Salazar and Delpit (1995) affirm that academic success is equally informed by the degree to which all students are able to decode expected behaviors. The literature on campus climate reinforces the idea that academic success is a contextualized activity that is mediated by a student’s race, class, and gender (Hurtado et al. 1997; Sue 2004; Sue 2005; Garcia and Figueroa 2006).

College Climate: Educational Politics that Mediate Achievement
The history of institutional racism in higher education has deep roots and connections to societal beliefs that have been left unexamined and unquestioned (Sue 2004; Sue 2005). Institutional racism is invisible and silent in nature, which indicates that its ideologies are normative and function as a default standard (Sue 2005). More specifically, institutional racism is a social system that omits people of color while giving advantage to privileged members of society (Sue 2005; Garcia and Figueroa 2006). The current use of biased admission criteria in higher education is an example of institutional racism, which affects college access for Latinos (Sedlacek and Brooks 1976; Vasquez 1982; Sue 2004; Sue 2005).

College access and educational expectations have caused a decline of Latino students in institutions of higher education. In fact, the pattern of college access and choice among Latinos remain unchanged since the 1970s (Hurtado et al. 1997). Also, Latino students (who have the lowest expectations regarding degree attainment) are less likely to enroll in college immediately after high school, and tend to apply to fewer colleges when
compared to other students (Hurtado et al. 1997). Although Latino students
do face challenges entering institutions of higher education, students of color
in general are entering institutions of higher education at record numbers
when compared to previous years (Dey and Hurtado 1995).

The changing demographics of higher education are not only in the type of
students attending college, but also in institutional missions and policies (Dey
and Hurtado 1995). The representation of ethnic minority groups and other
non-traditional students has increased among first time entrants to four-year
colleges and universities, but Latinos have experienced a decline in the rate
of college participation (Dey and Hurtado 1995). Due to the increase in
students of color in general, and decline of enrollment among Latinos, many
administrators in institutions of higher education have worked together to
promote racial and ethnic diversity on college campuses.

Issues regarding campus racial climate can be used to enhance educational
policy, practice, and progress in educating diverse students (Hurtado et al.
1998). Segregation had historically been the culture of higher education,
and many college campuses sustain long-standing, often unrecognized,
benefits for particular student groups (Hurtado et al. 1998; Sue 2005; Garcia
and Figueroa 2006). Therefore, the success of creating supportive campus
environments often depends on an institution’s initial response to the
entrance of students of color (Hurtado et al. 1998). Increasing the structural
diversity of an institution is an important initial step towards improving
climate, because college campuses with high proportions of White students
provide limited opportunities for interaction across race/ethnicity barriers,
which, in turn, limits student learning experiences with socially and culturally
diverse groups (Hurtado et al. 1998; Gurin et al. 2002). Therefore, one
important and crucial step toward improving campus climate and increasing
diversity is to increase the representation of people of color (Hurtado et al.
1998).

The educational and social benefits of racial diversity in higher education
positively affect all students that attend a diverse college or university.
However, simply attending a diverse college or university does not guarantee
a meaningful inter-group interaction (Gurin et al. 2002). Frequency and
quality of informal interaction with diverse peers and classroom diversity
is of true importance (Terenzini et al. 2001; Gurin et al. 2002). The effects
of diversity include increased academic skills, citizenship engagement, racial
and cultural understanding, and judgment of compatibility among different
groups in democracy (Terenzini et al. 2001; Gurin et al. 2002). Racial and
ethnic diversity is crucial to student development in higher education.
Therefore, the lack of diversity in institutions of higher education and in the classroom can affect the interaction Latinas have with their professors.

**Teacher and Student Interaction**

The number of Latino faculty in higher education increased dramatically between 1979 and 1989, but the number remains small compared to White and non-Latino faculty (Verdugo 1995). Also, underrepresented faculty members have not kept pace with the increase of underrepresented students entering institutions of higher education. This lack of balance creates a challenge for Latino faculty members who mentor and help Latino students in their academic engagement (Montero-Siebirth 1996; Rinn 1997; Hurtado et al. 1999). Therefore, increasing the number of Latino faculty members is necessary for the academic achievement of Latina students.

For Latino students, Latino faculty members are especially significant because of the similar class and cultural background (Loo and Rolison 1986). For this reason, researchers established that having Latino faculty in powerful positions would positively influence Latino students and assist in alleviating the challenge of retaining Latino students (Norman and Norman 1995; Verdugo 1995). Unfortunately, Latino faculty members often lack the institutional power and status that would enable them to fill such positions (Sedlacek and Brooks 1976; Verdugo 1995). Also, the under-representation of Latina faculty members minimizes accessibility of mentors for Latina students (Castellanos 1996). However, it is also necessary for instructors to stop gendered schooling practices because of the negative effects they have on the academic achievement of Latina students.

**Gendered Schooling in Education**

Gendered schooling refers to practices used by educators that create an imbalance of attention, support and expectations between male and female students. In the K-12 system, female students can suffer from the “disappearing syndrome” in which the voices of female students are less likely to be heard in science, history and math classes; because their voices are not heard, female students participate less and receive a second class education (Canada and Pringle 1995; Sadker et al. 2000). There is a relationship between academic achievement and self-esteem. The imbalance of attention in the classroom, therefore, causes female students to end up with lower self-esteem and consequently with lower academic achievement (Sadker et al. 2000). Unfortunately, gendered schooling practices affect Latinas in the K-12 system and also at the undergraduate and graduate level.

The differential treatment of women in college continues to exist partially because many teachers are not conscious about gender inequities in the classroom (Tettegah 1996; McGlynn 1997). Gendered schooling at the
undergraduate and graduate level can be seen by the fact that one-half of students in any given classroom are silent and two thirds of those students are female, which indicates that gendered schooling causes an impact in learning and self esteem, since participation enhances both variables (Hurtado 1994; Sadker et al. 2000). Also, students who experience the classroom environment as less than hospitable tend to participate less in classroom discussion. Therefore, gendered schooling along with poor college climate can lead to poor student engagement and response (McGlynn 1997).

Student Engagement and Response
Latino students also deal with multiple levels of discrimination and racism that affects their academic engagement (Cuadraza 1992). These experiences have negative effects on their academic engagement and response. For example, Latino students deal with differential treatment and stereotyping by fellow students, faculty members, campus police, teaching assistants, administrators, and staff (Cuadraza 1992; Castellanos 1996; Suarez-Balcazar et al. 2003). Also, discrimination on college campuses has increased over the years and, as a consequence, it not only affects the adjustment and persistence of Latino students but it also creates feelings of alienation, intimidation, segregation, and isolation (Hurtado 1994; Gonzalez 2002; Suarez-Balcazar et al. 2003). The experiences of Latino students are important because their educational beliefs are influenced by their educational experiences. Also, those beliefs in turn affect the students’ attitudes towards the college and their intentions to leave or stay (Eimers and Pike 1997). In fact, Latino students are more likely to drop out than their non-minority counterparts (Eimers and Pike 1997; Saunders and Serna 2004). It is important to understand that the experiences of Latino college students strongly stem from academic theories and perspectives on student achievement.

Perspectives and Theories on Achievement
According to Ogbu (1992), the degree of trust in a relationship with White Americans and with educational institutions is important and necessary in trying to understand the behaviors, decisions, and attitudes that minority students have towards schooling and achievement. Ogbu (1992) explains that “involuntary minorities” (i.e., people who unwillingly migrated to the U.S. and were oppressed and discriminated against) such as Latinos endorse academic success as a means of getting ahead, but they are still skeptical about their likelihood of advancing in society. Although Ogbu makes important points regarding minorities and education, his research does not look at the institutional and structural history of discrimination that affects the way Latino students view schools and themselves.
Meritocracy in higher education is based on the belief that ability, effort, and success are all interrelated (Sue 2004). Therefore, administrators internalize the idea that if students drop out it is because the students did not try hard enough. Merit creates the illusion that everyone encounters the same problems in life and everyone comes from the same caliber of schools (Sue 2004). Therefore, the playing field is level and merit is all that is needed to succeed in institutions of higher education. The problem with merit is that it denies the reality of the lives students of color have lived, and the unsupportive and poor schools that they have attended (Sue 2004). Merit-based systems blame the individual student for dropping out instead of looking at the real problem of student retention.

The Cultural Deficit model explains that cultural values, as transmitted to the family, are dysfunctional, and are therefore the reason for low educational and occupational attainment among minorities (Solorzano 1997). This model also examines the “deficiencies” in the social structure of minority families such as large, disorganized, female-headed families, Spanish speaking, and patriarchal or matriarchal family structures (Solorzano 1997). The cultural deficit model blames the individual and the culture of Latino students. However, research shows a positive correlation between the Latino culture and the academic success of Latino students (Vasquez 1982; Trueba 1988).

The role of culture is an important factor in school achievement for Latino students, not only at the collective (ethnic group) level, but also at the individual level, in part because intellectual development is socially and culturally based (Trueba 1988). Parental involvement and support, optimistic outlook, drive to succeed, ethnicity as a source of strength/pride, and role models/mentors are also important factors that contribute to the success of Latino students in higher education (Casas and Ponterotto 1984; Arellano and Padilla 1996; Wortham 2002; Chiang et al. 2004). The emotional support of friends and family has a positive effect on the persistence of Latinas in higher education (Casas and Ponterotto 1984; Cabrera et al. 1993; Castellanos 1996; Nora et al. 1996; Garcia 2001; Gonzalez 2002). For many Latinas, family and (more specifically) emotional parental support influences them to pursue a doctorate degree (Gandara 1982; Achor and Morales 1990). Since Latinas in doctorate programs have to deal with overcoming the assumptions of others about themselves, Latinas find fellow Latinas to help support them emotionally (Cuadraz 1992). The importance of culture and the positive correlation between culture and academic achievement have enabled researchers to derive the theory of Resistance with Accommodation among Latinas.
Resistance with Accommodation is common in school settings where Latino students continue to struggle to identify and deal with others’ identification of them in a culturally alien setting, such as schools (Wortham 2002). In Wortham’s case study, the Latino adolescents faced and struggled with the choice to adapt to mainstream Anglo values embodied in school practices (assimilation) and maintaining their identities as Mexicans (2002). By conforming to mainstream Anglo expectations, Latino students were seen as “White” but Wortham explains that many Latino students conformed to mainstream expectations enough to do well in school, but they also preserved their own cultural identities (accommodation without assimilation) (Vasquez 1982; Achor and Morales 1990; Wortham 2002). This form of Resistance with Accommodation was found more common among Latinas than Latino males (Wortham 2002), which partially explains why there are more Latinas entering and graduating from institutions of higher education.

Scholars argue that students who succeed in higher education do so because they have assimilated to the dominant norms and values, yet Latino students have constructed paths through the terrain of discrimination and prejudice they have encountered in schools, and they continue to identify as Latina/o (Barajas and Pierce 2001). Latinas maintain positive definitions of themselves and they have supportive relationships with other Latinas. This responsive action can be explained by cultural democracy, which maintains that identification with one’s ethnic group is a necessary ingredient of academic success, and psychological adjustment is known as a method of persistence in higher education (Vasquez 1982). In fact, first generation Latina college students in particular protect themselves against crippling effects of being a triple minority (Latina, female, first generation college students) by establishing a sense of pride in their origins, history, and group identity, as well as in their abilities (Vasquez 1982; Hurtado 1994). The fact that Latinos tend to befriend fellow Latino students has caused some scholars to argue that Latinos are self-segregating.

The tendency for students of color to self-segregate from a university’s predominantly white student body into their own respective racial groups is known as “racial balkanization,” which has shown positive outcomes for Latinos (Villalpando 2003). Same-race peer group affiliations for students of color have post-college outcomes that benefit them in important ways (Villalpando 2003). For instance, the Chicana/o peer group’s cultural resources and assets may influence the success of fellow Chicana/o students by mitigating isolation, marginalization and racism that Chicana/os face in higher education (Villalpando 2003). Also, informal and formal student organizations bring together Chicana/o college students who share similar values, interests, and who can offer support and validation (Hurtado 1998;
Villalpando 2003). Therefore, while white students interpret ethnic group clustering as racial segregation, minority students view this behavior as a method of cultural support within a larger unsupportive environment (Hurtado 1998). Latino students also turn to friends and family for emotional support as a method of persisting in higher education.

The literature explains how college climate, teacher-student interaction, gendered schooling, student engagement, and theories on academic achievement intertwine and affect the status and experiences of Latinas in higher education. However, the literature is lacking research that specifically deals with current data on first generation Latina college students and an examination of the strategies used in order to academically succeed while maintaining an ethnic identity.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is two-fold: 1) to explore the experiences of first generation Latina students at California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State), and 2) to examine the strategies that first generation Latinas at Sacramento State use in order to academically succeed while maintaining their ethnic identity. The goal is to provide current knowledge to previous research regarding the college experience of Latinas and to provide a framework for future policy implications in academia. The study focuses on first generation Latinas, their background/demographics, family-community cultural wealth, and college. This study’s intent was exploratory. This researcher used a qualitative method approach to answer the research question: What are the experiences and strategies that first generation Latina college students in order to academically succeed while maintain an ethnic identity?

The researcher combined data collected from six student interviews and current graduation rates to unpack experiences of academically successful Latinas who have maintained their ethnic identity. In fact, according to Robert C. Bogdan and Sari Knopp Biklen (1998), “If you want to understand how people make sense about their world, we have to bring to light the meaning making process that shapes how people uses language to speak, describe, and engage the world around them.” Therefore, in order to analyze the experiences of Latinas in higher education, the researcher needs to get close to the research participants, to hear them talk and observe them in their day to day lives (Bogdan and Biklen 1998). For this reason, the researcher found it most appropriate to conduct interviews with research participants.
Research Design
Originally, the researcher intended to interview between five to ten first generation Latinas. The participants in this study are Sacramento State junior and senior standing students who self-identify as Latina. In order to graduate from college, students must be able to maintain the university standard GPA. Therefore, it was important to interview Latina students who were close to graduating because it demonstrated that they have been able to academically succeed. Latina participants were also required to be first generation college students. First generation Latina students are important to document because their success is significant as most have no prior knowledge of the college experience. Also, they do not have the advantage of parental guidance when it comes to assistance in admission and retention strategies.

All of the participants in this study were between the ages of 21-28, and were raised in the United States. A few participants were born in a Latin American country but only remember living in the United States. All participants read and signed the consent to participate form.

Data Collection
Participants were interviewed for approximately one to two hours, and interviews were audio recorded for accuracy. Interviews took place at a time, location, and date where participants felt more comfortable. See the Appendix for further details that were given thorough the research participant consent form.

Interview Process
At the time of the interview, brief introductions were not needed because the researcher knew all the participants through previous encounters. However, in order to remove any form of nervousness or fear, the researcher and the participant spent nearly an hour having an informal and untaped conversation. Participants were also reminded of their rights and signed the consent to participate form. At this point the participants either decided on a Pseudonym or the researcher designated one for them. After the interview was completed, the interview was transcribed. After transcription was completed interviews were decoded and themes were found. Pseudonyms were given to all participants in order to protect their identities.

Research Question and Guiding Questions
Each of the questions used in the interviews explored a different phase of the participant’s life and experiences. The first section dealt with questions regarding the participant’s background and demographics. Questions included date of birth, place of birth, and parent’s educational level. The
second section dealt with questions regarding the participant’s teachers, schooling experiences and parental involvement in their educational growth. The third section had questions that allowed participants to explain and explore their college experience from their first day on campus to present feelings about the university. Participants were volunteers and were not paid for participation. This researcher personally conducted every phase of the interview.

Data Analysis
After each interview was completed, the interview was transcribed manually. Once all interviews were transcribed, they were reviewed and noted. After reviewing, the researcher contacted participants if there were any questions regarding accuracy. Once this was completed, the researcher began the coding process. Coding was done in order to identify themes, recurring ideas, language, and patterns of belief. It was through this coding process that the researcher came to the findings. In the coding process the researcher found recurring themes that dealt with resources and structural support and how they affected the participant’s educational experience. It was also through the coding process that the commonality of ESL placement was found, along with role of parents, college as a living idea, college transition, and the role of ethnic studies.

FINDINGS
Findings show that the amount of resources and structural support that first generation Latina college students received directly affected the amount of guidance that they received and inevitably their college experience. Comparing participants who attended public schools with those participants that attended charter schools, participants who attended charter schools for high school had a higher level of guidance and resources. In fact, Eva Rodriguez, a senior Sociology major with Salvadorian parents, described the charter school she attended in the following way.

ER: When I went to an open Charter school in L.A. we had two teachers to a class, so they would split up the class. There wouldn’t be more than thirty students so there would be fifteen students max per teacher.

First generation Latina college students who attended public schools in California had a different perspective regarding their public kindergarten through 12th grade education and what it provided them with. Danielle Esquivido, a senior Anthropology and Ethnic Studies major, explains her perception of her K-12 teachers.
DE: My elementary school teachers were like its environment…
ghetto. I did not receive a good education and was not prepared for
college. I had very few good teachers, most were just trying to pump
you out. They didn’t care.

Cristina Rocha, a senior Psychology and Ethnic Studies major explains
how and when she first realized what little her public K-12 education had
provided her with.

CR: My last math class was geometry but I didn’t know how I
had gotten there. I mean they just kept passing me even if I didn’t
know anything. I didn’t think anything about it until I went to City
College and took the entrance exam and was placed in Pre-Algebra.
Pre-Algebra was the last class I took in middle school, so the last
time I had a good quality education was in middle school.

It is visible through these three interviews that first generation Latina college
students have different educational experiences and perceptions regarding
their K-12 education. Some attended charter schools, which are known to
be significantly better equipped and provide more attention to students than
California public schools. The lack of attention that students receive in CA
public schools due to the overcrowding of students in classes may have a
direct effect on where participants were placed and how long it took for them
to get out.

From ESL to GATE
The respondents bring to light the lack of resources and structural support
that was denied to them in their K-12 education. Findings show that first
generation Latina college students were commonly placed in ESL (English
as a second language) programs simply because Spanish was their native
language. Feelings of frustration, confusion and anger surfaced during the
interview as participants explained that it was only because of their parents
and teachers that they were able to get placed out of the ESL program. Lily
Cruz, a senior Ethnic Studies major and Cristina Rocha share their personal
struggle in ESL classes and when they finally placed out.

LC: I had been there [ESL classes] since kindergarten and I
wasn’t able to get out of it until the fourth grade but it was only
because of the interaction I had with my teacher in the third grade. I
felt like I was stupid. I actually talked to my mom and I didn’t feel
like I belonged there.
CR: In Middle school I was placed in ESL because I spoke Spanish at home with my parents. The teacher I had for ESL had taught my mom like 14 years before me. She recognized me and my mom so she helped me test out of it and I actually ended up placing in GATE [Gifted and Talented Education]. At the time I didn’t think I was smart so when I was placed in GATE I was shocked.

The research participants bring to light the issues and feelings they held while being placed in ESL classes. It also shows that both parents and teachers play an important role in assisting and providing research participants with resources and guidance in order to help them test out of ESL classes. It is here that research participants first explain the vital role of parents.

Role of Parents
The role of parents (and the level of resources, structural support and guidance that they are able to assist their children with) is reflected in the experiences that first generation Latina college students faced in kindergarten through college. Findings showed that parents played a positive and supportive role in their child’s educational life and goals, whether through financial means, emotional means or both. Parents also interacted with teachers, but most participants explained that due to their parents’ low educational attainment (all received education in another country) there was a point where parents could no longer help them with their school work. Even though parents were unable to help their children with homework they still supported them as much as they could with their educational goals. Maribel Gonzalez, a senior Ethnic Studies major and Lily Cruz explain their parent’s involvement below.

MG: They were always there emotionally but after a while they couldn’t help us with homework.

LC: It was a foreign territory to him.

It is here that participants explain from their own viewpoints what it was like for their parents to help them with homework. They also share the real reason why so many Latino parents do not help their children with homework, and that is because they simply cannot. There is either a language, or educational barrier but it is not because Latino parents do not value education. In fact, most participants shared the fact that they grew up thinking about college.

College as a Living Idea
The idea of college was present for most of the participants, and it was usually older family members who introduced them and persuaded them
to attend college after high school. Participants explained that they were striving for an undergraduate degree in order to help their community by going back and being role models and to be able to help their families and for themselves. It is important to understand that the availability of resources, structural support and guidance did not only affect first generation Latina college students in the K-12 systems, but it also affected their college experience.

MG: My teachers would mention it (college) but it was basically my brother because I saw him go through it so I was like oh I have to do this.

Mari Barrera, a senior double major in Art and Ethnic Studies explains her personal reasons that she is striving for an undergraduate degree:

MB: So I want to do it for me but at the same time I want to do it because I think that there is an under representation of Chicanos and Mexican people, and people from Latin America. It’s not until somebody within our own community that you feel comfortable going out and seeking information and I wish I would have had somebody there. I hope kids can see me and be like her, this crazy girl did it so why can’t I?

Although research participants are first generation college students, they were not the first in their family to attend an institution of higher education. Seeing a family member attend an institution of higher education influenced the participant’s decision to attend higher education. Therefore, older siblings and family members paved the path to higher education for younger family members. This is another way that parents and family provide resources and structural support. However, most research participants expressed that they had a tough college transition.

**College Transition**

For the Latina college students in this study, their K-12 education did not adequately prepare them for college, so their college transition was less than pleasurable. The participants expressed feelings of inferiority and isolation when they first came to college. It was only after they met other Latina classmates and teachers that their college experience started to feel more positive. Clubs, organizations, programs and classes all assisted the participants in ensuring that they felt like they were part of the campus. Although many of the students reported having a positive college experience, findings also showed that they continued to feel the pressures of assimilation. The pressures of assimilation are then counteracted by the strategies used in order to academically succeed while maintaining an ethnic identity. The
strategies that were used were joining social, cultural and academic clubs. Other strategies were being involved in program like E.O.P. (Educational Opportunity Program), C.A.M.P. (College Assistance Migrant Program), and the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Scholars Program. Following are some of the participant’s comments regarding their feelings when they first arrived at the university.

MB: I felt very secluded, especially in the Art department, being that I was like the only Mexican.

LC: You feel lonely and like you don’t belong. I mean being here on campus you do feel different.

Although research participants attended both charter and CA public schools, they all felt unprepared for college which affected their college transition. Mari helps to explain how feeling unprepared added negativity to her college transition because she also felt alone in the university. Lily further spoke about feeling alone and like an outsider because she looked different than most of the people around her. These negative feelings were counteracted by taking courses on race and ethnicity which were mostly found in the Ethnic Studies department.

Role of Ethnic Studies
Participants expressed that Ethnic Studies is more than just a major. It is a department that allowed the participants to attain an undergraduate degree while also positively reinforcing their Latino culture and history. The participants explained that it was in college that they found their roots and found more reason to identify as Latina. Also, several participants explained that campus programs like C.A.M.P, E.O.P., the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Scholars Program, cultural clubs, social and professional organizations, and relationships with professors were all strategies that they used in order to academically succeed while maintaining their ethnic identity. Below are some of the participants’ responses.

DE: Being involved in EOP, McNair, Anthropology club E.S.S.A.A. and E.N.I.T. all helped me succeed academically and maintain my ethnic identity. They extremely helped me because if I didn’t have ENIT and Ethnic Studies I think I would go mad.

MB: I felt very dumb because I wondered why I didn’t know so much. But when I took La Mujer Chicana I was like. “Damn I’m at home.”
Danielle first reinforces how being involved in cultural, social, and academic clubs were all strategies that she used in order to academically survive and succeed while maintaining her ethnic identity. Danielle explains the role these different organizations played in her survival in higher education. Mari not only explains the feelings she first held when she began her undergraduate career but she also expresses the feelings she held when she first found ethnic studies. The Ethnic Studies department was a home for many students, where they were able to interact with other students and faculty that looked like them and understood their struggle.

DISCUSSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS
Reflecting on the experiences shared by participants, the majority believed that Latino faculty members positively influence first generation Latina college students (Verdugo 1995). Since the literature suggests that Latino faculty played an important role in the academic lives of first generation Latina college students, it is crucial that the number of Latino faculty members be increased in all college and university campuses. In fact, participants expressed that Latino faculty members assisted them in their personal and academic goals. In her interview, Lily Cruz spoke about her experiences with Latino faculty members:

*L.C.: I have met two amazing Latino professors here and keeping in touch with them has truly helped me. They’re the ones who first led me to consider graduate school. They helped me with the application process and wrote letters of recommendation for me. I know I can count on them and they have always been there for me.*

Therefore the increase of Latino faculty members may create a positive relationship between Latina students and college campuses and strong student engagement and response.

The feelings of alienation, difficulty in academic adjustment, and pressures to assimilate are all counteracted by parental support, cultural democracy, and self-preservation. The participants in this study, along with results from other scholars’ research suggest that academic adjustment in college can make the college transition difficult (Hurtado 1996). The challenges that first generation Latina college students face because of the difficulty in academic adjustment tends to bring about feelings of alienation (Hurtado 1994; Gonzalez 2002; Suarez-Balcazar et al. 2003).

Findings showed that parental involvement and support, along with using ethnicity as a source of strength and pride are all strategies used in order to counteract pressures of assimilation and difficulty with academic adjustment.
First generation Latina college students also continued to identify as Latina throughout their college years (Barajas and Pierce 2001), and actually explained that maintaining their ethnic identity was needed in order for them to academically succeed (Vasquez 1982). First generation Latina college students were able to maintain their ethnic identity by befriending fellow Latinas, i.e., self-preservation (Villalpando 2003) and by being involved in social and professional organizations, which assist in providing validation (Hurtado et al. 1998; Villalpando 2003).

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research would broaden the research question and attempt to find information that includes first generation Latino males, their experiences and how they are able to succeed while maintaining an ethnic identity. This researcher would examine the differences and similarities between different ethnic groups by conducting a multi-ethnic cross-examination in terms of college attendance, attainment, preparation, choice, access, and level of self-preservation.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the experiences and strategies of first generation Latina college students in terms of academic success and maintenance of ethnic identity. The researcher found that there are many variables that can positively and negatively affect the experiences of first generation Latina college students. First generation Latina college students continue to experience feelings of alienation and pressures to assimilate. These experiences are counteracted by involvement in social and professional organizations, cultural clubs, relationships with faculty, specific courses, and majoring in Ethnic Studies.

Proposition 209 passed in 1996, ending affirmative action in higher education. What policy makers must take into consideration when writing and supporting such polices and propositions is that Proposition 209 has negatively affected Latinas in higher education. This is not because Latinas are no longer given a “free card” into higher education but because universities are not looking at admissions criteria through a holistic approach. Instead they believe meritocracy has become the culture of higher education. This has created an even poorer college climate. Policy makers must stop to look at and consider the real side effects of policies. They must also strive to be ethnically and culturally aware of the issues that surround Latinas in higher education.
APPENDIX

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

April 15, 2011

Dear Participants,

My name is Jeanette Arellano Cano, and I am currently an undergraduate student at California State University, Sacramento, majoring in Ethnic Studies. I will be conducting a qualitative research study and invite you to participate, due to the fact that you self-identify as a first generation Latina college student. The purpose of this research project is two-fold: a) to explore the experiences of first generation Latina college students, b) explore the methods used by first generation Latina college students in order to academically succeed while maintaining an ethnic identity.

Upon agreement to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

- Participant will be contacted via email or by phone to set up interview date, time and location.
- Interview will take place at a time and location that is most convenient to the participant.
- Interview will last approximately 1-2 hours.
- The interview will be audio-taped to ensure accuracy in reporting the participant’s statements.
- Researcher and participant will engage in debriefing in order to discuss any questions or concerns the participants might have about the study.
- If anything is unclear a follow up interview will be necessary, but it will not last more than one hour.
- Transcription of interview will occur followed by destroying recordings.
- Coding and analysis of interviews.
- Submit findings and destroy remaining participant information such as coding of interview transcripts.

Questions regarding background/demographics, family and college experience address the main themes of the questions. All participants will receive a copy of the interview questions prior to the scheduled interview.

Participating in the research study will cause a potential loss of privacy and emotional distress, which will be minimized by keeping all research data in a cabinet inside the researcher’s room, which will always be locked. Although interview questions might cause discomfort and/or emotional distress, participants may skip any questions they prefer not to answer or stop the interview at any time for any. After the interview participants should contact Psychological Counseling Services, in regards to any concerns related to the
topics in the interview. All transcribed data and audio files will be kept in a password-protected program that will only be accessible to the researcher. The recordings will be destroyed soon as they have been transcribed. With participant consent, the researcher would like to keep the participants contact information for a maximum of six months to conduct follow-up interviews if additional clarification is required. If permission is not given to keep personal contact information of participants, the information given by the participant will be destroyed after transcription is completed, which will be no longer than six months.

In order to ensure confidentiality, all research data will be kept in a password protected program and locked in a secure location. The researcher and faculty mentor will be the only individuals with access to the research data. If clarity is needed, the researcher will contact the participant to ensure that all information on the final research paper is accurate. There will be no compensation for your participation in this research project. The participant’s involvement will be of no cost to them. Participation is this research study is voluntary and highly appreciated. Participants have the right to refuse to answer any question or choose to stop the interview at any time. Pseudonyms will be used in any reports or publications. You may choose a pseudonym for yourself or otherwise the researcher will designate one for you.

If the participant has any questions, or concerns regarding the process and progress of the research study, they will be able to email the researcher at jarellano.cano@gmail.com or the researcher’s faculty sponsor at Figueroa@csus.edu to ask questions or set up a preferable time to meet in person.

Consent to Keep Contact Information

_______ I give Jeanette Arellano Cano the permission to keep my contact information and contact me again in the future (within six months) for a follow-up interview if it is needed.

_______ I do not give Jeanette Arellano Cano permission to keep my contact information or to contact me in the future for a follow-up interview if it is needed.

Sign to confirm that you agree to participate in this research study

__________________________________  ____________
Signature of Participant     Date

__________________________________  ____________
Signature of Researcher     Date
REFERENCES


Generation Rx: Young Adults and the Influence of Fear of Negative Evaluation on Perception of Health Care Services

Sonia C. Dueñas
Dr. Kim Roberts, faculty mentor

ABSTRACT

Most research about age discrimination in health care pertains to children or the elderly, but few scholars have considered young adults as a population that may encounter negative experiences regarding the health care industry. The study analyzes the degree to which young adults, as well as ethnic minorities, perceive health care as substandard. This research uses Stereotype Threat (defined as social implications of a negative stereotype regarding one’s ethnic group apparent) (Steele and Aronson 1995). Stereotype Threat is used in this research as a theoretical framework for determining the psychological effects of discrimination. The researcher surveyed 50 randomly selected participants that were exposed to a vignette describing either a young minority adult male or elderly Caucasian male. Then, each participant received surveys that measured client satisfaction and negative evaluation, and hypothesized that client satisfaction and fear of negative evaluation would be negatively correlated. There was not a significant relationship between client satisfaction and fear of negative evaluation.

There is ample research about the disparity in America’s health care system, specifically inequalities involving ethnic minority groups and their health care (Swami and Shobhana 2005; Jones, Vahia, Cohen, Hindi, and Nurhussein 2008; Ojeda and Bergstresser 2008). In addition to differences between minority groups (Swami and Shobhana 2005), are similar negative attitudes toward the senior citizen population (Jones et al. 2008), further contributing to the setback in adequate health care. Thus, many scholars (Swami and Shobhana 2005; Jones et al. 2008; Ojeda and Bergstresser 2008) have studied discrimination in both racial/ethnic minority groups, and ageism and health care. However, very little empirical or qualitative research exists about the disparity in health care pertaining to young, minority adults, and the age demographic they hold within the health care system. Many young people of color may feel as though they are not being taken seriously and not being treated adequately. One could argue that young adults in general do not categorize as a minority group, but in this study young adults, specifically
Members who identify within the same minority group (young adults) share negative experiences and discrimination or prejudices as other young minority adults within their sociological minority group. When an individual associates with a marginalized group where emotions of prejudice or lack of empathy are inflicted, a variety of psychological and physiological symptoms are likely to occur (Burgess, Warren, Phelan, Dovidio, and Ryne 2010). This concept, known as “Stereotype Threat” is generally used in reference to standardized testing in an educational context (Steele and Aronson 1995). The present study will use “Stereotype Threat” as a concept outside of its usual context, as a theory relevant in explaining impressions of negative attitude(s) and inadequate health care provided to young adults of color. Furthermore, cultural competency, a physicians’ understanding of culture(s) of ethnic groups she/he serves, is a theoretical framework that is known in the health care industry (Ziegahn and Ton 2011). This is an important concept that needs to be addressed in order to build a better communication between the patient and provider (Ziegahn and Ton 2011).

The United States has seen many advances in the area of health care (Carter 2007), and the country’s health care providers should be expected to have congruent behaviors and attitudes for the entire population they serves; most certainly, health care professionals should conduct their practices without a lens of prejudice that results in incompetent services. Although there have been rapid advances in contemporary health care, from advanced technologies and practices to an influx of diligent scholars in the health field, there continues to be an unacknowledged disparity in health care amongst the defined minority population (Parker, Kirchner, Bonner, Fickel, Ritchie, Simons, and Yano 2009).

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Negative stereotypes are a significant potential cause for disparities in health care regarding services to minority groups, specifically a phenomenon named by Steele and Aronson (1995) as “Stereotype Threat” (Burgess et al. 2010). According to Burgess et al. (2010), “Stereotype threat occurs when cues in the environment make negative stereotypes associated with an individual’s group status salient, triggering physiological and psychological processes that
have detrimental consequences for behavior” (169). The context of Steele and Aronson’s original study pertaining to Stereotype Threat was that of the performance of African American and Caucasian students on standardized tests. In their study, African American college students were found to score drastically worse than Caucasian college students when told that the test being conducted was an analysis of their degree of intellect. However, African American college students of the control group scored relatively similar to Caucasian students when told that the test being conducted was nonevaluative (Steele and Aronson 1995; Aronson, Lustina, Good, Keough, Steele, and Brown 1999). What these results suggest is that African American students, when put under situational pressure that implies already existing negative social stigmas regarding the intellect of the group they belong to are addressed, performance and behavior become negatively affected. Furthermore, Stereotype Threat triggers physiological and psychological reactions (including anxiety) in the individual, along with negative cognitions and emotions which result in decreased efforts and demonstration of intellect (Burgess et al. 2010). Additional symptoms shown to stem from Stereotype Threat within minority college students are depression and anxiety (Cole, Matheson, and Anisman 2007).

In sum, the consequences of Stereotype Threat decrease self-validity in the group being stereotyped. In the context of health care, a young adult of racial/ethnic minority background could experience stereotype threat when seeking and receiving care. The individual’s age and physical appearance could lead to stereotypes of being unintelligent, of exaggerating symptoms, and of deserving less quality care from the provider than perhaps that of an older patient of European origin (Hanjorgiris et al. 2004; Burgess et al. 2010). It is not unusual to suggest that discrimination and lack of quality services exist, but perhaps our society accepts this problem and has become too comfortable with its existence. Burgess et al. (2010) extend the concept of Stereotype Threat beyond its original context into a theoretical existence in the realm of health care. Scholars argue that a distinctive characteristic of this particular social construct theory is that such cognitions and feelings can either develop through the actions of an opposing party (the superior, majority, stereotyping party), or through the individual’s own manifestation of negative stigmas of themselves (Burgess et al., 2010). Many scholars believe that race and ethnicity are already accepted as factors that influence mental health seeking behavior, such as attitudes and perception (Alvidrez 1999; Ojeda and McGuire 2006; Ojeda and Bergstressor 2008). The already negative social stigmas placed on ethnic and racial groups shape the attitudes they have of themselves and become barriers that impede their willingness to seek mental health services. Such mental health behaviors include stress
and anxiety, which can be the result of adaptation to mainstream culture and expectations, interaction styles and language barriers, and overall experiences regarding racism, discrimination, and oppression (Stevens and Vollebergh 2008). The present study will explore this concept in an attempt to show how young adults, including those young adults of ethnic minority, are perceived as negative or being “young and dumb” and thus less likely to be taken seriously by health care providers, thereby hindering their adequate health services.

The mental health of the young minority adult population is an important issue in public health (Eisenberg, Gollust, Golberstein, and Hefner 2007). As discussed, Stereotype Threat may trigger any nonspecific psychological processes. Depressive and anxiety disturbances are two highly common psychological disorders assessed in college students (Eisenberg et al. 2007). Researchers conducted a study that led to significant findings of prevalent depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, and suicidal reports in undergraduate and graduate students, and most commonly in those students of lower socioeconomic status (Eisenberg et al. 2007). For example, body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), a psychiatric disorder, occurs when an individual has an excessive preoccupation with a defect in her/his appearance, but often the defect is imagined (Wolrich 2011). Psychological features of BDD include low self-esteem, and high levels of sensitivity to criticism or rejection from others (Wolrich 2011). Recent research has shown that there are higher levels of body dysmorphic disorder on college campuses than in the levels of the general population, especially with female college students (Wolrich 2011). Depressive, anxiety, and body dysmorphic disorders are just a few psychological disorders commonly found in the population of young adults. Thus, the consequences of experiencing stereotype threat when receiving health care services as a young or minority adult, could include an increase in negative thoughts and emotions and the resulting psychological disorders (Burgess et al. 2010). Young minority adults who do seek care and experience a negative or dissatisfied experience (e.g. poor manner, insensitive tone, judgmental looks), and who feel that the health care providers give poor quality care due to the patient’s age and/or ethnic/racial group, can lose trust of the system and ultimately be deterred from seeking health care in the future.

**Problem and Cause**
The present study focuses on young adults, ages 17 to 34, and included ethnic minority groups as well as Caucasians. There are many health care issues to address regarding this age group; from negative accounts in the past when visiting a health care provider, and feeling ashamed or having a
negative stigma for receiving health attention regarding birth control, Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD), or the common cold. In summary, there are two issues that need to be focused on in the health care industry that include the equality of health care services regardless of age or race/ethnicity. The independent variable was the vignette the subject received; she/he was exposed to either vignette J.A. or vignette J.B. The dependent variables include the two questionnaires: Client Satisfaction Questionnaire−8 (CSQ−8) and Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE). In addition, age and ethnicity/racial groups were assessed.

The long-term objective of the present study is a movement to eliminate the disparities and inequalities; thus, research must attempt to find several pathways to a solution. Cultural competency provides an umbrella framework for these pathways. Increased cultural competency in health care in the following areas may lead to a reduction in Stereotype Threat (Lightner 2004): interpreter services such as bilingual community health workers who can thoroughly convey the importance of cancer screenings and health monitoring (Henderson, Saras, Kendall, and Laurenne 2011), training, coordinating with traditional healers, culturally competent health promotion, inclusion of a family and/or community member, and immersion into another culture (Lightner 2004). Henderson et al. (2011) analyzed sixteen studies regarding cultural competency, all of which supported bilingual interpreter services to be effective in improved communication between the health care provider, and improved satisfaction with health care system in general.

Cultural Competency

Cultural competency provides a way to address disparities in health care. “Cultural competency” is essentially a method that refers to diverse knowledge, understanding, and empathy between one party—health care providers—and another from a different culture—patients of various ethnic/racial and cultural backgrounds, and patients in the young adult age bracket (Johnston and Herzig 2006). Sometimes, a medical professional may receive ridicule from the patient when explaining the etiology of an illness that contradicts the cultural views of the patient, or at least their medical perspective on the illness (Kittler and Sucher 2008). However, the patient may be more receptive when unconventional practitioners, such as folk healers, provide an understanding of the etiology of the illness because it is delivered in a congruent way to the patient’s worldview; delivery includes sincerity, sympathy, and hope (Kittler and Sucher 2008). According to Lightner (2004), cultural competency is more than mere cultural knowledge and sensitivity; it is an understanding and respect for different practices or healing therapies.
within a culture. Take for example cultures that credit illnesses to the supernatural world, such as being the will of God as held by some Jews, Christians, and Muslims (Kittler and Sucher 2008). Some ethnic groups such as Latinos, Africans, and Pacific Islanders believe in bad-natured spirits who may cause illness in a person; for example, death in some Cambodian beliefs occurs when an evil spirit sits on their chest at night, causing heavy pressure and fright (Kittler and Sucher 2008). The concept of an evil spirit being someone’s cause of death may be difficult to understand and accept coming from the perception of a biomedical professional. Yet, for these cultures, the use of alternative approaches such as botanical medicine, or the use of Latin American root doctors and remédemen (remedies) may be more receptive (Kittler and Sucher 2008).

HYPOTHESIS

The study will attempt to explain attitudes about health care and negative evaluation in the culture minority group of young, minority adults using the approach of Stereotype Threat, testing two hypotheses:

1) Participants who randomly receive and read the vignette J.A. are predicted to score lower on the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire—8 (CSQ—8) and higher on the Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) survey.

2) Participants who randomly receive and read vignette J.B. are predicted to score higher on the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire—8 (CSQ-8) and lower on the Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) survey.

METHODOLOGY

College students were recruited from the Psychology department’s research website (34 female, 16 male, Modalage = 17-22, age range of respondents: 17-34) from a Northern California university. Convenience sampling of the particular population was done due to the availability of subjects, and because these subjects represented one of the main research components of the target population of study, which is age. Participants volunteered for the research study, and were compensated in research credit when applicable. Participants were scheduled to survey individually or in groups no larger than seven depending on the research room in which the session was scheduled. Participants were randomly assigned to read a vignette and fill out a survey packet including demographic information consisting of gender, age, race/ethnicity, and class. Demographics form was always placed at the end of the survey packet (see Table 1; Appendix D). Each subject participated in the research study only once.
Table 1. Descriptives for Gender, Age, and Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
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<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female (Gender)</td>
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<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (Gender)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23-28 (Age)</td>
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<tr>
<td>29-34 (Age)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American (Race/Ethnicity)</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian (Race/Ethnicity)</td>
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<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian (Race/Ethnicity)</td>
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<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biracial (Race/Ethnicity)</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Race/Ethnicity)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 50

Materials

The materials used in this study were two types of vignette: J.A. and J.B. and two survey scales: Client Satisfaction Questionnaire–8 (CSQ–8) and Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE). Survey packets contained only one of the two types of vignette, the two scales of measurement, CSQ-8 and FNE, and the demographics form. The unique vignette and scales of measure were introduced to the participants in a survey packet form. Participants’ reaction and scoring to the vignettes and surveys was the dependant variable in this study.

Both vignette J.A. and vignette J.B. were researcher produced and used for priming purposes. According to Gerrig and Zimbardo (2002), when evaluating one’s implicit memory, priming is the advantage provided by the subject’s prior exposure to a situation. The vignettes describe a patient who is ill and in need of medical attention. The two vignettes differ only in the brief description of the patient discussed in the very beginning of the vignette. Vignette J.A. is a 22-year old biracial African and Latino American male who attends college; vignette J.B. is an older European American male who works full-time (see Appendix A). The types of patients, J.A. and J.B. describe a young biracial student and an older nonbiracial worker. Therefore, age and race of the character in the vignette is considered the independent variable for the study.

The common protocol when using vignettes in a study is for the purpose of priming. After a participant reads a vignette, they are commonly evaluated or asked questions directed toward the vignette. However, in this study, instead of analyzing participants’ direct response or reaction to the vignette, they were asked to read the vignette and answer questionnaires regarding
themselves. Therefore, the vignettes were still used as a means of priming, but the objective was to determine whether the different types of vignette could influence the way in which a participant responded to questions relating to their experiences and perspectives.

The first scale of measure was the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire−8 (CSQ-8), originally produced by Clifford C. Attkisson (Corcoran and Fischer 1987). The CSQ-8 is a survey of self-client satisfaction of recent healthcare received. The CSQ-8 is a four-point Likert scale (higher scores indicate positive client satisfaction; lower scores indicate negative client satisfaction) and consists of eight items. Some of the items on the scale were: “Did you get the kind of service you wanted? (item 2); How satisfied are you with the amount of help you have received? (item 5); In an overall, general sense, how satisfied are you with the service you have receive? (item 7)”. The CSQ-8 has high reliability, with an alpha range from .86 to .94 in various studies (Corcoran and Fischer 1987) and α = .931 in this study. The following items were analyzed more closely: 1, 2, 5, and 7. Although the researcher administered the entire questionnaire, focus was on these particular questions when analyzing this particular variable. The Client Satisfaction Questionnaire−8 (CSQ-8) was a dependent variable for this study (see Appendix B).

The second scale of measure was the Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) survey, produced by David Watson and Ronald Friend (Corcoran and Fischer 1987). The purpose of the 30-item scale is to measure social anxiety, specifically the social anxiety one experiences when receiving negative evaluations from others, or the lack of social approval. The FNE is a “true” or “false” survey. Some of the items of the scale were: “I become tense and jittery if I know someone is sizing me up (item 3); I am afraid that others will not approve of me (item 13); I brood about the opinions my friends have about me (item 29).” The internal consistency (reliability) of the FNE was .94 in a study of 29 subjects, and the Brief version of the Fear of Negative Evaluation survey has a Cronbach’s alpha of .90 (Corcoran and Fischer 1987). For this study (n = 50), a Cronbach’s alpha was run on 10 items from the 30-item survey and had a α = .601; a commonly accepted value is α = .60. The Fear of Negative Evaluation survey (see Appendix C) was a dependent variable for this study. All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Procedure

Each research session initiated with participants entering the research room and signing a consent form; forms were placed in a large envelope to ensure confidentiality. Survey packets were then randomly distributed to
participants. Participants were instructed to read the vignette, either vignette J.A. or vignette J.B., depending on which was randomly attached to the survey packet containing the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire–8 (CSQ-8), Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), and demographics form. Participants were then asked to answer each item or question on all scales of measure to their discretion. Once the participants completed the packet, the packets were collected and placed in a separate envelope from the consent forms to further ensure confidentiality. The researcher then distributed debriefing forms, verbally debriefed the participants, and answered any questions. Subjects were thanked for their participation in the study and then dismissed.

RESULTS

A MANOVA was used to determine the affects of vignettes on subjects’ responses to two surveys including the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire–8 (CSQ-8) and Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE). Factors including age and race/ethnicity of participants were included to determine their overall influence on the vignette the participant was asked to read. It was found that the overall mean for CSQ-8 for vignette J.A. was \( M = 2.30, SD = 0.51 \) and for the FNE was \( M = 1.62, SD = 0.05 \); for vignette J.B. the CSQ-8 \( M = 3.20, SD = 1.15 \) and FNE \( M = 1.68, SD = 0.07 \) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Vignette J.A. and Vignette J.B. for Client Satisfaction Questionnaire-8 (CSQ-8) and Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J.A. - CSQ-8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.A. - FNE</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.B. - CSQ-8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.B. - FNE</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \( N = 50 \)

Although the mean was higher for Client Satisfaction Questionnaire–8 for vignette J.B. (older gentlemen), there was not a significant difference \( p > 0.05 \). Further analysis of participants’ race to vignette read based on Hotelling’s \( t \)-test was significant \( p = .019 \). Age of subjects did not affect the overall outcome of CSQ–8 or FNE. A nonparametric test was used as well due to the small sample size which indicated no significance between race and age on questionnaires \( p = 0.076 \).

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to examine how young adults perceived themselves in regards to negative stigmas and social anxiety, but also their perception of received health care. Participants who read vignette J.A. were
predicted to score lower on the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire−8 (CSQ-8) and higher on the Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) questionnaire. Participants who read vignette J.B. were predicted to score higher on the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire−8 (CSQ-8) and lower on the Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) questionnaire.

Depending what vignette the subject received, it was hypothesized the vignette of the biracial male would elicit a more negative evaluation on the questionnaires administered including CSQ−8 and FNE. Because aspects of Stereotype Threat were used as a conceptual framework in explaining potential substandard health care, factors such as age, and race/ethnicity to vignette were analyzed. The results indicate there was no affect of age or race on subjects rating using Client Satisfaction Questionnaire−8 (CSQ-8) and Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) questionnaires between groups of subjects receiving vignettes J.A. and J.B.

Since there was not significance found between age and race on the questionnaires, \( p = 0.076 \), the results conflict with those of previous research (Burgess et al. 2010), specifically the qualitative work of Burgess et al. (2010) that presents priming as a source for Stereotype Threat in the context of health care disparity. However, it is still important to acknowledge that participants’ internal mechanisms, such as negative cognitions, emotions, and anxiety—conditions detected through the Fear of Negative Evaluation scale—can manifest in a clinical setting from Stereotype Threat situations, and essentially result in disengagement (Burgess et al. 2010, 169). In this case, “disengagement” means a disconnect from the domain (health care system) perceived as uncomfortable and daunting.

LIMITATIONS

A limitation for this study was the sample size. Although the sample (\( n=50 \)) was over the generally accepted sample size in statistical research (\( n=30 \)) it is very likely that a Type II error occurred. Furthermore, there was limited diversity in the subject pool (see Table 1). In the current study, this researcher used vignettes and the entire CSQ-8 and FNE questionnaires were not utilized. In addition, methodological issues that may have compromised internal validity of this study will be addressed in future studies.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research will be more defined in structure, and contain detailed questions regarding participants’ health care services (e.g. private insurance, community clinic, etc); specific health care conditions and participants’
average level of exercise. Future research will also focus on health findings and health promotion for specific race/ethnic groups (e.g. Mexican, Nicaraguan, Puerto Rican, Hmong, Laotian, etc.) and gender groups (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, etc.). In summary, doctors should take continual courses in ethical treatment of patients when working with any patient population, even those of the young adult population. Both physical and psychological well being of a patient is important in global health promotion.

CONCLUSION

Although the results of this research do not indicate a significant relationship between client satisfaction and fear of negative evaluation, it does help solidify the need for health care providers to understand diversity issues in the population they are treating. Along with an increase of diversity in the country is an increase in advocacy for such groups of this diverse population (e.g., Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans) in a health care context. Issues from stereotypical assumptions and discrimination, such as those reported by African Americans and health insurance assumptions, language discrimination in Latinos, and age discrimination in Caucasians (Ziegahn and Ton 2011), support the need in contributing to a more culturally aware health care field. Additionally, further research of incorporating the population of young minority adults into a cultural competent framework in health care has yet to be developed.
APPENDIX A

Instructions: Please read the following vignette.

J.A. is a 22 year old biracial African and Latino American male who attends college. Lately, J.A. has begun to experience physical pains in his stomach and has experienced symptoms such as body aches, fever, and nausea. He finally went to see his primary healthcare provider. At the office, J.A. was given a brief and standard evaluation (temperature and blood pressure measurements). However, J.A. told his doctors that he had the flu before but this was much more severe. He was told by his doctor he simply had the common stomach flu and needed to rest. He listened to the doctor and rested. Several weeks later as the symptoms became worse, J.A. returned to the healthcare provider and asked for a blood test. He was later diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and was immediately started on chemotherapy treatment.

Instructions: Please read the following vignette.

J.B. is an older European American male who works full-time. Lately, J.B. has begun to experience physical pains in his stomach and has experienced symptoms such as body aches, fever, and nausea. He finally went to see his primary healthcare provider. At the office, J.B. was given a brief and standard evaluation (temperature and blood pressure measurements). However, J.B. told his doctors that he had the flu before but this was much more severe. He was told by his doctor he simply had the common stomach flu, and needed to rest. He listened to the doctor and rested. Several weeks later as the symptoms became worse, J.B. returned to the healthcare provider and asked for a blood test. He was later diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and was immediately started on chemotherapy treatment.
APPENDIX B

Instructions: Please think back to your most recent experience with a healthcare provider, and rate the following questions that best apply based on that experience. Please answer all of the questions.

Circle your answer:

1. How would you rate the quality of service you received?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Did you get the kind of service you wanted?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No, definitely</th>
<th>No, not really</th>
<th>Yes, generally</th>
<th>Yes, definitely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. To what extent did the healthcare program meet your needs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Almost all of my needs have been met</th>
<th>Most of my needs have been met</th>
<th>Only a few of my needs have been met</th>
<th>None of my needs have been met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If a friend were in need of similar help, would you recommend your healthcare program/provider to him or her?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No, definitely not</th>
<th>No, I don’t think so</th>
<th>Yes, I think so</th>
<th>Yes, definitely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How satisfied are you with the amount of help you received?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quite dissatisfied</th>
<th>Indifferent or mildly dissatisfied</th>
<th>Mostly satisfied</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Did the services you receive help you to deal more effectively with your problem?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, they helped a great deal</th>
<th>Yes, they helped somewhat</th>
<th>No, they really didn’t help</th>
<th>No, they seemed to make things worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. In an overall, general sense, how satisfied were you with the service(s) you received?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Very satisfied  Mostly satisfied  Indifferent or mildly dissatisfied  Quite dissatisfied

8. If you were to seek help again, would you return to that healthcare center?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No, definitely not  No, I don’t think so  Yes, I think so  Yes, definitely

*Note: D. Larsen, Clifford Attkisson, W. Hargreaves, and T. Nguyen*
APPENDIX C

Instructions: For the following statements, please answer each in terms of whether it is true or false for you. Circle T for true or F for false.

T  F  1. I rarely worry about seeming foolish to others.
T  F  2. I worry about what people will think of me even when I know it doesn’t make any difference.
T  F  3. I become tense and jittery if I know someone is sizing me up.
T  F  4. I am unconcerned even if I know people are forming an unfavorable impression of me.
T  F  5. I feel very upset when I commit some social error.
T  F  6. The opinions that important people have of me cause me little concern.
T  F  7. I am often afraid that I may look ridiculous or make a fool of myself.
T  F  8. I react very little when other people disapprove of me.
T  F  9. I am frequently afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings.
T  F  10. The disapproval of others would have little effect on me.
T  F  11. If someone is evaluating me I tend to expect the worst.
T  F  12. I rarely worry about what kind of impression I am making on someone.
T  F  13. I am afraid that others will not approve of me.
T  F  14. I am afraid that people will find fault with me.
T  F  15. Other people’s opinions of me do not bother me.
T  F  16. I am not necessarily upset if I do not please someone.
T  F  17. When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking about me.
T  F  18. I feel that you can’t help making social errors sometimes, so why worry about it.
T  F  19. I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make.
T  F  20. I worry a lot about what my superiors think of me.
T  F  21. If I know someone is judging me, it has little effect on me.
T  F  22. I worry that others will think I am not worthwhile.
T  F  23. I worry very little about what others may think of me.
T  F  24. Sometimes I think I am too concerned with what other people think of me.
25. I often worry that I will say or do the wrong things. 
T  F

26. I am often indifferent to the opinions others have of me.
T  F

27. I am usually confident that others will have a favorable impression of me.
T  F

28. I often worry that people who are important to me won't think very much of me.
T  F

29. I brood about the opinions my friends have about me.
T  F

30. I become tense and jittery if I know I am being judged by my superiors.
T  F

*Note: David Watson and Ronald Friend

Appendix D

Gender (gender you currently identify with):  F  M  Other

Age:  (17-22)  (23-28)  (29-34)  (35-40)  (41-46)  (47-52)  (53+)

Race/Ethnicity: ____________________________

Class:  Freshman  Sophomore  Junior  Senior
REFERENCES


Eisenberg, Daniel, Sarah E. Gollust, Ezra Golberstein, and Jennifer L. Hefner. 2007. “Prevalence and Correlates of Depression, Anxiety, and


Stressing Identification and Identifying Stress: The Psychological Well-Being of California’s Undocumented College Students

Ivania Enriquez Perez
Dr. Marya Endriga, faculty mentor

ABSTRACT
Serving the educational needs of undocumented immigrant students in higher education is a highly polarized topic. Although there is much controversy, little research is available regarding undocumented students in California or their psychological well-being. This study uses surveys to measure psychological well-being, acculturation stress, coping and feelings about documentation status in undocumented students as compared to their documented, naturalized, or native peers. This study results reveal that undocumented students experience more negative feelings regarding their legal status than documented students. In addition, acculturation stress is negatively associated with psychological well-being. Despite several study limitations, further psychological research with this unique population of college students appears warranted.

Although the United States is considered by many to be the land of the free and a place where dreams come true, there is still a large group of individuals who live in fear, insecurity and invisibility: unauthorized or undocumented foreign born immigrants (Perez 2009). In 2008, there were 39.9 million foreign born immigrants, 11.9 million of which were undocumented (Passel and Cohn 2009). About three-quarters (76%) of unauthorized immigrants are of a Hispanic/Latino background and the majority of this group (59%) are from Mexico (Passel and Cohn 2009). With such a large group within our society, the research question this study attempts to answer is the following: Are AB 540 students more susceptible to anxiety and emotional difficulties as a result of their legal status?

LITERATURE REVIEW
One significant barrier that undocumented immigrants face is access to education (Perez 2009). The 1982 Texas case of Plyler v. Doe ruled that undocumented immigrant children could not be denied access to public education (Frum 2007). This case found that undocumented immigrants imposed no significant financial burden, but that immigration status would
create a “lifetime of hardship” and a permanent “underclass” in a nation where education and social mobility is so highly interconnected that a college degree is considered the “ticket to the middle class” (Frum 2007). Despite the success of *Plyler v. Doe*, barriers to successful completion of higher education remain. There are approximately 65,000 unauthorized high school graduates each year, out of these only 13,000 enroll in college (Contreras 2009). For Hispanic/Latinos, 29% of undocumented immigrants have had less than a 9th grade education and only 18% have a high school degree (Passel and Cohn 2009). In this group, little support exists for the youth and young adults, often because their parents do not know how to help them get an education and access resources; for example, parents may not realize that their children are allowed to attend college regardless of their legal status (Contreras 2009).

Another major obstacle affecting undocumented young adults is lack of identification. Having an identification card or a driver’s license opens doors to a number of very important social experiences for this age group, such as getting into a bar or ordering an alcoholic drink at a restaurant. The simple act of going out with friends can be nerve-wracking and stressful and these young people often opt to remain at home, becoming increasingly socially isolated. Verderosa (2010) conducted an interview study that helps to illustrate the feelings of isolation experienced by undocumented students. One participant expressed, “A lot of your friends want you to go out with them when you turn 21, but you can’t. You end up isolating yourself” (Verderosa 2010). Loneliness, social anxiety, and social fears were all higher among Mexican-born immigrants than U.S. born peers (Polo and Lopez 2009). Lacking identification affects many other aspects of daily life as well, including limited access to jobs, social services, loans and lines of credit, which significantly limit upward social mobility (Gonzales 2008). Undocumented students are unable to fully participate in mainstream professional society due to continued barriers to resolution of their legal status; thus, they are denied integration into middle or upper social stratum (Martinez-Calderon 2009) as well as opportunities to socially, economically and politically mobilize and organize (Green 2003).

Undocumented students also appear to struggle with acculturation stress and issues of identity (Polo and Lopez 2009). Labeling themselves as AB 540 students works as an identifier, as Donaji’s explains, ‘I don’t want to say I don’t have papers so I use it as a cover … they are not just seeing the day workers, not just housekeepers, but students like them,’ giving students a new sense of identity and in social status (Gavilanes 2007, 21). Many students arrived to this country as young children and generally have mastered the language, customs and culture. However, they often feel as if they live in
two worlds but do not completely belong to, or identify with, either one. Undocumented students are on one hand criminalized for their status, yet on the other hand legitimated for defying the odds and achieving success (Abrego 2008). As Dozier (2001) explains, undocumented students may work numerous hours and may not have access to school supplies, such as textbooks. Being a subgroup within the student body, undocumented students experience not only the challenges every college student must endure, as well as challenges regarding their immigration status (Dozier 2001).

Undocumented students are constantly reminded of their legal status when engaged in the regular tasks of daily life. This affects them socially and emotionally, as they feel unwelcomed, rejected, hopeless and without control over their situation (Gavilanes 2007). Although these experiences when encountered separately may not hinder their well-being, they are added to the normal stresses experienced by all college-age students, such as escalating school fees, difficulty obtaining federal or state financial aid and pressure to excel in academics. In addition, 59% of undocumented immigrants have no health insurance (Passel and Cohn 2009). Their problems are compounded by the fact that undocumented students are less likely to seek help for the negative effects of stress on their emotional and psychological well-being as compared with documented students (Passel and Cohn 2009). Many undocumented students suffer serious psychological and emotional distress, and are reluctant to disclose their status for fear of deportation (Drachman 2006). An AB 540 student interviewed by Gavilanes (2007, 22) described this as a burden that affects them “emotionally, psychologically, and economically, all this things get in my way of taking ownership of my education and becoming a scholar when I have to worry about surviving.”

One significant attempt to support undocumented students was Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540), which was signed by California Governor Gray Davis on October 12, 2001. This law qualifies all long-term California residents, regardless of immigration status, as exempt from nonresident tuition in the state’s public colleges and universities (Firebaugh 2001; Abrego 2008). The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), which was established in 1968, is a community organization promoting social change advocacy and offers legal services to Latinos in the community, MALDEF has guides and up to date information regarding immigrants’ legal issues posted on its Web site for the benefit of California communities. According to MALDEF, AB 540 students qualify as such by having attended a California high school for at least three years and having graduated or attained a general education diploma (GED). They must also be currently enrolled in a California community college, or public university. The MALDEF (2011) Web site also states that eligible students must submit
an affidavit to the school they plan to attend, stating their qualifications under AB 540, and that they have or will file an application to adjust their immigration status. Finally, these students had to have been brought to California when they were younger than 18-years old.

Despite the victory for undocumented students, other legislative attempts to provide assistance to undocumented students have not been successful, such as California’s SB 1460, which would allow AB 540 students to access state and federal financial aid (Cedillo 2010). Undocumented students would be able attain the Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waiver, in which eligible California residents can get their full fees waived (Folsom Lake College 2011). Indeed, there has been a great deal of resistance when it comes to the immigrants’ rights, as shown by bills such as Arizona’s SB 1070, which was signed into law in 2010 and is considered one of the most controversial anti-illegal immigration measures in recent history (Senate Bill 1070 2010). For example, SB 1070 made it illegal for non-citizens to be in the state without documentation or to shelter, hire or transport undocumented immigrants (Wessler 2011). The bill requires police officers to check the immigration status of anyone suspected of being undocumented, allowing an official to require proof of documentation based on superficial appearance (i.e., racial profiling) or, as the bill states, ‘reasonable suspicion that the person is an alien’ (Senate Bill 1070 2011). Future research that furthers our understanding of the psychological and emotional experiences of undocumented college students is important, not just for its mental health applications, but also for its legal implications. Specifically, federal legislation such as the DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) that would grant residency status to undocumented students who arrived in the U.S. as unauthorized minors has been reintroduced to the Senate (Firebaugh 2001). This legislation would enable undocumented students to resolve their immigration status and pursue their professional careers without fear of deportation or discrimination due to their legal status (Gonzales 2006).

Psychological research with Latino/Mexican American youth and young adults, regardless of documentation status, has revealed several areas of mental health risk (Polo and Lopez 2009). Physical health and discrimination has been negatively associated with acculturation stress, even more so on individuals who lack social support (Finch and Vega 2003). For example, Polo and Lopez (2009) found that Mexican American adolescents had higher levels of depression, suicidal ideation, and feelings of hopelessness than other minority groups, such as African Americans. Issues that have impacted these students’ lives include difficulties with education, language skills, and the ability to adequately negotiate the acculturation process. They may have
also encountered acculturation stress, termed by Polo and Lopez (2009) as difficulties encountered by individuals coming into contact with another culture. Polo and Lopez (2009) also investigated contextual factors associated with mental health and legal status. They concluded that immigrant Mexican American youth exhibited higher levels of internalizing distress compared to U.S.-born Mexican American students (Polo and Lopez 2009). Immigrant youth experience higher levels of isolation and lower self-esteem compared to non-immigrant peers (Polo and Lopez 2009).

Nafiz et al. (2009) explain in their report on stress and coping among minority college students that Latino college students are faced with many stressors including acculturation stress. Latino students suffering from stress report problems with sleep, anxiety and concentration and perform worse in assignments and exams than European peers. In addition, they tend to be less satisfied with college and are more likely to drop out of school. Latino students cope with stress by seeking support from friends and family, although many use less healthy coping strategies such as using alcohol (Nafiz et al. 2009). Nafiz et al. (2009) also reported on research showing the association between discrimination and stress; for example, experiences of being accused of law breaking or cheating were associated with increased psychological distress and depression.

Finch, Kolody and Vega (2000) also found a direct relationship between discrimination and depression. According to their research, discrimination is an intrinsic part of a minority student’s life on a daily basis. For undocumented students, discriminatory experiences arise from within their ethnic group (i.e., from documented or native peers) as well as outside of their ethnic group. Coping with discrimination is considered to be a chronic life stressor (Finch et al. 2000), which AB 540 students deal with on a daily basis. Psychological stress is associated with investing into education; the flip side is the outcomes, which include increased public and social prestige as well as better health outcomes (Flores 2010).

The present study attempts to increase our understanding of the psychological experiences of the growing population of undocumented college students. Specifically it was expected that, in comparison to documented or native students, undocumented students would report higher acculturation stress and negative feelings about their documentation status and poorer psychological well-being and coping.

**METHODS**

Research participants consisted of a total of 43 California college students, mostly from a Northern California university. Within that group there
were 31 documented students and 12 undocumented AB 540 students. Documented students were classified as such by possessing residency, student visa or U.S. citizenship. Undocumented students were those who lacked these residency, visa or citizenship qualifications. There were 27 females and 16 males and all participants were of Mexican/Latino background. Most reside in Northern California, but some reside in Central and Southern California. The mean age of the participants was 23.5 years ($SD = 4.1$).

**Materials**

The S.A.F.E. Acculturation Stress Scale (Mena et al. 1987) is a measure of acculturation stress, defined as negative stressors experienced by immigrant individuals as they acculturate to their host culture (Amer 2005). It has 24 items measured on a 6-point Likert scale in which 0 = have not experienced; 1 = not at all stressful; 2 = somewhat stressful; 3 = moderately stressful; 4 = very stressful; and 5 = extremely stressful. The scale was developed with undocumented and documented Hispanic college students in a study of acculturation stress and coping (Mena et al. 1987). The reliability of the scale has been established in a study of Arab American mental health (Amer 2005) with a Cronbach’s alpha of .89.

The General Wellbeing Scale (Faye et al. 2005) is an 18-item scale developed to assess self-representations of subjective well-being and distress (Fazio 1977). The test-retest reliability of the scale was .85. The scale’s reliability has been established by previous studies, showing satisfactory internal consistency coefficients and item-to-total correlations; the high internal consistency indicated the scale was homogeneous and measuring general psychological state (Fazio 1977).

The Feelings About Documentation Scale (FAD) describes one’s feelings regarding legal status and was developed by the researcher based on the existing immigration literature and personal experience (Appendix A). The instrument has 40 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale in which 1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = most of the time; and 5 = all the time. Initial support for the scale’s reliability is shown by a Cronbach’s alpha of .89 in the current study.

The brief COPE inventory (Carver 1997) is a 29-item scale that measures how individuals cope with stressors and other life problems. It uses a 4-point Likert scale in which 1 = I haven’t been doing this at all; 2 = I’ve been doing this a little bit; 3 = I’ve been doing this a moderate amount; and 4 = I’ve doing this a lot. The brief COPE inventory was developed using a sample of community residents in the process of coping with an extremely stressful natural catastrophe, i.e. Hurricane Andrew (Carver 1997). Alpha reliabilities averaged across three administrations of the COPE sample met or exceeded .50 (Carver 1997).
In addition, demographic information was collected from each participant on gender, age, college year, legal status, and families’ location (whether or not they had family living nearby; Appendix B).

Procedure
Participants were identified and invited through Latino/a student organizations, word-of-mouth, “snowball” sampling (whereby participants invite friends, family), and social networking sites. Most of the participants came from the MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) club, Chicano/Latino Recognition Ceremony Committee, STAND (Scholars Taking Action for a Nationwide Dream) and classroom presentations, as well as from other area campuses. Each participant received a research consent form, which highlighted all the possible risks involved in the research, a packet of four surveys and a demographics sheet. Data were collected in two ways: in person and online (through surveygizmo.com). This researcher visited the organizations and personally oversaw the data collection; this researcher also gave these participants the online address for the survey, so they could ask their friends to complete the online version. Online surveying was validated through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPPA), which can be found at http://www.surveygizmo.com/the-fine-print.

For the in-person data collection, this researcher distributed the consent forms for the participants to sign. The survey was conducted in a public environment (i.e., student organization meeting rooms) that appeared to be most comfortable for the participants. After participants have completed the surveys and the packets were collected, the researcher debriefed the participants, answered any questions they had and handed out a debriefing sheet. The same debriefing sheet was uploaded to surveygizmo.com for participants who took the survey online.

RESULTS
Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations (SD) of all study variables.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Status</th>
<th>SAFE Mean (SD)</th>
<th>GWB Mean (SD)</th>
<th>FAD Mean (SD)</th>
<th>COPE Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented</td>
<td>45.00 (17.78)</td>
<td>57.00 (14.00)</td>
<td>120.75 (20.69)</td>
<td>72.17 (16.60)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 shows one-way ANOVAs comparing undocumented and documented students on the SAFE, GWB, FAD and COPE variables.
Undocumented students had significantly higher FAD scores than documented students ($F[1, 42] = 19.67, p < .000$). No significant differences were found for the SAFE, GWB or COPE. Pearson correlations among study variables (Table 2) showed a significant negative correlation between the SAFE and GWB ($r = -.43, p < .005$), indicating that higher acculturation stress was associated with lower psychological well-being. Correlations that were marginally significant ($p < .10$) suggested that acculturation stress may be associated with negative feelings about documentation and negative feelings about documentation may be associated with lower psychological well-being.
Table 2. Correlations among study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SAFE</th>
<th>GWB</th>
<th>FAD</th>
<th>COPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAFE</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWB</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-.27*</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAD</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPE</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * = p < .10; ** = p < .005

DISCUSSION

There is a scarcity of psychological research conducted with undocumented college students, especially about their mental and psychosocial states. They are a growing population for which legal and public policy issues are under current, hot debate and which may ultimately create a significant impact on our society. Results from the current study suggest that further examination of the psychological well-being of AB540 students is necessary. A trend in the results from the FAD scale, showing that negative feelings about documentation may be related to higher acculturation stress and lower psychological well-being suggests that measuring experiences specific to legal status issues may be important. Although the scale is new and developed by this researcher, the finding that undocumented students show significantly different scores than documented students provides initial support for the scale’s validity. More research is needed to better inform the public about the needs of undocumented students and how they manage to stay afloat in our society.

LIMITATIONS

Several limitations were present in the current study. Using two methods of participant recruitment and data collection resulted in possible methodological confounds. Specifically, there were more undocumented students in the online survey procedure than in the in-person procedure. It may be that undocumented students preferred the increased anonymity of the online version and, if so, future studies might benefit from using the online procedure only. Another potential methodological confound was that randomization of surveys was done for the in-person procedure, but not the online procedure in which surveys were completed in the same order with every participant. Also, there were more incomplete surveys in the online procedure than the in-person procedure, which also may have affected the study results. Participants may not have been used to online surveys, which may have been confusing, and the lack of in-person instructions may have increased participant nervousness and may have affected their responses. In
addition to problems with data collection, the sample size in the current study was small and used convenience rather than random sampling, which did not allow for confidence in the study results or their ability to be generalized. This was most evident in the correlations, which were primarily of marginal significance. Most of the participants were from the Sacramento area, which means that geographical variables might have contributed to the results. Also, the fact that the surveys were presented in English only may have affected the responses of participants for whom Spanish may have been their primary or preferred language.

Although there were many limitations to this study, there are also some benefits. There is limited research and information about AB 540 students. As these individuals come out of the shadows, they deserve attention, especially regarding their emotional and psychological needs. With this research, the author hopes to begin building awareness of this unique group and their significant contributions to this country, the state and our communities. Although the current study focuses on psychological concerns of undocumented students, it is also important to appreciate their strengths as a cultural group. Undocumented Mexican American students tend to be community oriented and collectivistic as a whole and many return to their families and communities after college, giving back by inspiring and supporting their siblings and friends (Contreras 2009). They also inform their community members of the processes by which an education can be attained or other forms of help may be found, even when one lives with undocumented legal status. As Contreras (2009, 618) stated, they are more likely to “give back to their communities and foster economic growth.” Giving back to their community serves as a motivator, as Joel, a student interviewed by Gavilanes, expressed; “one of my motivations to pursue education is being a role model, going back to my community, to kids and telling them education is possible” (2007, 26). Thus, blaming the undocumented for our country’s economic downfall, displacement of other American students or for any other reason is not an accurate claim. Continued research in this area could also lead to information for policy makers by shedding light on the untold stories of undocumented students.

FUTURE RESEARCH
Future research with undocumented students could examine the presence of mental illness and psychological distress, especially as it relates to feelings about their legal status. On that note, the Feelings About Documentation scale (Appendix A), which was developed for the current study, should be further refined and tested for its reliability and validity. Using a qualitative
approach to further enhance this research would also be beneficial. For example, interview research may reveal rich psychological themes within the experience of this population that could be also used to generate hypotheses for additional quantitative research. In addition, research comparing the experiences of undocumented Latino students with students of other cultural and ethnic minority groups (e.g., undocumented European students) would also be useful.

CONCLUSION

Because there is little research on undocumented students, it is important to gain a fuller understanding of threats to their psychological well-being. They continue to experience significant barriers as they attempt to live in a society they have called their own yet do not feel as if they are wholly a part of it (Perez 2009). In addition, the current anti-immigrant climate and the derailing of the DREAM Act contribute to mounting stressors that may threaten mental health. This research serves as a first step towards better understanding this growing group of young individuals who are seeking their rightful opportunity to empower themselves and benefit this country that they call home.
REFERENCES


Amer, Mona M. “Arab American Mental Health in the Post September 11 Era: Acculturation, Stress, and Coping” (PhD diss., University of Toledo, 2005).


## APPENDIX A. FEELINGS ABOUT DOCUMENTATION

Please read each statement and rate how it best describes your feelings regarding your legal status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel fearful.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I feel fearful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I think about my legal status.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I think about my legal status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am easily alarmed, frightened, or surprised.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I am easily alarmed, frightened, or surprised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am easily irritated.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I am easily irritated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel useless.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I feel useless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I think about all the things I have not yet accomplished because of my legal status.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I think about all the things I have not yet accomplished because of my legal status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am afraid of what awaits me in the future.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I am afraid of what awaits me in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I think about how unsatisfied I am with my life.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I think about how unsatisfied I am with my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I worry a lot.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I worry a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I feel tense or on edge.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I feel tense or on edge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I have headaches or neck pain.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I have headaches or neck pain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I have nightmares.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I have nightmares.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I am afraid others will not approve of me.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I am afraid others will not approve of me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I have less interest in activities that I normally enjoyed.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I have less interest in activities that I normally enjoyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I feel good about myself.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I feel good about myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I feel I don’t have control.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I feel I don’t have control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I have endured hardships throughout my life.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I have endured hardships throughout my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Overall I am satisfied with my life.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>Overall I am satisfied with my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I am embarrassed to disclose my legal status.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I am embarrassed to disclose my legal status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I feel anxious when someone asks about my legal status.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I feel anxious when someone asks about my legal status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I am apprehensive or nervous when interacting with others.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I am apprehensive or nervous when interacting with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I feel happy.</td>
<td>______</td>
<td>I feel happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>I am afraid to disclose my legal status.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I have a lot of stress.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>My legal status has affected my academics in a negative way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>I have a good support system at home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>My legal status has affected my life in a negative way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>I believe the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) ACT will pass.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>I think I have more obstacles than other students due to my legal status.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>I think I work twice as hard compared to other students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>My legal status has motivated me to do better.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Most of my worries are due to my legal status.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>I cannot live a normal life due to my legal status.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>I don’t believe I will ever be able to practice my career.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>I frequently worry about my legal status.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>I worry about how people might perceive me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>I have a good support system at school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>I have little stress due to my legal status.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>None of my worries are due to my legal status.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>I abstain from having fun, such as going to a club or socially drinking due to my legal status.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Age _______ 2. Female _____ Male ______

3. Ethnic Background:
   _____ American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut
   _____ Asian or Pacific Islander
   _____ Black or African American
   _____ Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish Origin
   _____ Middle Eastern
   _____ White/Caucasian
   _____ Multi-Ethnic, please specify: ___________________________
   _____ Other, please specify: ___________________________

4. What year are you?
   _____ Freshman  _____ Sophomore
   _____ Junior    _____ Senior
   _____ Other, please specify: ___________________________

5. What is your current legal status in the state of California?
   _____ U.S. Citizen
   _____ U.S. Resident
   _____ Temporary visa (student, work)
   _____ Undocumented (AB 540)
   _____ Undocumented (Not AB 540)
   _____ Other, please specify: ___________________________

6. Do you have citizenship in another country?
   _____ Yes  _______ No  _______ I don’t know

7. Your extended family (parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings) live:
   _____ Mostly in the U.S. in the same city as I
   _____ Mostly in the U.S. in other cities
   _____ About half in the U.S. and half in a Mexican/Latin country
   _____ About half in the U.S. and half in another non-Mexican/Latin country
   _____ Mostly in a Mexican/Latin country
   _____ Mostly in another non-Mexican/Latin country
   _____ Other, please explain: ___________________________
You Are What You Watch? An Examination of the Relationship Between Media Exposure and Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage

Lindsey Halsey  
Dr. Gregory Kim-Ju, faculty mentor

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the social institutions and media factors that influence the development of peoples’ underlying attitudes toward homosexuality and gay rights policies. It is hypothesized that high viewing of soap operas and talk show television programs will be related to greater acceptance of homosexuality and same-sex marriage, and that females, those who are less religious and more politically liberal would have more accepting attitudes toward homosexuality and gay rights policies. This study included 132 undergraduate psychology students. Results regarding the first hypothesis were not significant. The remaining hypotheses were supported. Future research is needed to further investigate the relationship between the development of peoples’ attitudes toward homosexuality and gay rights policies and the media.

On November 4, 2008, citizens in California supported the passing of Proposition 8, which states that same-sex couples are not able to marry under law and receive the respective benefits (i.e. tax, property, employment benefits). In response to the passing of Proposition 8, a number of civil union debates, protests and rallies occurred in advocacy for equal rights under the law for same-sex partners who wished to marry. A number of factors may be related to peoples’ attitudes about homosexuality and same-sex marriage factors that ultimately influence the ways in which people do or do not support issues such as Proposition 8. Research has shown that television programming (i.e., amount of viewing and genre), individual personality characteristics (i.e., gender, age, and ethnicity), socialization agents (i.e., peers, family, education, politics, religion, etc.), and the degree of contact with homosexual others may all have an impact on peoples’ attitudes toward homosexuality and their stance on gay rights policies, specifically same-sex marriage (Wood and Bartkowski 2004; LaSala 2007; Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008; Calzo and Ward 2009; Schwartz 2010). While studies have examined these variables, less research has focused on the relationship between genre of television programming consumed by viewers and attitudes toward gay
rights policies, specifically same-sex marriage. The present study attempts to investigate the ways in which television consumption may be related to peoples’ attitudes about homosexuality and same-sex marriage to better understand how their beliefs may affect groups on a larger social level (e.g., same-sex couples’ ability to legally marry and obtain respective benefits associated with marriage).

LITERATURE REVIEW

A myriad of social, cultural, and political factors contribute to the development of peoples’ attitudes, beliefs and values (Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008; Calzo and Ward 2009; Morgan and Shanahan 2010; Schwartz 2010). What people experience in their daily lives, who they interact with, and what they are taught in school or in church all may play an important role in their development of certain attitudes. The central ideas communicated through the aforementioned social mechanisms have the potential to affect other facets of their daily lives, including their attitudes about the social world. It is important to understand how and why peoples’ attitudes are formed in order to understand how these variables can be powerful enough to affect larger social and political institutions, such as the development and engagement of certain state policies, namely Proposition 8. To achieve such an understanding, it is important to examine the process of attitudes toward homosexuality.

The Cultivation and Socialization of Attitudes

People are constantly bombarded with information from the media. This information conveys generalized portrayals of ethnic, sexual, and other minority groups, through comedies, news programs, soap operas, etc. The themes of such programming are consumed by audiences that use these themes to shape their opinions and attitudes about specific groups (Calzo and Ward 2009; Morgan and Shanahan 2010). Over time, and after much consumption, television viewers internalize mediated viewpoints, and they project them onto their respective realities; the myth becomes truth in a process known as “cultivation.” Morgan and Shanahan (2010) explained the origins and implications of cultivation theory. They state that George Gerbner originally developed cultivation theory in the 1960s; he explained it as the process by which individuals form beliefs through mediated mechanisms, such as television programming and argued that the more individuals watched television, the more likely those individuals would adopt the attitudes expressed through media and “superimpose their own forms of collective consciousness … upon social relationships” (Morgan and Shanahan 2010, 338). The process of cultivation acts as a cycle. Each
component of cultivation affects the viewer, and the viewer concurrently affects what messages are delivered based on ratings of particular television programs, thus the cycle continues; Morgan and Shanahan (2010) maintain that cultivation does not involve any new learning of information, but just the reassertion and strengthening of preexisting social norms.

Cultivation is not just a social process; it is a cognitive one as well. Although this research was not designed to examine the cognitive processes involving the development of attitudes and stereotypes, it is still important to understand the processes. This cognitive process is typically referred to as heuristics, which is a subconscious process that allows individuals to generalize information they have experienced for easy storage and quick access. However, the information stored using heuristics is often flattened and offers a shallow, stereotypical representation of the information (Morgan and Shanahan 2010). One instance of this occurrence is when viewers rely on information they have obtained by watching television to understand the real world; heavy television viewers are more likely to have an unrealistic, or mediated, and stereotypic perspective of reality (Morgan and Shanahan 2010). For example, heavy television viewers may internalize genre-specific televised themes and form cultural stereotypes. Mediated stereotypes of other groups, specifically other ethnic groups, have been examined through past research. Lee et al. (2009) refer to stereotypes of ethnic minorities as racial myths and explain how media perpetuates and reinforces these myths through the stereotypic messages it projected. Other social groups are also stereotyped and viewers’ attitudes about them are generalized. For example, Calzo and Ward (2009) found that heavy viewers of The Oprah Winfrey Show were more likely to believe society includes an unusually high number of families in need, and these viewers would be more likely to support interventionist and government policies in support of such families. One study also found that heavy viewers of soap operas and other television shows with romantic undertones would be more likely to have unrealistic ideas about marriage and romance, wish to get married at a younger age, and hold the belief that their marriages “will last forever” (Morgan and Shanahan 2010).

An elaboration of research that examined the relationship between the media and racial attitudes was posited in a study conducted by Lee et al. (2009), who assessed whether the level of television consumed had an impact on viewers’ perceptions of ethnic group characteristics, using the Big Five model of personality, which is a measure used to assess personality types (Lee et al. 2009). Results indicated that peoples’ stereotypic attitudes of various ethnic groups were significantly related to the level of television consumption (Lee et al. 2009). For instance, heavy viewers of television viewed Caucasians as generally more dependable, stable, and less angry than members of other
ethnic groups. Viewers who watched mostly informational television rated Caucasians as being more conscientious than members of other ethnic groups (Lee et al.). Similar analyses were conducted for various other ethnic groups, with results showing that television has the capacity to influence viewers’ attitudes about certain ethnic groups (Lee 2009). In other words, the attitudes an individual develops is contingent on the specific messages broadcasted through each genre. According to these studies, heavy viewers are at the greatest risk for their worldviews being shaped by the mediated mechanisms such as television.

The Development of Attitudes Towards Homosexuality Through Media and Socialization

More recently, researchers have examined the relationship between the media and attitudes toward homosexuality (Calzo and Ward 2009) and television depictions of homosexuals often flatten the gay or lesbian role into a one-dimensional character. Homosexuals are often portrayed as either promiscuous, laughable characters who have trouble with relationships or their sex life, or they are portrayed as individuals struggling with HIV/AIDS. Many comedy shows in particular not only portray homosexuals as flat characters, but also homophobia is often exploited for comedic effect. Televised dramas, soap operas, and films in general often grant enough time for deeper character development, so homosexual characters in those genres tend to be represented as diverse and complex individuals (Calzo and Ward 2009). However, research on the implications of such deeper character development on individual attitudes is lacking, as is research on the influence of specific exposure to different genres of television on viewers’ attitudes toward homosexuality and same-sex marriage. Hence, as the previously discussed studies and these examples suggest, cultivation may have significant implications toward the development of people’s attitudes, especially with the increased level of media accessibility. Greater accessibility to media has emerged over the years (e.g., YouTube, Hulu, DVR, etc.), which may have increased people’s level of viewing, allowing for greater opportunities for exposure to mediated themes and more chances for audiences to develop unrealistic depictions about society (Morgan and Shanahan 2010).

Calzo and Ward (2009) and Lee et al. (2009) argue that people’s attitudes were not innate—not even entirely cultivated, but socialized as well. Socialization refers to the process of internalizing general attitudes held by social groups and institutions over time (Calzo and Ward 2009; Lee et al. 2009); the socialization process begins as early as childhood, and becomes increasingly more affluent during adolescence when group affiliations and friendships become more complex. During this period, homophobic
tendencies and general prejudices emerge (Poteat 2007). There may be pressures from the peer group and various other social institutions to conform and adopt the attitudes of the group in order to avoid being ostracized (Poteat 2007). The socialization process of people’s attitudes includes exposure to media, as well as contact with their family members, peers and friends, and religious, political and educational institutions (Poteat 2007; Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008; Calzo and Ward 2009; Schwartz 2010). The preexisting beliefs held by these institutions have the ability to affect personal attitudes about specific topics, such as homosexuality and gay rights policies—for instance, Haider-Markel and Joslyn (2008), Calzo and Ward (2009), and Schwartz (2010) posit that religious, politically conservative, and less educated individuals tend to be less accepting of homosexuality and gay rights policies than those who are less religious, more politically liberal, and more educated. Societal attitudes about gender, ethnicity, and age may also influence peoples’ attitudes about homosexuals (Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008; Calzo and Ward 2009; Schwartz 2010). Researchers also suggest that women, Caucasian and young adult individuals are more accepting of homosexuality and gay rights policies than men, Asian, Latino and African American and middle-aged individuals (Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008; Calzo and Ward 2009; Schwartz 2010).

It is also important to assess how the aforementioned socialized attitudes affect the shaping of gay rights policies, including policies on same-sex marriage. Wood and Bartkowski (2004) examined how participants’ socialized attitudes about homosexuality influenced support for gay rights. They argued that people who made dispositional attributions toward homosexuality were less in favor of gay rights than those who made situational attributions. The term “dispositional attributions” refers to the belief that individuals’ behaviors were the product of inborn tendencies (i.e., homosexuality as a biological predisposition). The term “situational attributions” refers to the beliefs that individuals’ behaviors are the product of choice (i.e., homosexuality as a lifestyle choice) (Wood and Bartkowski 2004). Results indicated that believing homosexuality was innate (or dispositional) was positively correlated with support for gay rights (Wood and Bartkowski 2004). Similarly, Haider-Markel and Joslyn (2008) hypothesized that if people believed homosexuality was a dispositional (or uncontrollable) attribute, then attitudes and support for gay rights were generally more accepting. If individuals viewed homosexuality as situational (or controllable) then attitudes and support for gay rights were generally less accepting. Politically liberal individuals were more likely than conservatives to view homosexuality as a biological factor and to support gay rights policies (Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008). Highly religious individuals were more likely than those
who were less religious to view homosexuality as a personal choice and were less likely to support gay rights policies (Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008). Understanding dispositional and situational characteristics may offer insight into how attitudes toward homosexuality and same-sex marriage are developed and perpetuated through social mechanisms.

Schwartz (2010) introduced the social concept of sexual prejudice, which might also help explain the relationship between media consumption and an individual’s socialized attitudes regarding homosexuality. Sexual prejudice refers to heterosexual individuals’ attitudes regarding their own gender and the anxiety felt for fear of being viewed by society as homosexual (Schwartz 2010). Since homosexuality is stigmatized by society, heterosexuals develop homophobic attitudes to protect themselves against being viewed negatively (Schwartz 2010). Typically, gay men are portrayed in the media as more feminine than heterosexual men (Ivory, Gibson, and Ivory 2007). Heterosexuals may recognize this portrayal and they may fear being viewed in a feminine way. This feeling may lead individuals to develop more negative views regarding homosexuality as a means of protecting themselves from being labeled as gay. As illustrated by Calzo and Ward (2009), people’s socialized attitudes about homosexuality are influenced by the consumption of media. Viewers are exposed to mediated stereotypes that perpetuate and strengthen homophobic beliefs, negative attitudes toward gay rights policies and sexual prejudice.

Socialized attitudes toward heterosexual marriage also influence the individual’s development of attitudes toward homosexuality and same-sex marriage (LaSala 2007). LaSala (2007) investigated people’s attitudes regarding legal benefits pertaining to marriage; legal benefits include: obtaining health coverage under the spouse’s insurance; the ability to inherit spouse’s Social Security benefits, pensions, and personal assets without excessive taxation; the ability to visit a spouse in the hospital, and the ability to make health care decisions for the spouse if s/he were to be rendered incapable. Social benefits of marriage include: the notion that married couples are seen by society as normal and healthy, conversely to those who remain single or are divorced. It is argued that those who deviate from the norm (i.e., getting married) are stigmatized, which is a mechanism to keep positive and “normal” beliefs about marriage in the majority (La Sala 2007). LaSala argues that “Marriage privileges are meant to reward and legitimize certain relationships and sexual behaviors and in doing so stigmatize and marginalize others” (2007, 182). He also argues that political and religious conservatives attempt to reinforce the importance of marriage by relating marriage to overall physical and psychological wellness of the married couple and their children. This researcher further argues that, generally speaking, political and
religious conservatives believe marriage means “taming” sexual desires and, in general, they are opposed to non-procreative sexual activities. Until *Griswold v. Connecticut* in 1965, the state of Connecticut could prevent a married couple from using birth control. The state’s position was that “legalizing same-sex marriage would sanction non-procreative sex, and therefore, according to [religious and political] conservatives, must be opposed” (LaSala 2007, 182).

**PURPOSE**

Media and the other socialized institutions that exist in our environment can have an important relationship with the development of individuals’ attitudes toward not only ethnic groups but towards other groups as well, namely homosexuals. These socialization agents may have the capacities to shape peoples’ attitudes in ways that may effect the development and engagement of certain public policies (i.e., gay rights policies, specifically policies on same-sex marriage). It is important to understand how and why their attitudes and beliefs develop and influence decision making; the more informed people are about groups and particular subjects, the more informed their decisions may be, especially regarding decisions that impact the gay community.

The purpose of this study is to further investigate the relationship between mediated and socialized institutions’ effect on the development of individuals’ attitudes toward homosexuality and to assess whether there is a significant correlation between that effect and the development of gay rights policies, such as same-sex marriage. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between heavy television viewing, specifically television genres, and attitudes toward same-sex marriage. It is hypothesized that individuals who are heavy viewers of soap operas and talk shows will have greater acceptance of homosexuality and gay rights policies. This assumption is based on past research that has indicated consumption of certain genres of television may have the capacity to influence attitude development in specific ways that are unique to the messages conveyed through that particular genre of television (Calzo and Ward 2009). In particular, it is assumed the themes of love, marriage, altruism, and volunteerism portrayed in soap operas and talk shows would have a mainstreaming effect on its viewers, meaning ideas portrayed through media will have similar effects on its viewers, regardless of cultural differences (Calzo and Ward 2009). As a result of this specific genre consumption, viewers may adopt the beliefs portrayed through that medium. It is also hypothesized that females, those who are not very religious or are politically liberal will have more accepting attitudes towards homosexuality and gay rights policies.
**H1:** There will be a positive correlation between media consumption of soap operas and talk shows and accepting attitudes toward same-sex marriage.

**H2:** Females will be more accepting of homosexuality and gay rights policies than males.

**H3:** Participants who are not very religious will be more accepting of homosexuality and gay rights policies than participants who are religious.

**H4:** Participants who are politically liberal will be more accepting of homosexuality and gay rights policies than participants who are politically conservative.

**METHOD**

Participants included 132 undergraduate students enrolled in Introductory Psychology courses at a northern California university. Their ages ranged from 18 to 42 (mean = 21.3, $SD = 3.5$), and included 49 males (37.1%) and 83 females (62.9%). Approximately 41.7% of participants self-identified as White/Caucasian, 17.4% as Latino/Hispanic, 7.6% as Black/African American, 16.7% as Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.8% as Native American Indian, 9.8% as Multi-ethnic/Multi-racial, and 6.1% as Other. Most participants (32.6%) were juniors in college.

**Materials**

Informed consent, debriefing forms and survey packets consisting of various measures designed to assess participants’ attitudes toward homosexuality, gay rights support, level of contact with homosexuals, level of media consumption, religiosity, political ideology, and other personal demographics were utilized for data collection.

**Measures**

A 20-item Heterosexual Attitudes Toward Homosexuality Scale (Larsen 1998) measuring how strongly participants agreed or disagreed with various gay stereotypic and homophobic statements was used to assess attitudes towards homosexuality (Wood and Bartkowski 2004). A six-item scale was used to assess level of gay rights support (Wood and Bartkowski 2004) by asking how strongly participants agreed or disagreed with various statements regarding gay rights. An eight-item scale assessed participants’ level of contact with gays (Wood and Bartkowski 2004) by asking in what, if any, various social settings did participants interact with gays. This measure is used in order to assess participants’ level of acceptance toward gay people. To assess level of media intake (Calzo and Ward 2009), participants indicated how many hours
per week they watched television and what genre of television they watched the most (i.e., dramas, comedies or sit-coms, soap operas, reality television, talk shows, or news programs). Participants were asked to complete a general demographics page, asking: age, gender, level of college education, ethnicity, religiosity, and political ideology. Participants were not asked if they were homosexual. Religiosity was measured on a five-item scale by assessing the frequency participants attended religious services in a year (Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008). Political ideology was measured on a three-item scale that asked if participants were conservative, moderate, or liberal.

**Procedure**

On the day of the study, this researcher read the consent form to the participants, and each participant was asked to sign the consent form before surveys were administered. Once all the consent forms were signed and gathered, this researcher handed out survey packets and allotted 30 minutes for the participants to complete the forms. After participants finished the survey, respective packets were collected; consent forms were kept separate from the surveys to ensure participant anonymity, and debriefing forms were administered.

**RESULTS**

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between age, gender, level of education, religiosity, political ideology, general level of media consumption, average genre of media consumed, and general attitudes toward homosexuality and gay policies, including specific attitudes toward same-sex marriage. The majority of participants (32.6%) watched an average of 6 to 10 hours a week of television, and the television genres viewed consisted primarily of comedies or sitcoms (23.5%).

The data did not support the primary hypothesis (H1) that people who watch a high amount of genre specific media, namely television soap operas and talk shows, would have more accepting views of homosexuality and gay rights policies, specifically same-sex marriage. The data supported the secondary hypotheses (H2, H3, H4). The data indicated that level of religiosity was significantly correlated with general attitudes towards homosexuality, $r = -.40$, $p < .01$; gay rights policies, $r = -.32$, $p < .01$; and specific attitudes toward same-sex marriage, $r = -.37$, $p < .01$ (H3). Multiple between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) sets were conducted to further assess the relationships between gender, ethnicity, political ideology, general media consumption, specific television genre consumption, general attitudes toward homosexuality and gay policies, and level of contact with gays. The main effect of gender on level of contact with gays, $F(1, 130) = 5.38$, $p < .05$, was significant (H2). The
main effects of political ideology on general attitudes towards homosexuality, $F(3,128) = 2.08, p < .05$, and level of acceptance of gay rights policies, $F(3,128) = .68, p < .05$, were significant (H4). Post hoc Lead Significant Difference (LSD) tests indicated significant differences between the politically conservative and liberal, and politically moderate and liberal people’s attitudes regarding homosexuality, $M = -.59$ and $M = 0.8$, and gay rights policies, $M = -.48$ and $M = -.47$.

**DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship, if any, between people’s level of media consumption, especially that of certain television genres, and attitudes toward gay rights policies, specifically toward same-sex marriage. The results yielded no significance for the primary hypothesis (H1), but supported the secondary hypotheses (H2, H3, H4).

The simple regression analyses yielded several significant factors; however, none of which were directly related to the relationship between media consumption and attitudes toward gay rights. The other significant results appeared to reflect past research findings, with regards to various socialization agents and general media consumption influencing one another and individuals’ attitudes toward homosexuality and gay rights, including same-sex marriage (Poteat 2007; Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008; Calzo and Ward 2009; Morgan and Shanahan 2010; Schwartz 2010). For instance, there appeared to be a significant negative correlation between level of religiosity and attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Specifically, the more religiously conservative an individual was, the less approving of homosexuality and same-sex marriage he or she was. There was also a significant positive correlation between political ideology and attitudes toward same-sex marriage: the more politically liberal an individual was, the more approving of homosexuality and same-sex marriage he or she was. There was also a significant relationship between gender and level of contact with gays; the data revealed that women tended to have greater contact with gays, which may indirectly suggest greater acceptability of homosexuality and gay rights policies than men.

**LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

These findings should be viewed with caution given several limitations in this study. One limitation involves the sample not reflecting a wide enough range of culturally diverse individuals. It may be advantageous for further research to examine the television consumption patterns of adolescents, middle-aged and senior individuals, of those with less or more education than that of a college undergraduate and of those from different geographical
locations. This may allow researchers to collect data from a greater range of culturally diverse people and age groups. Another limitation to the study may be that participants were not as revealing about their true feelings regarding this socially sensitive topic. Participants may have given socially acceptable responses, regardless of the fact that anonymity was assured. An example of a mechanism that may be utilized through future research includes that of The Implicit Association Test, which allows for the assessment of individuals’ biases by measuring time lapse for responses. This method may allow for a more accurate analysis of individuals’ true attitudes toward homosexuality and gay rights policies.

Although no significant results were presented in this study regarding the relationship between level of genre-specific media exposure and level of acceptance toward homosexuality and same-sex marriage, further research with modified designs must be conducted to fully understand such relationships. This topic must further be explored to also more fully understand the social, emotional and cognitive implications of such mediated portrayals on individual members of the affected social groups and their mental wellbeing, particularly on the impact of identity development.

**CONCLUSION**

Wolf and Kielwasser (1991) refer to a statement made by George Gerbner that identifies all humans as social animals who exist in a world comprised of mediated institutional constructions called culture:

> …culture is that symbolic organization which socializes us and cultivates our fantasies about a world we do not experience directly. It is a system of stories and other artifacts, increasingly mass-produced, that mediates between existence and our consciousness of existence, and thereby helps shape both… In this respect, Gerbner is right: our culture is indeed mass-mediated. And, by extension, so are we.” (1991).

Exposure to the media and the messages mediated content conveys about certain social groups may be unavoidable, as may be the influence of media on the development of attitudes, considering we live in a world that heavily relies on television as a source of information. Keeping this in mind, recognizing and understanding how and why attitudes develop is important to our understanding of television’s effects on individuals’ attitudes toward not only homosexuality and same-sex marriage, but other cultural groups as well. If we recognize this assumption, we may be able to differentiate our own attitudes and beliefs from those of the media, which may help us make more informed and education decisions about other cultural groups in the future.
REFERENCES


The Importance of Retaining African Americans in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT
Programs in higher education designed to improve student retention lead to positive learning outcomes for all students when diversity is prevalent. The researcher conducts this study as an exploratory study in the form of a literature review solely focusing on retention, diversity, underrepresented students, and higher education. This type of research is important because it could assist institutions of higher education with the conceptual framework for how to maintain diverse populations to ensure the benefits of retention are successfully met. The researcher is broadly pursuing the question of how and why diversity impacts retention on college campuses that are either homogenous white or African American.

In September 2007, this researcher began her college career at California State University, Sacramento as an undergraduate student with hopes of succeeding in higher education. Given that this researcher was coming from a predominantly African American high school within a low-income neighborhood in Los Angeles, she was hoping to not feel alone, particularly in terms of race and ethnicity. When this researcher arrived on campus, she met students from all races, ethnicities, and nationalities, which led this researcher to agree with the popular idea that Sacramento State was diverse. The opportunity to engage in dialogue with students from different geographic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds became a unique learning opportunity. This opportunity was one she never had before (or certainly had never appreciated). However, the combination of in-class and campus experiences over time led her to challenge the claim of Sacramento State being truly a diverse campus, as African American students were noticeably underrepresented. For example, this researcher would start a class as one of four or five African American students and as the weeks rolled by that number would dwindle to her being one of three, one of two, and sometimes being the only African American student left in class. Her African American peers on campus were experiencing difficulties with retention and graduation. This researcher started to worry about the success of her community on
her campus and campuses like the one she attended. Are African American college students an endangered species? This researcher also wanted to know what factors informed the outcomes and experiences of African American college students. Finally, this researcher wanted to know what factors could and do make a difference for those African Americans who remain on campus.

PURPOSE STATEMENT
The following review of literature aims to integrate and summarize the works of those who study retention programs targeting the collegiate African American student, to synthesize any different results that appear in the body of knowledge, and to indicate directions for future studies on the topic.

LITERATURE REVIEW
In higher education, the term “diversity” is used to account for the differences between students in terms of age, gender, physical ability, religious or spiritual beliefs, geographic background, socio-economic background, and ethnic identity, to name only a few factors (Nieto 2000). While the act of defining diversity on its own is not controversial, the implications of what diversity means in relation to enrollment and graduation rates, specifically as it relates to the issues race and ethnic representation, is controversial (Takagi 1998). The disproportionate representations across racial/ethnic groups in higher education question the practices and policies around access and success. In other words, if students come into the university setting with differences, they may not be able to expect to receive an equal education when a one-size-fits-all model of education lacks the capacity to work with those differences (Ramsden 1991).

For many years in education, controversy has surrounded diversity. For example, diversity in higher education was at the root of Proposition 209 in the state of California. According to Takagi (1998, xii), “In November 1996 California voters passed by a wide margin Proposition 209—a voter initiative that banned the use of quotas in the state.” Proposition 209 eliminated race and gender as a basis for admission into the University of California (UC) system; after Proposition 209, the UC system moved their admission process into one solely based on merit (Takagi 1998). Unfortunately for many underrepresented students, merit-based admission policies mainly benefit only those with access and resources. Ballantine, Spade, and Karabel (2008) discuss how some of the nation’s top educational institutions (Harvard, Yale, and Princeton) reacted to the controversy by changing their definition of merit to create a more just admission process. The changed definition of
merit included the types of qualities that students from diverse backgrounds had to offer. During the course of changing their definition of merit, other decisions were brought into place for those students not favored by the term merit. Students were being admitted into prestigious institutions because of quota-based admissions policies to which committees had to adhere; these institutions, wanting to avoid appearing unjust, made their admissions policies and their definition of merit more holistic in nature (Ballantine et al. 2008). Regardless of the move away from quotas, the public sentiment still resides in the idea that students of color were taking the spot of students who were more traditionally qualified (Ballantine et al. 2008).

Policies implemented in higher education often incite a public narrative that victimizes diverse students, but fail to actually critique the lack of responsiveness of institutions towards ensuring the quality of education being accessed by all students. In the present research, diversity in racial and ethnic identity is of primary importance. This article reviews the existing literature to outline the experience of African American higher education in terms of retention practices and policy. This discussion will integrate and focus on retention programs targeting the collegiate African American student. This review serves as the foundation to transition from a broad discussion of retention to examine a more localized response taking place at Sacramento State. Combining the lessons learned from the literature and campus efforts, directions for future studies will be outlined as a set of policy implications.

The Representation of African Americans in Higher Education

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (http://nces.ed.gov/) in 2009, the student body in higher education was composed of: White 62.3%, Blacks 14.3%, Hispanic 1.5%, Asian/Pacific Islander 6.5%, American Indian/Alaska Native 1.0%, and Nonresident alien 3.4%. In some ways, what is happening nationally mirrors what is happening at Sacramento State. For 2011, campus admissions (http://www.csus.edu/about/ 2011), recorded that 7% African American, 1% American Indian, 20% Asian/Pacific, 16% Latino/Latina, 43% Caucasian, 2% International, and 11% other formed the student body. Although these numbers affirm diversity at a stronger percentage than the national average, some educational equity scholars might argue that diversity on a campus alone is not enough to represent equity in terms of access (Altbach and Lomotey 1991).

From a retention perspective, the pathway to college is not qualitatively the same (Kerr 1994) when the lack of or access to resources and opportunities over the willingness to earn seems to distinguish underserved students from—what Dill and Henley (1998) refer to as—the traditional students.
When a campus has a low percentage of underserved students and a high percentage of traditional students—or the students who, according to Dill and Henley (1998), go straight to institutions of higher education directly after completing high school—the imbalance of the two will render a qualitatively different experience (Kerr 1994). Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, and Gurin (2002) would suggest that this type of demographic profile, if unchanged by the time graduation is planned to occur, reveals outcomes that can hardly be viewed as triumphant. Specifically, Gurin et al. (2002) refer to diversity in numbers (like the diversity seen at Sacramento State) without any efforts to meaningfully integrate that diversity in campus life and in the classroom as “structural diversity.” Structural diversity is a step in the right direction, but cannot do much to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of the students on campus, including African American students.

Retention

There are many different views on retention in the United States, perhaps due in some part to the differences in definitions for the term retention. Walleri (1981) defines “retention” as on-time graduation within four to five years. According to Thomas (2009, 9), retention in a higher education setting refers to “the percentage of students in a particular year who neither graduate nor continue studying in an award course at the same institution in the following year.” Seidman and Hagedorn (2005) define retention as the act of staying in school until the degree is completed. Whereas Wild and Ebbers (2002, 503) define retention as a measure and state, “student retention is significant for measuring institutional effectiveness in the prevailing environment of accountability and budgetary constraints.” Although scholars and other individuals define retention differently, there are many common ideas, most of which center on the basic idea of degree attainment from an institution. Similar views about retention focus around degree attainment, while the differences around retention focus on the different grade levels for students. The target population for retention is students from underrepresented backgrounds because of the long-held belief about succeeding in education.

If students are not retained through high school (if they do not graduate or receive their General Education Development, or GED), then they have little chance of even making it to college (Greene and Forster 2003). Greene and Forster (2003, 3) also suggest, “Only 70% of all students in public high schools graduate, and only 32% of all students leave high school qualified to attend four-year colleges.” This statistic raises a red flag in that it suggests that all students who graduate from high school are not college ready. Haycock (2003, 2) offers a further explanation specific to African Americans: “Approximately 76 percent of white graduates and 86 percent
of Asian graduates go directly to college, compared to 71 percent of African Americans and 71 percent of Latino graduates.” The African American student who does not go directly to college often has increased difficulty returning to the idea of going to college after a few or several years of non-academic activity (Haycock 2003). Obviously, a student who never makes it to college cannot be retained; a student who struggles just to make it to college faces additional struggles with retention once she or he arrives on campus, and for a long time after that point.

Thus, retention issues at the K-12 level could contribute to retention issues in higher education. Retention (as it is defined in the present study) in K-12 education is just as significant a problem as retention in collegiate education; however, the present study focuses only on the unique challenges of retaining college students, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds. Without retention being prevalent in K-12, the issue will only worsen without students being aware of such issues affecting their education efforts.

Higher Education and the African American Experience
A common thread within the study of retention, especially college retention, is the idea that retention as a concept is of great and growing importance. According to Lotkowski, Robbins, and Noeth (2004, vi), “In the face of changing workforce and educational requirements, the need to retain more students will only intensify.” The employment landscape is changing and without an educated population ready to work in that new landscape, businesses and other social institutions are in danger of failing. The only way to create that educated population is to make sure they are retained. Retention is becoming more important. Lotkowski et al. (2004, 2) also argue, “Low retention rates waste human talent and resources, jeopardize our nation’s economic future, and threaten the economic viability of our postsecondary institutions and our country’s democratic traditions.” So, poor retention rates not only threaten the health and well being of the workforce, but they also threaten our ability to continue to educate even wealthy and privileged individuals. Without high retention rates, institutions lose their connection to all of their students, which impacts both the students and the institution.

The growing importance of retention has not resulted in improved retention rates, and few scholars would argue that retention rates for all students in institutions of higher education are encouraging (Braxton, Rendon, Jalomo, and Nora 2000). In the 1990s, fewer than half (47%) of all students entering four-year institutions completed the bachelor’s degree within nine years; public universities fared even worse, with only 41% of students completing the baccalaureate degree within nine years (Astin, Tsui, and Avalos 1996; Lee
1999). Bound, Lovenheim, and Turner (2009) confirm earlier findings by Horn and Berger (2004) suggesting that student retention rates in college are lower now than they were in the 1970s. In addition, Bound et al. (2009, 2) state, “the likelihood of obtaining a bachelor’s degree, conditional on some college participation, dropped from over 45 percent in 1970 to under 40 percent in 1990” and rates are continuing to slide. Horn and Berger (2004, vii) argue, “The increase in enrollment after five years was accompanied by an overall decline in degree completion from 50 to 47 percent.” Thus, institutions of higher education (especially public schools) are struggling with retaining their students.

Retention rates for students of underrepresented backgrounds are even more frightening (Artiles and Trent 1994). Nora and Cabrera (1996) suggest that during the mid-1980s, African Americans and Hispanics had the highest college dropout rates. Smedley, Myers, and Harrell (1993, 1) agree by saying “African-American and other non-Asian minority students attending predominantly White colleges are less likely to graduate within five years.” Researchers who have studied the retention rates of underrepresented students understand the continuous cycle of alarming numbers related to this issue.

The retention situation for African Americans specifically is equally distressing (Freeman 1997). In the early and mid-1990s, only 19% of African American students completed the four-year degree within four years, and less than one-third completed the degree within six years (Astin 1996). Lee (1999) found that only 34% of African American students completed a four-year degree within nine years. These numbers show African Americans as disproportionate to their majority counterparts in higher education. Kane (1994, 881) found that “after 1980, enrollment rates by blacks began to decline, whereas enrollment rates by whites continued to increase. This type of performance has been an ongoing issue for African Americans in higher education with numbers constantly decreasing in terms of enrollment and completion.”

The retention situation with African American students in California is as bad as (if not worse than) any other state in the nation. According to Allen (2005, 22), “From 1989 to 1998, California’s African American population remained consistent, yet the University of California system experienced an 18.1% decrease in Black student enrollment.” From a research perspective, this issue (if unchanged) will continue to affect African Americans overall—specifically African Americans in California. In institutions of higher education, especially state-operated schools in California, African American students are endangered.
While African Americans are making it to college (albeit in lower numbers than their majority counterparts), they are not successfully completing the amount of years or the various requirements needed to earn a degree. There are many factors that contribute to the overall reason why African Americans as a population seem to have difficulty graduating from college. Steele (1999, 2) poses the following question: “Does the problem stem from something about black students themselves, such as poor motivation, a distracting peer culture, lack of family values, or—the unsettling suggestion of The Bell Curve—genes?” Steele’s definition of the Bell Curve is that some individuals are more genetically gifted than others, and that because of their genetic background, success follows a bell curve: some very talented students, some very untalented students, and many students of average talent in the middle (1999). Steele (1999) suggests that, in attempting to discover why African Americans continue to struggle in academia, some researchers have put the blame on genetics. Other scholars (Carnevale and Rose 2003; St. John, Paulsen and Carter 2005) focus more on the financial aspect of completing college, or the lack of proper preparation in the African American community (Sellers, Chavous, and Cooke 1998). Still other scholars (King 199; Benton 2001) focus directly on the institutions in question. The arguments for each type of challenge are compelling.

Regarding the financial difficulties faced by many African American college students, Carnevale and Rose (2003, 109) argue that, “Within colleges, students from lower socioeconomic status families are more likely to have trouble graduating.” These researchers draw a connection between race and socioeconomic status, and argue that students from a lower socioeconomic background (many of them being African American) struggle during college and have a lesser chance of graduating from college due to the non-academic challenges they face as a result of the combination of race and socioeconomic status (Carnevale and Rose 2003). St. John, Paulsen and Carter (2005, 556) add that “A larger percentage of African Americans were…concerned about finances when they made their college choices.” While their majority peers or their peers from higher socioeconomic brackets had the luxury of making academic choices based on purely academic concerns, the African American student (particularly the African American student from a lower socioeconomic background) had to make decisions and face financial challenges in addition to racial/ethnic challenges, which they dealt with in addition to the general academic challenges faced by all students (St. John et al. 2005). Thus, if these African American students (especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds) are to be retained, they must learn how to overcome the socioeconomic-based issues and concerns.
of African American students (the issues and concerns not faced by white students of a similar socioeconomic status).

Sellers et al. (1998) suggest that inferior academic preparation at the K-12 level can explain the inferior academic performance of African American students. During the process of transitioning from high school to college, many African American students fail to learn the skills needed to succeed in college, which causes them to struggle once they become enrolled in an institution of higher education (Sellers et al. 1998). Sellers et al. (1998) suggest that if African American college students are to be retained, then they must find some remediation of the necessary skills for success.

Benton (2001, 22) looks in a different direction for the causes of African American students’ struggles in academia and asserts, “African American students continue to perceive PWIs [Predominantly White Institutions] as hostile, unsupportive, and unwelcoming.” When an African American student arrives at a campus where she or he is a minority, s/he can feel as if the entire institution is intimidating and unfriendly, while her/his majority peers have the luxury of feeling welcomed and supported (Benton 2001). These feelings can lead to the student experiencing negativity or apathy toward education in general, not just the offending individuals or the institution allowing the lack of support to continue (Benton 2001). Clearly, retention relies on a welcoming reception, the support, and the understanding that many African American students do not receive from their home institutions.

In some cases, faculty of color (specifically African American faculty) can provide support for African American students in need of it, but many African American students cannot use African American faculty in this way because those faculty members simply are not present on their campuses (King 1993). Regarding the limited presence of African American faculty, King (1993) suggests that there is a discipline-wide problem in creating and maintaining the African American professoriate. King (1993), Philip and Lomotey (1991) notes that African American teachers and professors are important because of the support services they offer to African American students. If African American faculty members are not available, then the retention of African American students becomes that much more difficult.

Eccles and Barber (1999) argue that student involvement in college campus activities leads to positive interactions between the institution and its students, and improves the students’ educational outcomes. When students take part in extracurricular activities, they begin to embrace everything their institution has to offer, and they become a part of a community to which they feel connected (Eccles and Barber 1999). Student participation in a
retention program, then, can be dually beneficial, especially if the retention program addresses all of the needs previously outlined.

Perhaps due in part to the increasing importance of retention, programs designed to improve it (especially retention of underserved populations) are becoming very popular on college campuses (Smedley, Myers, and Harrell 2003). Popularity does not equal competence, however, which is why scholarly attention to the workings of these programs is essential. Retention is the way to ensure the benefits of diversity, and retention programs are the way to ensure successful retention of students at a given institution.

The Significance of Diversity in Higher Education
Any discussion about efforts to integrate and maintain diversity must begin with a clarification about the importance and necessity of diversity, especially in educational settings. Many researchers who have studied the benefits of marinating a diverse population in higher education have discussed the importance of diversity. The impact of diversity on college campuses is important because it enhances educational outcomes for all students (Gurin et al. 2002). Gurin et al. (2002) go on to suggest, “Higher education is especially influential when its social milieu is different from student’s home and community background and when its diverse and complex enough to encourage intellectual experimentation and recognition of varied future possibilities”. When students embark on the higher education experience, a diverse environment is beneficial for them to learn to use critical thinking and engage in discussion with a diverse population of students. Frankenberg, Lee, and Orfield (2003) suggest that the underrepresentation of African Americans and other minority groups in education compromises the quality of learning for all students in several ways. These ways may include: anecdotal stories directly from URM students, focusing on reasons why a degree in higher education was considered or the struggles in which some of the students had to face. Frankenberg et al. (2003) also imply that schools are becoming increasingly non-white, or places where minority students are starting to receive a more equal opportunity to get an education. Despite the fact that minority students are able to attain an education, the lingering idea of not succeeding is still placed upon them as they enter the doors of higher education institutions. These stigmas are placed on them partially due to the long-held belief of failure. Frankenberg et al. (2003) suggest that the fastest growing minority groups are Latino and Asians; these two ethnic groups have experienced some struggles in the educational system, but the collectivist approach common in their cultures (the idea that the group or the collective comes before the individual) has led to important strides being made in education. The educational benefits of collectivism,
introduced at least in part by communities of color, reach all throughout the educational institution (Frankenberg et al. 2003). Without diversity, these benefits disappear. Chang (1999) found that, from a psychological perspective, racial/ethnic diversity has a significant positive impact on the type and quality of education received by all students at a given institution.

Brown (2004) suggests that institutions of higher education are more than places where diversity can be explored: colleges and universities have the responsibility and duty to maintain their diversity due to their assigned task of preparing the world’s citizens. Because colleges and universities hold the leadership position in training future generations, they must take seriously the charge of protecting diversity (Brown 2004). Educating African American students in higher education is important because of the past unpleasant experience African American students in education have had to endure. Giving African American students the opportunity to explore the notion of what education fully means not only breaks the long held belief of not educating them, but also digs deeper into the issue by giving all an equal opportunity to learn and use critical thinking amongst each other. Without offering African Americans the quality education other students receive, it is then that race matter and students are being judged on the color of their skin, but not the ability to learn, engage, and use critical thinking.

If a diverse student body enriches learning and ensures a civil future, then educators, administrators, and other interested parties must discover how to retain and ensure the graduation of those students who create diversity on campus in order to keep the benefits of that diversity (Gurin et al. 2002). In other words, to keep the benefits of diversity, educational institutions need successful retention programs.

**Purpose and Mission: Retention Programs Addressing Diversity and Higher Education**

Perhaps the importance of retention has spread, or maybe education in general is becoming an attractive business opportunity, but retention programming has caught the attention of consulting firms that claim to be able to increase institutional retention rates (Tinto 2006). Unfortunately, businesses paying more attention to retention has not resulted in better retention programming or improved outcomes, and “most institutions have not yet been able to translate what we know about student retention into forms of action that have led to substantial gains in student persistence and graduation” (Tinto 2006, 5). The inability of business to answer the retention problem reinforces the idea that continued scholarly attention is necessary.

Lotkowski et al. (2004) approached their study of various retention programs from an academic perspective instead of a business perspective, and created a
list of characteristics of successful retention programs. They found that there are two main categories of factors that can lead to a retention program’s success or failure (and, by association, a student’s success or failure): academic factors and non-academic factors (Lotkowski et al. 2004). Retention programs in general are more successful when they can access correct and “comprehensive information about students, their needs, and the factors that affect retention” (Lotkowski et al. 2004, 4). Obviously, retention programs are more successful when they include programmatic features that target the academic side of a student’s life, such as time management strategies or study skills (Lotkowski et al. 2004). The work of Lotkowski et al. (2004) echoes the arguments made by Sellers et al. (1998), who suggested that a lack of basic skills prevents underrepresented students from excellence. Lotkowski et al. (2004) seem to confirm that retention programs that include efforts to get the targeted students up to speed (academically) are the ones that are successful. Non-academic factors, typically assessed once the student is enrolled, can include: level of commitment to obtaining a degree, level of academic self-confidence, and level of academic and social integration into the institution (Lotkowski et al. 2004). Therefore, in order to be successful, a retention program must target the whole student and all parts of her/his life.

Thomas (2002) agrees with Carnevale and Rose (2003), and St. John et al. (2005) in recognizing the importance of a financial component in retention programs. Many students cope with poverty, high levels of debt, and the significant burdens that come along with having a job while being a student (Thomas 2002). Retention programs with financial benefits (such as a stipend or tuition waiver) can combat this challenge faced by many college students, especially students from underserved populations.

Finally, research on retention suggests that successful retention programs must attempt to address the other non-academic factors that could impact a student’s experience in college, including the cultural environment of the campus (Benton 2001), participation of supportive faculty (King 1993), opportunities for student involvement in extracurricular activities (Eccles and Barber 1999), or, especially for African American students, the cultural factors of motivation, peer culture, and family values (Steele 1999). In attempting to meet the standards prescribed by Lotkowski et al. (2004), retention programs face a battle that seems impossible to win, but that has not stopped many retention programs from giving that battle their best shot.

Some retention programs use the “divide and conquer” strategy in this battle: instead of attempting to remedy the retention problem as a whole, they target only a small part of the population in danger, in hopes that other programs will target other parts of the population. Programs that target specific
segments of the general underserved or underrepresented population (such as a specific ethnic minority, students from low-income backgrounds, or students who are the first in her/his family to attend college) are often able to target that segment’s specific challenges (Bragg and Barnett 2006).

The federal government funds some of the programs that target students who are underserved or underrepresented in higher education. These programs are known as TRIO programs. TRIO programs date back to 1964, when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a bill in an attempt to assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds; the bill passed and the first three programs (hence the name “trio”) were born (McElroy and Armesto 2003). Today, there are a total of eight TRIO programs, including the following: Educational Opportunity Centers, which provides information and advising on college admissions; the Ronald E. McNair Baccalaureate Achievement program, which aims to prepare qualified students for doctoral study; Student Support Services, a program that provides resources to institutions to help them advise and tutor disadvantaged students; Talent Search, which provides support and counseling for underrepresented students interested in higher education; the Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs Staff, which assists institutions interested in becoming TRIO campuses; Upward Bound, which provides opportunities for pre-college students; Upward Bound Math-Science, which applies Upward Bound principles to those interested in math and science; and Veterans Upward Bound, which applies Upward Bound principles to qualified Veterans (http://www2.ed.gov/ accessed August 6, 2011).

Perhaps, due to their federally funded status, these programs are high profile and have drawn both popular and academic attention. For example, McElroy and Armesto (2003) studied TRIO programs and found that one of their most significant contributions was that they were responsible for breaking the idea of failure as an option. Becker (1999) argues that TRIO programs help students by including (instead of excluding) all parties who could be helpful in getting the student to succeed (such as family members or members of the student’s community). Blake (1998, 329) adds that, “In one generation, these programs have implemented numerous successful strategies that have been shown to work effectively with first-generation-college, minority, and low income students.” In their study of the Educational Opportunity Program (or EOP), Loo and Rolison (1986) found that minority students benefit from special retention programs. They reported reactions from the students served that included ideas such as “EOP helps a lot” and “EOP offers a lot of support” (Loo and Rolison 1986, 68). More recent studies about EOP have revealed similar results (Gautreau and Novemsky 1997; Hamermesh and Bean 1998). The TRIO programs have not been around very long, but they
have already had a huge impact (Ward 2006). In these ways, TRIO programs seem to meet the challenges for retention programs set by Lotkowski et al. (2004).

TRIO programs might be the best-known retention programs in the world of education, but they are certainly not the only programs in existence. There are other federally funded retention programs that target specific parts of the underserved population. One of these programs is the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). CAMP is a program in higher education geared towards students who are or who have parents who are seasonal farm workers (http://www2.ed.gov/ accessed August 6, 2011). Researchers have studied CAMP with particular focus on its effectiveness (Twigg 2004; Reyes 2007). Twigg (2004) discovered that CAMP participants enrolled in an algebra class increased from 70% to 80% while CAMP students also passed the entire algebra class. These numbers demonstrate improved participation and success in math among CAMP students (Twigg 2004). Reyes (2007) argues that programs like CAMP work because they empower students who previously had little or no academic power. Thus, the research of Twigg (2004) and Reyes (2007) supports the research of Lotkowski et al. (2004): retention programs that target the academic side of the student, as well as the parts of the student that are more difficult to measure, are most likely to be successful.

It is important to note that not all retention programs are federally funded, especially when the field is narrowed to include only programs that target a specific segment of the underserved population. Kim and Conrad (2006) argue that some of the retention programs that are specifically designed for African Americans, for example, are found only at Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs). One such program is the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program. According to Battin (1997, 15), the Mellon Mays program provides “students interested in college teaching careers with a mentor support system designed to encourage and facilitate their work toward graduate study in a PhD program.” Having retention programs on HBCU campuses is critical because “historically Black colleges and universities … have served an important role in promoting access to higher education for African Americans when other venues were closed to them” (Palmer and Gasman 2008, 52). In the war of retaining African American college students, the HBCUs must be on the front line, which means that retention programs on these campuses must follow every suggestion for improvement and growth.

However, the reality is that most African American students do not attend HBCUs; most African American students will need the support of retention
programs at PWIs (or Predominantly White Institutions) (Furr and Elling 2002). For example, the Meyerhoff Scholars program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County targets African American students interested in doctoral study in math and science (Maton, Hrabowski, and Schmitt 2000). While not framed specifically as a retention program, the Meyerhoff Scholars Program works as such because its students “achieved higher grade point averages, graduated in science and engineering at higher rates, and gained admittance to graduate schools at higher rates than multiple current and historical comparison samples” (Maton et al. 2000, 629). The Meyerhoff Scholars Program has thrived in part because its goals and guidelines fit with what Lotkowski et al. (2004) established as the defining characteristics of successful retention programs (Summers and Hrabowski 2006).

It is possible that the success of programs like the Meyerhoff Scholars Program is due in some part to a further fragmentation of an already fragmented population. The Meyerhoff Scholars Program targets a small segment of the larger underserved population (African Americans) and then makes that segment even smaller to focus only on African Americans interested in math and science (Maton et al. 2000). Perhaps the increased customization allows the program to target specific issues without the distraction of treating the symptoms of a disease the students do not have, or spending time covering material that is not explicitly relevant to the group being serviced. The same logic surely applies to programs that aim to include gender as a relevant variable. For example, Allen (1992) found that collegiate enrollment rates for African American females are increasing while rates for males are decreasing. Garibaldi (1992) also found that African American males are struggling in college, at different rates and for different reasons than their female counterparts. Thus, retention programs that include a focus on African Americans and gender could improve upon the recommendations made by Lotkowski et al. (2004) and others by increasing the amount of specialization. In other words, in addition to targeting the whole student as Lotkowski et al. (2004) prescribed, retention programs must also specialize and narrow the amount of ground they aim to cover.

**CONCLUSION**

According to researchers like Gurin et al. (2002), diversity is beneficial in higher education because of the impact it has on students, faculty, and institutions. Without the benefit of diversity in education, institutions would struggle with student success (their most important reason for existence), which is why diversity should be maintained through retention. Most individuals understand the benefits that college students get from diversity,
but Gurin et al. (2002) considered the additional benefits to society. Those disadvantaged students retained in the nation’s colleges and universities can influence those around them, and all individuals and institutions are improved. Many of those retained students go on to become leaders and global citizens (Lotkowski et al. 2004). The importance of retention programs cannot be underestimated.

When retention programs are a part of an institution’s plan, retention rates of underserved or underrepresented students improve. This results in higher completion rates and better citizens, ready to become the next generation’s workforce. Without quality retention programs, all students (not just African American students) are indeed an endangered species.

This researcher hopes to pursue this area of study by further investigating the differences in currently existing retention programs. This researcher would like to study retention programs for African Americans on campuses that are homogenous and predominantly white, campuses that are homogenous and predominantly African American, and campuses that are heterogeneous, or diverse. This researcher aims to discover which of the aspects of successful retention programs appear in the various programs. This researcher also aims to discover whether the kind of campus makes a difference in the success of the program. This type of data collection and analysis could also reveal the major implications the programs are facing in the 21st century. The present study has demonstrated the importance of retention and retention programs; future studies could demonstrate what retention programs need to do to remain viable, including:

- Offering programs designed specifically for African American students who fit the category of underrepresented or underserved.
- Organizing unity days at various diverse institutions where faculty, staff, and students learn to appreciate each other.
- Hosting a series of events, which will target the student body population. Events will focus on issues surrounding diversity and the importance of it.
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Stress-Assisted Corrosion of Aluminum 6061 in Basic Solution

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ABSTRACT
Caustic stress corrosion cracking has only been superficially examined in aluminum alloys. In caustic (basic) environments, the inherent, protective oxide layer becomes soluble on aluminum and allows for further degradation. The purpose of this study is to observe the effect of a strong base solution (sodium hydroxide, sodium hypochlorite, sodium silicate, pH ~12) on the strength and stress-strain behavior of Aluminum 6061. The stress-strain behavior is also used to gain insight into the mechanisms of stress corrosion cracking. Hydrogen embrittlement is hypothesized to have played a major detrimental role. An unidentified substance formed around the plastic region only on samples submersed in the solution. This could have implications of caustic corrosion inhibition in aluminum alloys.

As the field of materials science progresses, complex questions arise about how to take advantage of acquired knowledge to better the nation’s economy, defense, and technological advancements. The study of materials science has origins from all over the world and timeline, and has a massive interconnection with the history of humankind. In fact, the names of the Bronze Age, Stone Age, and Iron Age hint at how whole eras in human history can be defined by how it was affected by the understanding of materials science. The present study does not attempt to define an age. However, it does attempt to answer a few small, but important questions about material science that have been brought about only recently.

In 1928, The Silver Bridge, so-named for the shiny aluminum paint, crossing the Ohio River around the Point Pleasant area was built with an innovative “eye-bar” design (Ballard 1929). Engineers were not sure how the new design would distribute the loads placed on it, so stronger steel replaced the original mild steel in the design to account for error in load distribution. The strong design and stronger material led engineers to believe that the bridge would
stand for centuries. However, 39 years later, in 1967, disaster struck. Residents reported hearing a loud boom and watched as the bridge collapsed “like a deck of cards,” killing and injuring several people (Shermer 1968). Engineers could not diagnose the failure with any certainty because their calculations suggested that stress and rust alone could not have possibly caused the bridge to fail. Some residents of the area even put the fault on the Curse of Chief Cornstalk, a Native American Chief who had lost a battle to the white men many years ago (LeRose 2001).

After extensive dissection of the failed structure, it was determined that an internal crack had propagated through the structure during either manufacture or assembly, allowing environmental corrosion to accelerate through the material over the years until the eyebars failed. While the bridge was still standing, internal corrosion defects, such as a crack, could not have possibly been detected without the aid of modern science.

Material that has consistently shown favorable resistance to corrosion is aluminum and aluminum alloys. Oxygen reacts spontaneously on the surface of aluminum to make aluminum oxide (4Al + 3O₂ → 2Al₂O₃) in our atmosphere. Although this is a degrading reaction, the oxide layer is so thin that it has little compromising affect on overall strength, yet blocks oxygen from un-oxidized aluminum underneath. This process of the product of a corrosive reaction preventing further corrosion is called “passivation.” Using a computer simulation, Campbell et al. (1999) estimated that a stable, 4 nanometer-thick aluminum oxide passivation layer forms on aluminum in a few nanoseconds in our atmosphere.

However, when placed under a tensile (pulling) stress, the protective oxide layer is deformed, revealing un-oxidized aluminum. The aluminum oxide layer is also soluble in certain basic (pH greater than 7) environments, leading to many other ways to undermine the oxide layer’s protective quality. From chemistry, a pH of 7 is neutral, acidic environments are lower than 7, and basic environments (the kind that this study uses) have a pH greater than 7. This is where the present study comes in. An aluminum alloy was placed in a corrosive environment while under a slowly increasing tensile load or “strain rate.” The corrosive environment was a solvent of the oxide layer, and the strain rate (rate of extension) was slow enough to allow for the reaction to occur. This deformation of an aluminum alloy in a caustic environment satisfies the parameters for stress corrosion to occur: a tensile stress and a corrosive environment, while undermining its protective oxide layer.

Designing for prevention of failure continues to evolve with newer experimental methods and further study of failed materials. The failure of The Silver Bridge has impacted economic and militaristic applications
worldwide. It is in this spirit that this study aims to help push the evolution of the study of stress corrosion cracking (SCC), specifically in how it affects the use of aluminum alloys.

BACKGROUND

Corrosion is a degrading process that has many forms. In the case of The Silver Bridge, the iron content in the steel underwent galvanic SCC. In the galvanic corrosion of steel, iron ionizes in the ambient moisture, effectively creating an anodic area. The leftover electrons then flowed to a nearby cathodic area where hydroxide ions are created using water and oxygen. These two products then made iron oxide and iron hydroxide, the red, flaky substance we know as rust. Unlike aluminum’s oxide layer that bonds to the surface and prevents further corrosion, rust flakes off to reveal more uncorroded iron. Certain aluminum alloys can also undergo galvanic corrosion under the right conditions. Many studies (Baer 1999; Gao and Quesnel 2011) that show that a “Beta” phase precipitated at elevated temperatures in aluminum alloy 5083 acted as cathode to the rest of the microstructure along the grain boundaries, making the alloy more susceptible to intergranular stress corrosion cracking.

Caustic SCC is simply stress corrosion cracking from basic (pH greater than 7) environments. Almost all literature on Caustic SCC refers to carbon and stainless steels, since steel in caustic environments is not an uncommon metal-environment combination in industrial processes. One example of research on Caustic SCC in steel is a study by the Institute of Physical Chemistry. Flis et al. (2009) found that caustic SCC susceptibility was increased in steel with increased carbon concentration up to 0.23-wt pct. Concentrations of carbon higher than 0.23-wt pct saw a decrease in caustic SCC susceptibility as a result of the formation of magnetite (Fe3O4). Although basic environments are just as common as acidic environments in nature, caustic SCC in aluminum alloys has been only superficially studied, especially from engineering perspectives. The reasons for this are two-fold: 1) The protective aluminum oxide layer is soluble in most basic environments, and 2) Aluminum, like most metals, is also very reactive in basic environments (Macanas 2011). This leads to the mindset that since the aluminum-basic environment combination is an unsafe one, mere avoidance of the combination altogether is sufficient.

As previously stated, two things are needed for stress corrosion to occur: a tensile stress and a corrosive environment. There are many ways that a tensile stress can be applied and there are several forms of corrosion. In galvanic corrosion, combinations of elements as anodes and/or cathodes
can alter rate of degradation. The relative size between anode and cathode, or concentration of the electrolyte also affects corrosion rates. In acidic and caustic corrosion, the pH level as well as metal-environment combination can dictate corrosion rates. However, regardless of the type of corrosion, in all stress corrosion scenarios, when a material is deformed or a defect is present, it is insidiously exploited, in that corrosion reactions actually accelerate through the material via the defect, causing early failure. The method by which the present study provides the exploitable defect is by a slow strain rate tensile test.

In a tensile test, a specimen is subjected to uniaxial tension until failure. Measurement of elongation and load throughout the test allow engineers to predict how a material will perform in different applications. At any given time during the tensile test, the load on the specimen divided by the original cross-sectional area gives the stress, while the elongation divided by the original gage length of specimen gives the strain. Throughout the tensile test, the relationship between stress (σ) and strain (ε) is graphed and aids in the acquisition of various important attributes of almost any material. The linear portion of the graph is called the elastic region because it encompasses all the stresses at which permanent deformation will not occur, so that the material will elastically “spring back” to its original size and shape if the load were to be removed. The slope of the linear portion of a stress-strain graph, for example, is called the Elastic Modulus (E), which tells engineers how much a material will deform at any stress under the Elastic Limit, the stress at which permanent deformation begins. The point at which no more Elastic deformation occurs is called the Yield Strength, and the highest stress that the material can undergo before fracture is the Ultimate Tensile Strength. Engineers use these important values acquired from stress-strain graphs to refine design parameters (Ashby 2010). One of the stress-strain graphs used to acquire tensile data in the present study is shown in Figure 1.
Data acquired from the stress-strain graphs of each experiment gave insight into the degradation of Aluminum 6061 in a strong base solution.

Tensile tests can be performed at different extension rates. Extension rate is the change in length of the specimen per time. A typical extension rate for a tensile test on a 0.5-inch gage length is around $5 \times 10^{-3}$ in/s, or five ten thousandths of an inch per second. In the present study, a slow extension rate of about $2.5 \times 10^{-3}$ in/s, or two and a half millionths of an inch per second was used to allow the corrosion reaction to occur. A recent example of the importance of extension rate is that of a 2011 study in Switzerland that showed Nanocrystalline Nickel-Iron sheets exhibited a formation and increase in yield strength at higher extension rates during load-unload cycles (Van Petegem 2011).

**EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE**

Samples of Aluminum 6061 were subjected to a dilute corrosive environment of sodium hydroxide, sodium hypochlorite, and sodium silicate at room temperature and strained to failure in tension using a Constant Extension Rate Testing (CERT) machine. Data for the load and elongation of each test were recorded via an Analog-to-Digital converter (ADC) hardware interface. The first sample of Aluminum 6061 was tensile tested without a corrosive environment. A second sample of Aluminum 6061 was tensile tested while
submersed in a commercial cleaning solution of 7 pct. sodium hypochlorite, 5 pct. sodium hydroxide, and 5 pct. sodium silicate (pH ~12) (S.C. Johnson). The sample broke after 3.5 hours. A third sample of Aluminum 6061 was submersed in a solution of the same chemical composition, without a load, for 3.5 hours, after which the sample was strained to failure without a corrosive environment. All tests were performed at a strain rate of 5 x 10^-6 s-1.

Figure 2. Experimental setup

Figure 3. Sample in corrosive vessel

The load and elongation data left the CERT tensile machine in the form of a corresponding voltage (1 pound = 1mV; 1 inch = 1V). A DAQ-Ni9025 was the ADC that converted the voltage into a digital signal to be recorded and
analyzed using the programming environment LabView 2009. In LabView, a Virtual Instrument (VI) was created to record a set of load and elongation voltages every 15 seconds. The VI was programmed to convert each set into stress-strain data using the dimensions of the samples, which were then appended to an excel file in order to create stress-strain graphs to illuminate significant tensile data.

Preliminary qualification tests were performed on 4140 Steel and Inconel 600 in normal atmosphere to ensure all components of the CERT-Software interface functioned properly and all parts were calibrated accordingly. The samples’ dimensions are shown in Figure 4. The sample is shown in Figure 5.

**Figure 4.** Dimensions of all samples

**Figure 5.** Sample
RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research is to highlight the general affects of a strong base solution on the stress-strain behavior of Aluminum 6061 under slow strain rates. Also, the stress-strain behavior of the alloys is what gave insight into the mechanics of the caustic stress corrosion of the alloy; i.e., the only raw data obtained and evaluated in this study of stress corrosion will be the tabulated tensile data shown in Table 1, which list the significant results of the tensile test. The results include total percent elongation, time to failure, breaking strength, and whether or not the corrosive reaction was visible with the naked eye.

Table 1. Tensile data significant to corrosive reaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Condition</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Strained in no solution</td>
<td>15% el, 4.5 hours, 32ksi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Strained while submersed in solution</td>
<td>11% el, 3.5 hours, 32ksi, visible reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) 3.5 hours submersion, then strained</td>
<td>1% el, immediate failure, 15ksi, reaction not visible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first control sample that was strained without a solution behaved in accordance with typical tensile tests of Aluminum 6061. It elongated 15% of its original length; it took 4.5 hours to break, and it broke at 32 ksi. The second test sample also performed predictably. The corrosive reaction was apparent during the test as bubbles and corrosive products formed around the plastic region and the tensile data corroborated its degradation. It only elongated 11% and took an hour less to break, although it showed a slight degree of resilience, as the breaking strength was also 32 ksi. Since the breaking strength of the strained-while-submersed sample and the control sample were the same (32ksi), it means that, although the strained-while-
submersed sample was degraded (reduced elongation to failure, faster failure), some ductility was kept.

However, the failure of the third sample raises interesting questions. When comparing the second and third samples, the elongation in the third sample was far less; failure occurred within a few minutes and at roughly half the strength. Although the second and third samples were soaked for the same amount of time in the solution, and the reaction was not visible in the third sample, the strength of the third sample was severely more compromised; almost no elastic or plastic deformation was apparent in the third sample.

To explain the earlier failure of the third sample, the corrosive reaction must be looked at. Both the second and third samples were subjected to the same degrading chemical reactions. Aluminum 6061 has several alloying elements and the solution contained three different chemicals, putting the number of reactions above 20. However, almost all the reactions taking place model after the following: \( \text{Al} + \text{NaOH} + \text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{NaAlO}_3 + \text{H}_2 \), where a metal (Al) reacts with a base solution (NaOH + H2O) to make a salt or other solid compound (NaAlO3) and hydrogen gas (H2).

As the material was deformed in the second test, hydrogen gas was liberated relatively quickly. However, in the third test, with no applied stress, the corrosive environment degraded the oxide layer and exploited residual surface and internal defects. The hydrogen produced was trapped and created pressure cavities, which caused internal strain and made the material more brittle. Although this would be a widely accepted use of the phenomenon of Hydrogen Embrittlement as an explanation for degradation of the third sample, it does not account for the rate and degree to which it was degraded.

In order to explain this, a 2005 study on the hydrogen embrittlement of aluminum will be discussed. In 2005, Lu and Kaxiras calculated that hydrogen could actually do more damage to aluminum matrices than originally thought. Throughout any metallic matrix there are missing atoms, and the spaces they would occupy are called vacancies. These vacancies play a role in various mechanical properties as well as in the hydrogen embrittlement behavior of aluminum. It is thought that these vacancies can support about six hydrogen ions. However, based on the calculations by Lu and Kaxiras in 2005, the orientation of hydrogen ions within aluminum matrix allows up to 12 hydrogen ions to fit in a vacancy. This means that far less energy is needed for hydrogen to wreak havoc on the mechanical properties of aluminum, and can at least partially explain the degree of degradation in the third sample of the experiment.

Something noteworthy to mention outside of tensile results is the appearance of a black-colored precipitation on the plastic region of the strained-while-
submersed sample. Although the second and third samples were submersed in the same solution, the stress on the second sample somehow caused a black substance to form on the surface of the plastic region. This could have possible implications of caustic corrosion inhibition via a kind of stress-induced passivation, though unlikely.

LIMITATIONS
One limitation of this study is the pH level of the solution. A pH of 12 is not often seen in nature, although it does occur in industrial processes. The composition of the solution also presents a limitation, in that sodium hypochlorite and sodium silicate—although a cheap way to reach the objective level of pH—do not occur in nature. Another limitation is that, although hydrogen embrittlement playing a major secondary role in the failure of the third sample is a good explanation, only tensile data and previous research were used to hypothesize hydrogen embrittlement.

FUTURE RESEARCH
Future research includes doing similar experiments with welded joints of Aluminum 6061 as it is widely used in welding applications (Lakshminarayanan 2009). Heat treatment may also give rise to interesting corrosion behavior. Identifying and recreating the substance that formed on the plastic regions of the strained-while-submersed samples can also lead to interesting results. Scanning Electron Microscope imagery might also provide great insight into the mechanisms of the failures.

CONCLUSION
In the present study, the stress-strain behavior of Aluminum 6061 was assessed in order gain insight into the mechanisms of its caustic stress corrosion. Hydrogen embrittlement is hypothesized to have played a major part in the acceleration of the degradation of the submersed-without-strain samples, although this explanation needs further investigation. An unidentified substance was formed in the plastic region of strain-while-submersed samples and needs further investigation to be identified.
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Lions & Bears, Oh My! Creating the Bridge Between Athletics & Academia

Ijeoma Ononuju
Dr Ricky Green, faculty mentor

ABSTRACT
In an effort to create a more culturally relevant and humanizing approach to the goal of closing the achievement gap in K-12 education, this study examines and advocates the use of athletics as a pedagogical model. The athletic model has been shown to be successful in educating culturally diverse student populations by building upon traditional standards. Through conceptual analysis of books written by or about the coaching styles of Paul “Bear” Bryant and Joe Paterno, this research builds a bridge between athletics and academia. Results show that the athletic model is a viable method for teaching ethnic minority students.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation ... But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. (Martin Luther King 1963)

Approaching 50 years since Martin Luther King delivered this speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, African Americans still find themselves dealing with the same issues that the Civil Rights Movement had hoped to dispel (Jeynes 2005). Though strides have been made legislatively, the functionality of equality has yet to approach the doorsteps of many of those who remain stranded on the “island of poverty” (King 1963). This exile continues to persist despite the advent of a colorblind mantra; this researcher argues that it is this colorblind mantra that encourages assimilation
and instructs the uniqueness of “Negro” culture to remain isolated and unrecognized in the corners of American society.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka set the precedent that separate but equal was indeed separate, but unequal when it came to education, and thus established that segregated schools were unconstitutional (Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin 2002). This, perceivably, was the first step in creating an integrated society that would fulfill the dreams of those who fought for justice and equality; yet, the failing of legislated integration is that it solely integrates physical bodies. Although Brown v. Board of Education was significant (acknowledging the inferior education African American children were receiving compared to whites), the achievement gap persists (Banks 1988; Jeynes 2005; Hawley and Neito 2010). Thus, integration has not failed, but remains incomplete.

Due to the perpetual achievement gap, researchers such as Banks (1988), Ogbu (1992), Ladson-Billings (1995), and Fordham (1998) have attempted to provide an explanation. As a result, there are theories (e.g. Cultural Inversion, acting white, lack of cultural relevance, Banking Approach) that point to why some minorities, in particular African Americans, tend to underachieve in academia (Fordham 1988; Freire 1993; Bartolomé 1994). The failing, or imperfection, of integration is that the “Negro is still languished in the corners” of the classroom, “and finds himself an exile in his own” education (King, Jr. 1963). Though the African American has been integrated, the price for that integration is to keep the part that is African (Negro) veiled and to completely assimilate into the consciousness that is American. Simply put, African Americans, as well as other ethnic minorities, tend to underachieve in school because on some level their education is not culturally responsive (Bartolomé 1994; Ladson-Billings 1995). While the validity of individual theories may be debated, in order for the conversation to continue the dialogue must include the problem and the solution. In fact, it is in the spirit of developing a viable solution to the proverbial “elephant in the (class) room” of African American underachievement that this research is done.

This research will explore two questions. The first question is whether there is a need for K-12 pedagogy to become more humanizing and culturally relevant. The second question asks if the athletic model contains many of the elements of an effective culturally relevant pedagogy, and, if so, whether the model can be used to address the challenge of closing the achievement gap. First, the achievement gap and the factors that contribute to it will be defined and discussed.

While African Americans are underachieving in their academics, there are many who overachieve in the athletic classroom (Gnida 1995, Jeynes 2005).
Athletics are not solely about physical ability but about mental aptitude as well. The difference between success and failure is often based on an individual’s ability to out-think his/her opponent. Thus, athletics and its model of teaching may be a viable form of culturally relevant pedagogy and a possible solution to closing the achievement gap.

LITERATURE REVIEW

... if I am not what I've been told I am, then it means that you're not what you thought you were either ... If, for example, one managed to change the curriculum in all the schools so that Negroes learned more about themselves ... you would be liberating not only Negroes, you'd be liberating white people who know nothing about their own history. (Baldwin 1963, 3)

In this quote, Baldwin articulates his fundamental response to education. He maintains that the resistance to embracing a more culturally relevant pedagogy is not so much a resistance toward educating ethnic minorities in a different way as it is resisting the truth that persists as a result. This researcher argues that education, at its core, is fundamentally about examining and trying to develop an understanding of the world that surrounds us. Socratic reasoning demands that educators be willing to sacrifice and endure the pain of examination in order to create and nurture the type of learning environment that is inclusive and not exclusive (West 2001).

The Achievement Gap

The “achievement gap”—the disparity in academic performance between different groups of students—continues to plague K-12 education (Jeynes 2005). The disparity in academic performance is evaluated based on educational measures. The State of California’s Department of Education evaluates student academic performance with the Academic Performance Index (API) score, which utilizes students’ scores on statewide assessments (e.g., STAR, CASHEE) and converts them into points on a scale from 200 to 1000. African American students in California score on average 152 points lower than Anglo American students (California Department of Education 2010) and drop out at a rate three times higher (California Department of Education 2009). What exacerbates the gap is that African Americans are performing well below the baseline of 700 while Anglo Americans are performing on average well above it (California Dept. of Education 2010).

Identifying the factors or causes for the achievement gap can be a difficult task. Considering the primary variables in the equation, the root causes can be attributed either to the student, the system, or both. In order to appropriately
address the achievement gap in full, both the student and system variables should be fully vetted; this study will focus more on the latter. Specifically, this study focuses on pedagogy and its effects on the ethnic minority student’s performance.

Reviewing the API scores of the different ethnic minority subgroups in California reveals that there are also differences in performance that exist between the subgroups themselves. To account for the difference in performance between various ethnic minority groups, Ogbu (1992) developed the Cultural-Ecological Theory of Minority Performance in School. Ogbu highlighted three sub-groups of minorities: Autonomous, Immigrant or Voluntary, and Caste-like or Involuntary. This study focuses primarily on voluntary and involuntary minorities. “Voluntary minorities” are defined as individuals or a group of people who immigrate to the U.S. in search of a better opportunity and do not look at their residence as being forced upon them by the government or “white America” (Ogbu and Simons 1998). Involuntary minorities, conversely, view their residence as forced upon them by “white America.” Involuntary minorities historically have been marred by oppression, enslavement, relocation, forced occupation, and as a result have developed an oppositional response to the dominant culture (Ogbu and Simmons 1998). Involuntary minorities, such as African Americans, tend to have the greatest struggles in school (Ogbu 1992).

Many students’ perceptions about education are developed through the macro and micro influences of everyday life. Macro aspects include the student’s community, how his/her community fits into society as a whole, how the community achieved minority status, and the effect that minority status has on the student’s relationship with school (Ogbu 1992). For involuntary minorities, there is a struggle between the ethos of their communities and their education (Fordham 1998). There is often a decision to be made between embracing a definition of success that focuses on the individual or one that focuses on the collective. What results is an oppositional social identity, which equates academic success with acting white (Ogbu 1992; Fordham 1998). The stigma of “acting white” refers to a rejection of an individual’s culture and group identity in preference for the dominant “white” culture and identity; the community implicitly discourages academic success for fear of losing its best and brightest to the dominant white culture (Fryer 2006).

There are also micro factors that contribute to the achievement gap. The micro aspects include focusing on the student’s relationship with academia, his/her relationship with the teacher, school, administrators, and most importantly the active pedagogical model (Ogbu 1992; Ogbu and Simmons...
Duncan-Andrade (2009) notes the importance of hope in education as a pedagogical tool, and argues that hope is essential for student growth. Teachers then should be cognizant of the type of hope they are providing. While true hope may serve to inspire and engage students into their education, false hope can hinder inspiration, disengage, and erode motivation, contributing to the growing achievement gap (Duncan-Andrade 2009).

In many cases, the achievement gap is the result of a complex interplay between macro and micro forces within education. The teacher-student relationship that is analyzed at the micro level is not simply isolated from its macro counterparts, but is often viewed through the scope of a collective/community point of view (Fordham 1998; Fryer 2006). Scholars have also noted the importance of the student’s relationship with his/her community in order to create a pedagogy that will begin to close the achievement gap (Freire 1992; Ogbu 1992; Bartolomé 1994; Ladson-Billings 1995; Duncan-Andrade 2009).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
The relationship between students and teachers can be one of the core variables related to academic performance. Freire (1993) defines this relationship as fundamentally about power. By defining the relationship in this manner, the teacher may fulfill the role of the narrating subject while the students are the listening objects. This command style of teaching (Mosston 1968) provides the teacher with full autonomy in all decisions in the learning process and the student with no autonomy. This style of teaching, also known as the banking concept of education (Freire 1993), allows the teacher to inhabit a position of superiority and the student a position of inferiority. What results is a system that reinforces the power structure of the outside society and, whether explicitly or implicitly, the minority student’s historical role (Woodson 1969).

Acknowledging the cultural inversion that exists with involuntary minorities, it becomes easy to see how the student begins to reject the current education model. Bartolomé (1994) says that robbing students of their culture reduces minority students to a “savage” status and effectively dehumanizes them. Pedagogy should then incorporate the authentic history of the student as a base and should be criticized when it perpetuates the belief that ethnic minorities are inferior to the dominant culture (Woodson 1969).

Culturally relevant pedagogy erases the self-identification of ‘savage’ and allows students to transition from objects to subjects through the infusion of culture in the curriculum and culture of the classroom. Such pedagogy would also attribute to student success, inspiring critical thinking by both the teacher and student in the educational process, and creating a paradigm shift where
teachers and students become partners in learning (Villegas 1991; Bartolomé 1994; Ladson-Billings 1995; Franquiz and Salazar 2004). As a result, the teacher has a better opportunity to embrace the community, and delineate some of the outside communal issues that affect student performance in school.

Culturally responsive pedagogy takes on the challenge of “growing roses in concrete” (Duncan-Andrade 2004, 1). It is the process of transforming the student from object to subject along with the simultaneous paradigm shift of the teacher to learner (Jackson 1994; Govindarianjan 2001; Duncan-Andrade 2004). Hope and trust become irreplaceable ingredients in creating an atmosphere that will inspire the highest level of success with students in their academics (Jackson 1994; Duncan-Andrade 2004). For students, trust in their teachers is highly correlated with their motivation to learn and the feeling of empowerment with their learning (Govindarianjan 2001; Curzon-Hobson 2002). Motivation and learner empowerment has the potential to translate into student achievement, but successful development of trust between teachers and students is not easily accomplished. The adage that people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care is especially true for many ethnic minority students who are rose seeds planted in concrete; thus, trust between teachers and students, as it relates to a culturally responsive pedagogy, is built on the teacher’s ability to care about his or her students. Teachers must provide a sense of material and Socratic hope to their students if they intend on developing a trust foundation upon which they can build (Duncan-Andrade 2004).

Athletics and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
The first question of the research is whether or not there is a need for a more humanizing and culturally relevant pedagogy. The second is to examine whether the athletics model can be seen as a model of culturally relevant pedagogy and can be used to close the achievement gap with involuntary minorities. The athletic model, which occurs outside of the classroom, differs from traditional classroom pedagogy due to its problems being more practical or applied (Nasir and Hand 2008). Problems that are more practical than theoretical can have an effect or impact on student engagement. Student engagement is directly related to academic performance. As students transition to subjects of learning they become more engaged, which helps to improve academic performance (Freire 1992). Many students value the team first or collective ethos that is associated with athletics, which helps to increase their engagement (Nasir and Hand 1992). Scholars (Banks 1988; Jackson 1993; Franquiz and Salazar 2004) have noted that students who tend to be field dependent or relational in their learning styles are more attuned
to social aspects of their surroundings and tend to experience a higher degree of academic success in cooperative learning environments than in competitive ones. These students typically identify as African Americans, Mexican Americans, or Native Americans (Cohen 1969; Witkin 1977; Banks 1988).

Nasir and Hand (2008) discuss student engagement in terms of the student’s ability to make a “connection between self and the activity” (147). The connection or engagement can be measured by the student’s access to the domain of knowledge as a whole, the ability to take on integral roles and accountability for the role, and the opportunity for the student to engage in self-expression or make a unique contribution (Nasir and Hand 2008). At the core of student engagement is the relationship between student and teacher and the teaching styles used (Mosston and Ashworth 1985). In order to maintain student engagement and inspire high academic achievement a variety of teaching styles should be used with the autonomy of decision-making trading off between students and teachers (Mosston and Ashworth 1985). Whether reproductive or productive in nature, student and teacher/coach are able to create a more symbiotic experiential relationship in the course of learning (Mosston and Ashworth 1985; Nasir and Hand 2008).

The athletic model affords an opportunity for high student engagement because it allows students to connect with the activity by utilizing a variety of teaching styles and allowing the student to have access to the domain, providing integral roles, accountability, and encouraging self-expression. Coaches rely on communication with their players in order to be successful, and the more specific the communication, the better students are able to engage (Gallimore and Tharp 2004; Nasir and Hand 2008). Gallimore and Tharp (2004) noted in their research that coaches also invest in their students by getting to know them individually, their families and communities, learning style, and then tailoring instruction to bring out the best in the individual, which includes consistently evaluating individuals in response to overall team performance as well as individual growth, and then relating this information back to the student/athlete (Gallimore and Tharp 2004; Nasir and Hand 2008). The specificity of the feedback helps to build the trust relationship between student and teacher that is essential to student engagement and overall performance. It also provides consistent access to the domain of knowledge and allows the student to appropriately evaluate their standing, holding them accountable for their specific areas of opportunity while not discouraging self-expression.

Thus the achievement gap, defined by the performance scores from the California Department of Education, establishes a need for further research.
The sub-group that appears to be most susceptible to poor performance is involuntary minorities, particularly African Americans. Many factors influence the academic performance and engagement of students. Often a combination of these various factors makes the issue of academic performance complex. As a result, many students feel disenfranchised or forced to choose between two different worlds—school and home (Fordham 1988). A more humanizing and culturally relevant pedagogy would allow the student to better engage in his or her learning, and it eliminates the need for the student to choose between competing identities. The athletic model contains many of the humanizing and cultural elements in its infrastructure and can serve as a model for academia.

**Paterno & Bryant**

The books examined for this research include *Paterno by the Book* by Joe Paterno, *Bear Bryant on Winning Football* by Paul “Bear” Bryant, *Joe Paterno: Football My Way* by Mervin D. Hayman and Gordon S. White, *Playing for Paterno* by Charles Pitman and Tony Pitman with Jae Bryson, and *Career in Crisis: Paul “Bear” Bryant and the 1971 Season of Change* by John David Briley. The choice of Joe Paterno and Paul Bryant as subjects for the analysis is due to their unprecedented success as college football coaches. Joe Paterno is currently the head football coach at The Pennsylvania State University, having served in this capacity since 1966, and has accumulated the most wins of any Division I Bowl Subdivision team. Paul Bryant at his retirement (1982) was the wins leader (being since passed by Paterno and other coaches) in Division I Football Bowl Subdivision and he had relative success at each coaching stop in his illustrious career. What makes both men important to the research questions is that they presided over teams that saw the integration of African Americans. Bryant was the first coach in Alabama’s history to have African Americans on the football team; Paterno oversaw the increasing diversification of his teams for more than four decades as the head coach.

**METHODOLOGY**

This research will use a conceptual analysis approach to evaluate the chosen literature. The concept categories will be based on the research question of whether the athletic model is a viable model of culturally relevant pedagogy in K-12 education. As the literature is analyzed it will be coded for the existence of the defined concepts. The concept categories will focus on the teacher/coach–student relationship and student engagement. These categories will range from how the teacher/coach views his position in relation to the student/athlete to the student/athlete’s ability to identify with
the activity. Each of these categories is considered essential in establishing a more humanizing and culturally relevant pedagogy.

The presence of the various concepts in the literature will provide a theoretical framework as to how the athletic model can be applied outside of the athletic classroom and in the academic classroom. The concepts are defined to show how students are empowered to achieve greater success in the classroom. By coding for the existence of the concepts in the literature, a connection will be made between the success of the students in the athletic classroom and the existence of the concepts in the curriculum (i.e., athletic model).

**Category Description**
The category descriptions are discussed in this section.

**Teacher/Coach Position**
This category will focus on how the teacher views himself or herself in relation to the students. Specifically, the teacher would view him or herself as a participant in the learning process, not exclusively as the facilitator of student learning. Being a participant in the learning process allows for a more equitable relationship in the classroom, empowering students to take greater ownership of their learning (Bartolomé 1994). It would also allow for the teacher to embody a position of learner, creating an environment where the students and teacher are teaching and learning from each other, inspiring greater student engagement and higher academic success.

**Culture and Community**
Culture and community as a concept will be the use of the student’s social practices, values, beliefs, and history within the curriculum with the goal of empowering the student and inspiring higher academic engagement and success. Culture and community should be used as a means of awakening critical consciousness within the student that will allow the student to critically analyze their environment and the prevailing social structure.

**Teaching Model**
There is a commitment to educating all students and a variety of mediums are utilized to account for the various learning styles of a diverse group of learners (Mosston and Ashworth 1985). By not subscribing to a one-size-fits-all mentality of delivering instruction, more access routes to the domain of knowledge are created. Subsequently, students can find the access point that fits them best as learners. This helps students to transition from being objects to subjects of learning (Freire 1993; Nasir and Hand 2008).
Ethos
A more collective approach to learning is implemented. There is a culture of togetherness, collective accountability, as well as collective empowerment. Individual empowerment takes a back seat to the collective (Ladson-Billings 1995).

Feedback
Expectations that are specific, measurable, and attainable are collaboratively set between teacher and student, with specific feedback provided on a consistent basis. Students are expected to meet and exceed expectations, and feedback is utilized as a motivational tool for inspiring higher achievement (Gallimore and Tharp 2004). With consistent and specific feedback, students gain greater access to the domain of knowledge (Nasir and Hand 2008). Increased access to the domain leads to greater student engagement. Also, setting high expectations and continually raising the bar through opportunities to provide feedback helps empower students and leads to greater academic success.

Practice-linked Identity
Students begin to identify with the activity in which they are participating. An atmosphere of learning is created that allows the student to take on integral roles in the learning process. Self-expression and innovation are welcomed, valued, and seen as a means of enhancing learning outcomes, which creates a learning process that is more humanizing in its approach and increases student engagement (Nasir and Hand 2008).

ANALYSIS/RESULTS/DISCUSSION
This research begins to reveal the athletic model as a successful example of culturally relevant pedagogy. This researcher delves into an athletic model for closing the achievement gap in today’s schools. Seven concept categories related to culturally relevant pedagogy and the athletic model were identified and defined to assist in the examination of the selected text. The selected text focuses on the teaching styles of Joe Paterno and Paul Bryant who have reached the pinnacle of success as football coaches. This section provides an analysis of the results as they relate to the various concepts examined.

Teacher/Coach Position
The teacher/coach position, as part of the athletic model, has tremendous impact when defining the relationship between the coach and his players. The role the coach plays in the learning process, and the way they may perceive themselves affects the relationship between player and coach, as well as the model of teaching that is used. The previously discussed literature
provides evidence that Bryant and Paterno both were willing learners and this allowed for their players to feel empowered in the process.

Bryant, along with his belief in team unity, was a firm believer in discipline. Bryant stressed discipline in his program, believing that “the most disciplined team would often make the difference” (Briley 2006, 47); yet, though Bryant was a disciplinarian, he was also a willing learner who was ready to admit that he didn’t have all the answers, and he took ownership when he was wrong. Terry Davis, quarter back for Bryant’s 1971 team, alludes to this when he says:

The first half was a close game and normally Coach Bryant did not send in many plays. He had always told me if I don’t like it, don’t run it. Sometime in the first half, they started running in a bunch of plays, and it was option-left and option-right. I was calling the plays that he sent in … We kept one series after another with no success … I went to the sideline and Coach met me coming off the field and he was furious. He said ‘Davis what in the hell is going on out there?’ I told him that if he would let me call the damn plays, we would be all right … He said that it was okay, and that I was exactly right about calling the plays. After that I called the plays for the rest of the half and game. (Briley 2006, 184)

The willingness to take a back seat and become a student, allowing the player/student to take a teaching role in the learning process is fundamental in an effective culturally relevant pedagogy (Mosston 1968; Freire 1993). This gives the student the autonomy to critically think about the problem, their environment, and learning as a whole. This pedagogy also establishes a cooperative or symbiotic relationship between the coach and player.

The athletic model, based on its explicit objective of winning, is student focused, due to the fact that players win the game, and coaches help facilitate the learning that will allow the players to be successful in the game. This requires coaches to teach and encourage their players to think and learn on their own, independent of the coach at times. Paterno says:

I say to them ‘Look, if you’re a defensive halfback and you’re playing in a zone defense and I tell you to play deep, but you just know that the next pass is going to be a short flat one and there will be times when you just know it and you don’t go against everything I’ve told you, if you don’t gamble for the interception, then you’re no damn good. You’re stupid, you’re lousy, and you’re not a good
football player. I can get a robot to play that position.’ (Hyman and White 1978, 36)

Challenging his players to think for themselves, even at risk of proving him wrong, empowers his players and creates a more heterogeneous learning environment. This more humanizing approach to teaching and learning alleviates many of the structural inequalities found outside of the classroom, and allows for the players to exercise their knowledge and expertise in a competent manner (Bartolomé 1994). The expectation for players to critically engage in their world, which is football, is an essential component of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Culture & Community
For football coaches, the recruitment process often takes them into the homes and communities of their players. It is during this time that they are able to meet with parents, family members, and other members of the community who may be vested in the well being of a potential recruit (Hyman and White 1978; Paterno and Asbell 1989). In terms of building an effective culturally relevant pedagogy, this is an important step, but understanding or being open to a player’s culture and community can go beyond the recruiting process. Analysis failed to show how culture and community where infused into the curriculum; however, there was recognition and engagement of the culture and communities of the players by the coaches (Hyman and White 1978; Briley 2006).

Paterno, as an Italian kid from Brooklyn, was often called a “Wop” or “Guinea” growing up, and empathizes with those who have been treated like second-class citizens (Hyman and White 1978). Paterno, addressing the subject of African American athletes, says:

…there is so much emphasis on making it in athletics that they [teachers, family, community] don’t take advantage of the other talents these kids might have, talents that might benefit the community at large … we’re interested in his life and what we can help him make of it, not just what we can get out of him as a football animal. (Hyman and White 1978, 21-22)

Paterno’s words show that he has made an attempt to engage the culture and communities from which his players come. In order to expand their horizons and provide them with a complete education, he demonstrates a willingness to be patient when dealing with some of the external factors that have shaped his players (Hyman and White 1978).
For players and students, it’s not just about words but about actions as well. When Paterno consulted with his African American players (even though they only accounted for five percent of the team in 1969) about possible bowl game sites, he demonstrated a willingness to engage in the cultural concerns and sensitivities of his players (Paterno and Asbell 1989). If disrespecting or disregarding a student’s culture and community reduces them to an inferior state of savage, then respecting their culture, as Paterno does, allows students to experience a paradigm shift and subsequently transition from objects to subjects in the learning process (Freire 1992; Bartolomé 1994).

**Teaching Model & Feedback**

Analysis of the teaching model and feedback categories shows both categories to be interrelated. Feedback is an essential component of the teaching model, and the teaching model is one of the determinate factors in how the feedback would be related back to the student/player (Gallimore and Tharp 2004). Whether or not a coach is attuned to the varied learning styles of his players can often determine the difference between a players being successful or not (Jones 2005). Providing feedback to players is very similar. Paterno and Asbell (1989) allude to this when Paterno says, “Maybe he has to chew out one boy to help him. Maybe he has to invite another boy out to his house, sit him down and say to him, ‘look, son, look how good you can be’” (1979, 45).

Bryant used a variety of teaching models to coach his players. He provided a daily practice schedule and depth chart, which listed the daily player rankings for his players and accomplished two goals: First, it provided clear objectives for the players. Second, every player was aware of his or her standing on the depth chart (Briley 2006). This level of communication and transparency helps to keep the players focused on the task at hand and helps to prevent confusion between coaches and players. Comments would be made throughout the practice in regards to a player’s performance and the drill would then be repeated until it was done to Bryant’s expectation (Briley 2006).

Bryant used specific feedback as a way of teaching his players, and before the players could leave for the summer they were required to meet with Bryant personally to reflect on the contributions that a particular player has made, as well as the expectations Bryant had for the player (Briley 2006). During the season, each player that played in the game was graded based on their performance, and then were required to sit down with their position coach to discuss the grade that he received (Bryant and Stallings 1983). These meetings kept the lines of communication open between the player and
coach, so that the player was always aware of their strengths and weaknesses, what was expected of them, and how they fit into the team objectives.

The utilization of various teaching styles and the commitment to feedback and communication between the player and the coach connects directly with culturally relevant teaching; not only are the individual learning styles of the students taken into account but by providing feedback to players, the players are able to gain greater access to the domain of knowledge. As the players gain greater access to the domain of knowledge, they are able to connect their identity to the activity and they also begin to develop a critical consciousness about the domain itself (Mosston and Ashworth 1985; Gallimore and Tharp 2004; Nasir and Hand 2008).

Ethos
Analysis of literature showed that the emphasis of a collective ethos, which, for both Bryant and Paterno, was the most dominating concept based on frequency and emphasis. Both men focused more on collective empowerment or success than individual empowerment. For Bryant, the team always came before the individual, and winning meant unity (Bryant and Stallings 1983). In his book, Bear Bryant on Winning Football, Bryant says:

In order to have a winner, the team must have a feeling of unity; every player must put the team first, ahead of personal glory. The men who play for us must be willing to make sacrifices. Victory means team glory for everyone. Individual personal glory means little if the team loses (1983, 29).

Bryant establishes a collective goal for his team and uses this ethos as a foundation for his teachings. By doing this Bryant is able to redefine the definition of success, putting diminishing value on individual success in place of team success. Bryant’s emphasis on team unity and a collective identity made the transition of integrating African Americans on his team easier.

Paterno, similar to Bryant, also built his teaching foundation on a collective ethos, which he calls “we” and “us.” In Paterno: By the Book, Paterno and Asbell write:

Penn State style football was enriching these guys far beyond just winning and losing games. It had to do with pride; it had to do with caring about their teammates as people as a community … We remind ourselves of the kind of team we are: not a team of I’s and me’s, but a team of we and us (1989, 129).

As stated by former players Charlie and Tony Pittman, who as father and son both were recruited by and played for Paterno, team ethos is effective:
Paterno...has created a program that puts young people face to face with gargantuan tasks that force them to believe in themselves as part of a collective. Playing for Paterno is not about padding your individual statistics. Winning as part of a united team is what matters. Paterno grooms his teams to focus on the team’s objective... Individual achievement takes a backseat (Pittman, Pittman and Bryson 2007, 45).

Paterno plants seeds deep within his players’ minds from the moment they become students in his classroom, making it clear that the overall objective are the community objective. Individual accomplishments would never overshadow the team; it is the responsibility of every member of the team to ensure the success of their teammates (Paterno and Asbell 1989). This type of collective efficacy utilized by Bryant and Paterno are the basic building blocks for culturally relevant pedagogy. As stated by Gloria Ladson-Billings, “culturally relevant teaching [is] specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment” (Ladson-Billings 1995, 160). Fostering an atmosphere of collaborative learning provides opportunity for the players to become responsible for each other’s learning and success.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations of the research include the level at which the analysis was done. The analysis looked at coaches who have been successful at the college level, while the research is focused on closing the achievement gap in K-12 education. One of the concerns is that coaches at the college level are paid to win, and their salary is not comparable to teachers in K-12 education. Also an ethnographic case study would be the ideal method for researching and analyzing the athletic model. Another limitation in the research is that it looks exclusively at football, and doesn't include any sports that women participate in, which brings up the question of whether the athletic model is a viable model for women as well.

CONCLUSION

The athletic model as an example of culturally relevant pedagogy is not, as result of the analysis, exactly culturally relevant. Instead, Bryant and Paterno’s model is an equity model, as it focuses on maintaining equality among its team members. Thus, Bryant and Paterno’s model contains many of the elements associated with a culturally relevant pedagogy. This makes sense because an equity model meshes seamlessly with a focus on collective or team identity that is so prominent with the athletic model. By choosing equity, cultural relevance is sacrificed in order to cultivate a community, or
team, united by common ground. This study shows that equity as a focus for teaching excels because it is more humanizing in its approach to educating students. In other words, students are provided an opportunity to have worth and value in the learning process. Based upon the analysis, there is evidence that the athletic model, as a means of educating ethnic minority students, is effective and has the potential to be an effective form for teaching all students, regardless of their ethnic status because of its equitable approach. While emphasis should be placed on finding a viable solution for closing the achievement gap, the ultimate goal of educating all students should not and cannot be lost in the process. Any viable solution may not only enhance the learning outcomes for ethnic minorities, but all students in general.

The athletic model should be explored in an effort to close the achievement gap because it has the potential to empower students to take possession of their education and inspire them toward higher achievement in the classroom. The understanding that the student is the vehicle that will deliver success or failure makes it imperative that education be about equipping students with the tools and skills that will allow them to participate in the classroom. Though the athletic model lacks the components to be considered culturally relevant pedagogy, it is about helping students engage in their education, choosing success over failure, which is done by empowering students to take control of their own voice and identity.

The athletic model is also just as much about the educator as it is about the student. As a model of equity teaching, the athletic model requires the educator (coach) to be in a position to learn just as much from his/her student as the student learns from the educator. The flow of information becomes a two-way street. Student and teacher dialogue begins and as a result, there is greater access to the domain of knowledge.

The initial objective of the present study was to explore whether the athletic model was a model of culturally relevant pedagogy. As a result of the analysis, the athletic model, as defined by Bryant and Paterno, was more color blind or equitable in nature than it was culturally relevant. Possible future research would be to look at other athletic programs, such as Grambling State University’s program, which was headed by African American educator Eddie Robinson (Robinson and Lapchick 1999). This further research would examine whether more culture and community was infused into the athletic model. Future research would also include female athletic teams, as well as a case study at the K-12 level, which would lead to a better assessment of the potential of the athletic model as a solution to the achievement gap.
REFERENCES


Web Gangsters: Juveniles’ Expression of Aggression on Social Networking Sites

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ABSTRACT

Many researchers have attempted to determine whether media plays a role in the violent or aggressive behavior of youth. However, previous research fails to address the new trend of young people posting negative images, videos, or comments on the Internet, specifically on popular web sites such as YouTube (www.youtube.com), MySpace (www.myspace.com) and Facebook (www.facebook.com). This research attempts to determine if certain aspects of these sites (for instance, a more controlled impression management process that is not available in face-to-face interaction) lead youth to perceive themselves as more powerful or aggressive, and, further, if their online activity reflects their perception of this persona.

Adolescence is considered to be a critical period because, at this age, people attempt to discover the many possible aspects of their identity. Consequently, experimentation is apparent in the behavior of youth (Zhao 2005). Experimentation within the behavior of youth extends to all areas of their communication. Some examples might include the behavior they exhibit during face-to-face communication as well as through online communication.

The establishment of the Internet as a vital part of everyday life has created an outlet for youth in America to develop their identity. This source is sustained by four elements provided during non-face-to-face interaction: virtuality or virtual reality, spatiality (ambiguity of the boundaries of the online world) disembedding (separation from the user’s immediate location) and disembodiment (separation from the user’s offline identity) (Slater 2002). These elements enable Internet users to communicate without physical limitations such as a confined space or genuine identity (Slater 2002).

When researchers study the effects of the media on youth, they have typically focused on negative images that youth may be exposed to through various media, like television and the Internet; most of these studies have attempted to analyze the youths’ responses to possibly damaging stimuli (Savage and Yancey 2006). However, many instances are occurring where youth use the
Internet as means of posting images of aggressive behavior rather than being victims of negative images they observe online. As a result, with the rise of youth involving themselves in aggressive behavior while using the Internet, it would be beneficial to conduct a qualitative content analysis that examines how young people use the Internet, specifically their use of social networking sites, to observe their ability to conduct themselves aggressively.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to sociologist Charles Cooley (1902), individuals develop a sense of self through social interaction. This process, defined as the “looking glass self,” allows humans to make self-judgments based on the appraisals (verbal and non-verbal) of others. In other words, just as if looking at a reflection in the mirror, humans have the ability to interpret their behavior based on the reactions of others and to use the information as a basis for understanding their self-concept (Zhao 2005). Furthermore, the development of self gradually progresses as an individual reaches adulthood. George Herbert Mead (1934) theorized that during the initial stages of self-acquisition (the process of learning a sense of self) a child considers the appraisals of ‘significant others’ or individuals close to the child, like parents or teachers. As a child progresses to the second stage of self-acquisition, s/he begins to consider the appraisals of ‘generalized others,’ the larger community to which the individual belongs. Social interaction does not simply include receiving cues from others to develop self-conception, but it also encompasses an active component of self-presentation (Zhao 2005). Sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) developed the dramaturgical theory, which holds that during daily interaction, individuals choose how they want to present themselves as if they are performing for an audience. The manner in which individuals choose to present themselves is influenced by whom they perceive to be their audience (Goffman 1959). Even though these theories relate to face-to-face communication, they can be applied to understanding the aggressive behavior of adolescents when they are communicating on social networking sites because, in many instances, the Internet has taken the place of face-to-face communication.

Online Social Interaction

The theories previously discussed regarding social interaction were developed by analyzing traditional, face-to-face communication. However, the emergence of computer mediated communication (CMC) requires additional evaluation of these theories. Due to the lack of a corporeal copresence or physical copresence of the communicating individuals, CMC creates and deducts elements normally present during interaction. For example, the Internet allows users to interact through a ‘telecopresence’ or interaction
with individuals that are not physically present but electronically connected (Zhao 2005). This aspect of communication has established four main properties for CMC: virtuality, spatiality, disembedding and disembodiment (Slater 2002). The term virtuality suggests that the Internet can be considered more than simply a medium, but rather an actual “place” where individuals can become immersed into the perception of corporeal copresence with other users during interactive, textual communication (Slater 2002). Spatiality is another property presented because the social atmosphere in online communication within ‘cyberspace’ only exists within that specific software or network. In other words, cyberspace is spatially ambiguous, not directly linking to the offline world, but it can be connected or linked within the complex, changing network (Slater 2002). Since the Internet is not confined by the limits of space, users are allowed to communicate with individuals who are spatially disconnected, which enables users to be disembedded from their present location, experiencing a sense of copresence with other users located elsewhere in the world (Slater 2002). Furthermore, through the process of disembedding, communities created by users that are entirely online can be adequately sustained.

The primary outcome of online communication caused by the lack of a face-to-face connection is disembodiment, the ability for users to detach their online identity from their physical body (Slater 2002). Individuals are separated from their physical being while engaged in online communication because the telecopresence or perception of being in the same location establishes two properties: anonymity and texuality (Slater 2002). For instance, while communicating with previously unknown individuals in the offline world, users have the option of not disclosing their true identity and remaining anonymous to others. In addition, online communication relies heavily on text as the primary medium for communication (Slater 2002). Zhao (2005) describes disembodied communication as narrative in nature, meaning that users are charged with the task of self-description in meeting other users, whether it takes the form of their online screen name or the self-posted information on their online profiles. Consequently, users are only known by their autobiographical portrayals, and they can present themselves in a manner contrary to reality without the information being verified or contradicted (Slater 2002).

The theory of the looking glass self taken from traditional perspectives proposes that individuals learn a sense of self by responding to others responses during interactions with significant others (parents, family, school) and, as they mature, generalized others (society, cultural groups, etc). Since CMC possesses the property of disembodiment resulting in interaction being primarily textual, how are Internet users able to observe
the reactions of others and use these reactions to develop self-concept? Zhao (2005) differentiates between the “self” that is developed during face-to-face interaction and the self that is developed in the Internet world, naming the latter the “digital self.” The digital self is created solely through online interaction without influences from non-verbal cues and traditional interruptions from the environment. In addition, the digital self is believed to be inwardly oriented (directed toward inward thoughts and feelings) that are narrative in nature and relying on users to use strictly linguistic communication to describe themselves to other users. This form of communication is retractable and is separate from their offline identities and includes the possibility of being multiplied via interaction with individuals in different societies (Zhao 2005). The ability individuals have to develop a “digital self” without a corporal copresence shows that non-verbal cues are not necessary for the development of this form of self-concept. Instead, the self is developed primarily from the perception of what others think. However, by basing self-formation on perceptions without reinforcement from other cues (e.g. nonverbal), discrepancies like misinterpretation of others perceptions have the opportunity to become more prevalent, even though the strength of the connections between self-concept and perceptions of the views of others remain the same. In other words, the self-view derived from the digital self has the potential to be contradictory to the offline persona.

Another component of the Internet, called disembedding, also creates an additional element that alters the process of the looking glass self. When individuals begin to encompass the options of generalized others into the traditional development of their self-perception, the generalized others only include those within that specific community. However, while online, users communicate with others outside their immediate geographical domain. As a result, users are subject to taking into consideration the perspectives of a broader range of individuals. Lastly, the online world subjects people to be viewed by an “e-audience,” or other users within the Internet (Zhao 2005). According to the dramaturgical theory (Goffman 1959), individuals adjust their behaviors regarding how to present themselves based on who they perceive their audience to be. In the online world, the process of impression management can prove to be a lot easier because individuals can choose what information they want to present to others without interruptions from the spontaneous reactions of others. Since CMC lacks components of typical social communication, why do users continue to utilize the Internet? A created social life on Internet sites provides an environment that is liberated of normal restrictions, for instance the real offline identities of those who utilize these web sites (Slater 2002).
Social Networking Sites
The Internet provides a variety of media that users can utilize to communicate with one another, such as email or instant messaging. Of particular popularity within the Internet are Social Networking Sites (SNS). SNS are described as sites that allow users to create profiles within the boundaries of the site and, using their profile, they can then access a list of other users with whom they have a connection, and then view a list of connections that other users have made on the site (Boyd and Ellison 2007). The first identifiable social networking site (SNS) was launched in 1997; however, SNS did not become popular with a large number of Internet users until after the creation of Friendster (www.friendster.com) in 2002. By 2003, newly formed SNS were constantly being established by site creators who were looking to take advantage of the growing popularity of the Internet (Boyd 2008). Among this string of incoming SNS, the most famous of its time was the Internet site entitled MySpace. MySpace possessed many aspects that differentiated it from other SNS but the most prominent aspect was the fact that MySpace’s policy allowed minors to join and create profiles. By 2004, teens were joining MySpace in large numbers (Boyd and Ellison 2007).

According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 93 percent of American adolescents ranging in age from 12 to 17 use the Internet and 73 percent of these users have established profiles on SNS (Lenhert, Purcell, Smith and Zickuhr 2010). What aspects of MySpace (or any other social networking mediums) lure such a large number of adolescents to join the site? During adolescence, teens are socially adventurous and tend to make large developments in the search for the self or identity; however, they are restricted by factors like mobility or their age (Zhao 2005). SNS provide a place for teens to develop identity and status, make sense of cultural cues and negotiate public life (Boyd 2008). For instance, SNS allow teens to be disembodied from their geographic location, thus providing the ability to ‘see’ the world from the comfort of their home (Zhao 2005). Also, as a result of experiencing difficulties in their development, teens search for a confidant with whom they can share their feelings. Furthermore, disembodiment and anonymity attracts adolescents because the lack of face-to-face interaction results in the process of impression management that allows individuals to choose what information they present to others (Zhao 2005). The ongoing process of impression management is key to developing social identity and SNS allow more opportunities for this process to occur (Zhao 2005).

Today, web sites such as Facebook and YouTube are at the forefront of social networking web sites. Facebook was originally created in 2004 as a SNS for students attending Harvard University and eventually began supporting other colleges and universities and in 2005 it reached other users, including
adolescents (Boyd and Ellison 2007). Another popular site, YouTube, has become a successful online destination with more than 100 million views daily (Cheng, Dale and Liu 2008). Before YouTube was established in 2005, many other video sharing web sites had been in existence for a period of time; however, using the video sharing sites proved difficult because of the lack of a straightforward, integrated web site (Cheng, Dale and Liu 2008). YouTube separates itself from other video sharing sites because it has a social networking aspect, allowing users to not only upload videos but also to create profiles and link with other users. In addition, YouTube possesses another aspect not previously used on other video sharing sites by relying on user-generated content and linking related videos that were posted on the site (Cheng, Dale and Liu 2008).

Youth and Aggressive Behavior

Elements such as virtuality, spatiality, disembedding and disembodiment within the Internet provide a platform favorable for interaction amongst peers and allow youth to portray themselves in any manner they desire. In an environment that allows the demonstration of a broad range of behaviors, what motivates youth to display themselves aggressively? Within the social networks of adolescents, aggression is essential to status amongst peers (Faris and Felmlee 2011). In addition, the relationship between violence and peer status is constant regardless of race or gender (Kreager 2007). The amount of aggression exhibited in the behavior of youth increases until their peer status reaches the peak of the social pyramid (Faris and Felmlee 2011). Preoccupations concerning peer status within adolescents drive aggression because youth aspire to gain and maintain a high social status amongst their peers (Faris and Felmlee 2011; Kreager 2007). Even though this behavior has yet to be proven as an adequate avenue for gaining social status, youth believe aggression will lead to the achievement of status amongst peers and their behavior reflects this belief (Faris and Felmlee 2011). In order to answer the research question, the researcher will use the definition of “aggressive behavior” as defined by Savage and Yancey (2006): negative actions that are not necessarily illegal because it does not include the action of physical force to others.

Traditionally, when researchers reviewed relationships between aggression and media, they viewed it from the perspective of youth observing negative media and displaying an altered behavior as a result of influential information (Savage and Yancey 2006). However, intensive research has yet to be conducted on youth who use the Internet as means of posting or engaging in negative behavior. In recent years, there have been multiple accounts of adolescents using SNS to create aggressive posts. In a USA Today article, the author coined the phrase “web bangers” as individuals who use the Internet,
specifically SNS, to post gang-related pictures, signs and video. For example, a teen from Chicago who was believed to be involved in vandalism to a church was arrested using evidence obtained from pictures he posted to his online profile (Glazer 2006).

Boasting of negative behavior on SNS is not limited to individuals who have violated criminal codes. In a well-known video circulating on the Internet, an uncle disciplines his nephew for his gang-related posts on Facebook. While being disciplined by his uncle, the teen admitted that he was not involved in gang activity, even though the post on his profile suggested otherwise (Shieh 2011).

HYPOTHESIS

According to the scholarly literature, the lack of face-to-face interaction during computer-based interaction allows Internet users the ability to present themselves in a manner contrary to their true identity (Slater 2002; Boyd 2008). This element provides an easier platform for the process of impression management because the impression presented cannot be contradicted by physical interaction. Adolescents in search of social interaction and social status will be drawn to SNS due to their advantageous characteristics for real-time communication and anonymity. As a result, the researcher argues that, among those tested, adolescents will feel socially at ease while using the Internet, resulting in a feeling of comfort by demonstrating an aggressive persona on SNS.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of examining demonstrations of aggression among adolescent Internet users on various social networking sites (YouTube, MySpace, and Facebook) the method of qualitative content analysis employed will be deductive or direct analysis. The content of adolescent profiles, such as profile name, image/video posts and conversations with other users will be analyzed for signs of aggressive behavior.

Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis is a research method that allows the reflexive analysis of written, verbal and visual communication through systematic collection, organization and interpretation of the phenomena observed (Elo and Kyngäs 2007; Malterud 2001). In addition, the use of content analysis enables researchers to make empirical generalizations based on information collected from the content of the information examined that can eventually
be applicable within the area or discipline studied (Elo and Kyngäs 2007; Malterud 2001). In the present study, the sampling of subjects (profiles of adolescents on SNS) will be conducted through judgment sampling, also known as purposeful sampling (Marshall 1996). Judgment sampling enables the researcher to actively choose the sample of subjects that will adequately answer the intended research question (Marshall 1996). The framework that will be used to determine candidate subjects (adolescent Internet users 18 years of age and younger) in the sample will be the presence of offensive or aggressive material on their profile, such as profanity and gang related material. For instance, within YouTube, key works such as, “teen fight,” “gang,” “blood” or “crip” will be used to determine sample subjects. The aspect of “linking” other profile users on SNS through “friend lists” will be utilized to find additional subjects for study (snowball sampling) and provide an additional method of sampling. This method of judgment sampling is necessary because SNS are too large to be reviewed in their entirety and will allow the researcher to view specific example of aggressive behavior on SNS (Elo and Kyngäs 2007). In addition, the information analyzed will consist of the profile name, image/video posts and communications with other users. Lastly, the unit of analysis will be each individual profile viewed.

In order to conduct the analytic process of content analysis, the researcher must determine whether inductive or deductive reasoning will be considered (Elo and Kyngäs 2007). Deductive content analysis allows the researcher to test concepts or hypotheses as well as further describe or identify concepts that have previously been theorized (Hsieh and Shannon 2005; Elo and Kyngäs 2007). According to the literature review, previous research has been conducted on online social interaction; however, there is a dearth of information concerning the relationship between online social interaction and the impact on aggressive behavior in adolescents. Consequently, deductive content analysis will allow the researcher to draw empirical generalizations about phenomenon. A structured matrix of analysis (Table 1) was used to organize the data and answer the question of how adolescents demonstrate aggressive behavior on their online profiles (Elo and Kyngäs 2007).

Table 1. Structured matrix template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile Name</th>
<th>Profile Post (image/video)</th>
<th>Conversation/Comments</th>
<th>Other Relevant Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

ANALYSIS

After reviewing numerous profiles within the digital confines of YouTube, MySpace and Facebook, 19 subjects were selected via a process of judgment sampling based on possible contributions to answering the research question, and expressions of aggression among youth who use SNS. Table 2 is a structured matrix that organizes relevant content observed on the selected profiles into the following categories: profile name, profile post (image/video), conversation/comments and other relevant observations. In addition, with respect to the category “Conversation/Comments,” “Conversation” refers to words spoken within the recorded video and “Comments” refer to posts created within the comment area of the SNS by the user examined or other profile users.

Table 2. Descriptions of expression of aggression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile Name</th>
<th>Profile Post (image/video)</th>
<th>Conversation/Comments</th>
<th>Other Relevant Observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bigbeezy24</td>
<td>Video: Fight in Sunrise</td>
<td>Comment (by user): City referred to as “gunrise”</td>
<td>Other posts uploaded by user were of recorded fights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshazimiz23</td>
<td>Video: Blood Walking</td>
<td>Comment: “Pretending to be a Blood”</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugiohoe21</td>
<td>Video: Argument between teen girls</td>
<td>Conversation: Girls use excess of profanity</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mzbinabadd1</td>
<td>Video: Teens claiming gangs</td>
<td>Conversation: Refer to themselves as “bad ass”</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deezieb17</td>
<td>Video: Teen throwing up gang signs</td>
<td>Comment: “Internet Gangster”</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo419glasscity</td>
<td>Video: Teens claiming gangs</td>
<td>Conversation: “S*** its me what you trynna do”</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MiamiLesbian</td>
<td>Video: Teen claiming to be Blood</td>
<td>Conversation: Teen requests messages and comments</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctallion08</td>
<td>Video: Teen displaying gang signs</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YungGoon</td>
<td>Image: Gang paraphenalia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Video posts are of people dancing (non-gang related)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2slobkilla</td>
<td>Video: Teen displaying gang signs</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dustie123456</td>
<td>Video: Teen displaying gang signs</td>
<td>Comment (by user): “me staccin my set”</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pele818</td>
<td>Video: Teen displaying gang signs</td>
<td>Comment: “eThug”</td>
<td>Teen posts videos with paraphenalia related to rival gangs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngbrin232</td>
<td>Image: Teen displaying gang signs</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blukb</td>
<td>Video: Teen fighting</td>
<td>Conversation: “It’s already recording” (then fight breaks out)</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the profiles shown in by Table 2, the researcher observed examples of the user’s choice of their profile name being utilized to convey a dominant or tough persona. For instance, the users Criminal 4 Fanga Gang and 2slobkilla are examples that explicitly self-identify in a derogatory manner, such as a criminal or killer. Other observed users chose more subtle methods of conveying a dominant persona. For example, YoungGoon uses the slang jargon ‘Goon,’ commonly used to refer to criminals. Also, the researcher believes that the user mizbinabadd1 is intended to convey to the Internet audience the extent of his/her “bad” or negative behavior. Although the other variables (profile posts and comments/conversations) listed in the matrix demonstrated behavior consistent with aggression, five dominant trends were consistent among the variables analyzed: vulgarity of language, similarity of video post genres, inconsistency or contradictions among posts, premeditation of behavior, and degrading comments from other users. Elements of the majority of these trends were exemplified by the user mizbinabadd1. All videos posted by this particular user portrayed a group of teens in front of an unknown school making violent boasts, claiming membership in various gangs or other territories, which is behavior exhibited in many other video posts. In addition, throughout the entirety of both videos, the youth use a large amount of profanity or vulgar language. For instance, the teens in the video used phrases like, “I’m a hood b****” and “I fight like a n*****.” Premeditation or pre-planning of aggressive behavior was demonstrated within their conversation (YouTube). A prime example of this element occurred when one of the teens stated, “Gotta get down,” prompting the teens to initiate a fight amongst each other. However, even though these users attempted to portray themselves as ‘hard,’ the portrayed persona was not consistently believed by peer users to be genuine personality. The researcher noticed trends of disbelief on the part of other users through the use of degrading comments on the observed posts. For instance, on
the video posted by mzbinabadd1, another user commented, “yall aint bad come to my hood and I’ll show you bad.” Also, in a video posted by the user pele818, the user and others portray themselves using gang signs affiliated with the well-known Crip gang. Users who commented on the video referred to pele818 as an “eThug” (Internet thug). The researcher believes that comments of this nature may also be contributed by self-fulfilling attempts by peer users to downgrade the observed user’s deviance, thus portraying themselves as tougher.

Lastly, the most dominant trend among examined posts and profiles were inconsistencies and contradictions within the information posted. For instance, on the profile of the user Jmoney, the user is portrayed in the profile picture wearing red and holding up a gang sign affiliated with the well-known Blood gang. However the user’s profile background design is affiliated with the Blood’s rival gang, the Crips. Another relevant inconsistency is seen on the profile of Pele818. This user provides two similar videos, however, one consists of the user wearing paraphernalia and using signs affiliated with the Blood gang, while in the other video he uses signs from the Crip gang, a rival of the Bloods. The researcher believes that these inconsistencies strongly demonstrate young people’s persistent attempts to be portrayed as having a tough persona. In other words, the youth were so consumed with attempting to portray themselves aggressively that, at times, they contradicted themselves.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present research study was to evaluate adolescents’ use of social networking sites and their ability to conduct themselves aggressively during computer-based communication. According to the review of the scholarly literature the main elements presented in online or computer based communications are virtuality, spatiality, disembedding and disembodiment. For the purpose of discussion, the researcher will primarily discuss the results from observations of adolescents online as they relate to disembedding and disembodiment. According to sociologist Charles Cooley, during traditional face-to-face interaction individuals learn self-concept as if they are observing themselves in a mirror (Zhao 2005). This theory, known as the looking glass self, was built upon by George Herbert Mead who theorized that young children acquire “self” by considering appraisals of ‘significant others,’ and eventually, consider appraisals from ‘generalized others.’ During the traditional process of self-acquisition, ‘generalized others’ is usually extended only to other individuals within the immediate community (Zhao 2005). However, through disembedding, online individuals are not bound to the confines of their present location. This allows for the expansion of those
considered to be ‘generalized others’. This researcher believes that the factor of disembedding plays a major role in the behavior of youth online. During the age of adolescence, most young people strive to present themselves in a manner they believe will cause them to be more socially attractive (Boyd 2008). The online world, specifically within social networking sites, creates an environment that exposes youth to an even larger number of peers. This factor was evident in a profile observed wherein the user was portrayed in the video posing as a member of the blood gang while requesting that other users to either comment on the profile or add the profile as a network friend. Furthermore, the researcher believes that the exaggerated attempts of these youth to be accepted by their numerous online peers were evident in their contradictory behavior. For instance, many of the youth posted pictures or videos to their profile that were aggressive, and contained elements of various gang influences. These youth made various exaggerated attempts to portray themselves as having an aggressive persona that they failed to realize contradictions in their behavior.

Although disembodiment within the online world is a primary factor contributing to the majority of behavioral trends online, the adolescents’ exaggerated behaviors interfered with the anonymity of their true personas, especially when the youth posted contradictory material. Disembodiment refers to the ability of Internet users to detach their physical identity from their online identity, allowing online communication to be completely anonymous and textual (Slater 2002). The researcher believes that this element contributes to the tendency of adolescents to portray themselves aggressively online because, while using a SNS, they can embody any identity they choose. However, the researcher observed that even though the online interaction was anonymous and textual, many of the adolescents’ aggressive interactions were not believed or taken seriously by other online users.

CONCLUSION

In order to answer the research question, the researcher relied on judgment sampling while viewing profiles of various adolescents. This method adequately provided examples of aggression and allowed the researcher to draw conclusions based on knowledge from previous research within the discipline. However, the researcher was unable to define reasons for demonstrations of behavior from first hand depictions of adolescents. More extensive research inclusive of qualitative data based on interviews with youth who have considered or have practiced portraying themselves aggressively on SNS would reveal valuable information about the nature of online communications through SNS and how it may contribute to aggressive ideation. In addition, targeting the social factors these youth believe
contributed to their behaviors would aid in addressing the issue at the society level. In addition, the researcher would like to question youth as to whether their aggressive behavior has lead them to consider behaving aggressively or even violent in the offline world, as violent implications are beyond the scope of this article. This research could inform practice and policy within the educational, social work, and juvenile justice systems.
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“Either they don’t know, don’t show, or don’t care about what’s going on in the hood:” A Social Disorganization Theory Approach to *Boyz n the Hood*

D’Andre Walker  
Dr. Russell Loving, faculty mentor

**ABSTRACT**

This research uses a social science approach to film criticism to determine if the Social Disorganization Theory (Shaw and McKay 1942) is evident in the 1991 film *Boyz n the Hood*. The method used by this researcher was to apply the three Sampson and Groves (1989) measures of a socially disorganized community to the depiction of the African American community in *Boyz n the Hood*. The purpose of this research is to examine depictions of African Americans in a film based on predominantly African American neighborhoods to discover possible cyclical implications of such depictions. This research found that, according to the three Sampson measures, *Boyz n the Hood* depicted lower-middle class African American communities in Los Angeles as socially organized. The strong local friendship ties, as depicted in the film, should have mediated against delinquency. However, as defined by Shaw and McKay, the community was actually disorganized since its residents could not realize their common values nor could the community control delinquency. The implication is that local friendship ties do not always mediate against street-corner peer groups. Instead, the particular dynamics of the friendship ties may be more of a measure of their ability to counter delinquent behavior.

Growing up, this researcher loved movies. However, this researcher could not watch anything he wanted. His mother did not allow him to watch any films that contained a high amount of violence, use of profanity, or sex scenes. Of course, the majority of the movies that this researcher wanted to watch contained all the characteristics that were forbidden by his mother. Although as a child this researcher was not allowed to watch films such as *Boyz n the Hood*, many of this researcher’s peers watched them and loved them. As an adult, this researcher wanted to apply what he has learned in his classes to the forbidden films of this researcher’s youth. Is it possible that some films based on the African American experience contain content that validates the environmental conditions that lead to the aforementioned overrepresentation of African Americans in the criminal justice system? This study begins to answer the question by critiquing one film. The present research aims to examine one of the most successful African American films of the past few
decades, John Singleton’s *Boyz n the Hood*, (1991), for evidence of Shaw and McKay’s (1942) Social Disorganization theory.

Social Disorganization theory was originated in 1942 at the Chicago School by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay (Kubrin and Weitzer, 2003). After going into a neighborhood where there was an ample amount of juvenile delinquency, these two researchers formulated a theory to explain why these juveniles were committing delinquent acts. The theory defines “social disorganization” as “the inability of the community structure to realize common values residents and maintain effective social control” (Gainey et al. 2004 pg. 1). Shaw and McKay identified four factors affecting the organization of a community: economic status, residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity and family disruption (1989). In 1989, Sampson and Groves provided three ways to measure the level of social organization: the ability for the community to control teenage peer groups, the presence of local friendship networks, and the amount of participation in formal or salutary organizations (Sampson and Groves, 1989).

After constructing a list of characteristics based on Sampson and Groves’ (1989) three measurements of social disorganization, this researcher applied them to *Boyz n the Hood* to see if the film depicted the neighborhood as socially disorganized. The results showed that the neighborhood was not effective at controlling teenage peer groups, strong local friendship networks between the boys in the neighborhood was present, and that there was low participation in community organizations. Although there were strong local friendship ties, they were ineffective at controlling juvenile delinquency. According to Sampson and Groves’ three measurements, the community depicted in the film should not have been disorganized because of the strong local friendship ties. However, the community met the Shaw and McKay definition of social disorganization because the residents were unable to realize their common values and maintain effective control over delinquent behavior.

The implication is that Sampson’s perception of the interaction between the three measures may have been simplistic. According to Sampson and Groves (1989), the three boys’ friendship tie should have mediated against delinquent behavior. Instead, one of the boys continued to engage in delinquent behavior and was eventually killed. The implication, as Gainey et. al. (2004) had concluded, is that the interrelationship between the measures is complex. As shown in the film, the dynamics of the friendship tie may be more of a key to mediating against delinquent behavior than the mere existence of the friendship ties.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Under their Social Disorganization theory, Shaw and McKay argued that juvenile delinquency in urban areas was based on four structural factors affecting community social organization: economic status, ethnic heterogeneity, residential mobility, and family disruption (Sampson et al. 1989). Economic status concerns several factors, including family income, parental education level, parental occupation, and social status in the community (Sampson, 1989). Ethnic heterogeneity refers to the presence of different racial groups (Costa, 2003). Residential mobility refers to a frequent change of residency (Crowley 2003). Family disruption is refers to single parent households, the more single parent households in a community the less adult supervision and control of youths (Gainey et al. 2004).

Shaw and McKay saw a relationship between social disorganization in urban neighborhoods and each of the four structural factors. They explained that communities in low income neighborhoods lack adequate money and resources to advance their community when it comes to education and other organizations (Sampson 1989). Racial and ethnic heterogeneity seems to promote the lack of communication and interaction among residence by weakening the social control of local youth (Gainey et al. 2004). The third factor, residential mobility, is an obstacle for the development of extensive friendship bonds and local associational ties (Sampson, 1989). Lastly, family disruption (i.e., Single parent households) decreases the ability of adults to supervise and control youth peer groups. Single parent households decreases the ability to supervise teenage peer groups because there is one less person in the house to serve as a protective eye, as well as provide increase supervision and guardianship of the youth in their neighborhood (Sampson and Grove 1989).

One of Shaw and McKay’s main indicators of a socially organized community is the ability for the residents to control their juveniles (Sampson 1989). There are three types of social control: informal, formal, and parochial. Informal control tends to be community based, formal control is usually based on institutions outside of the community, and parochial control comes from interpersonal networks and local community groups (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). Social Disorganization theory focuses on formal controls (Kubrin and Weitzer, 2003).

Kubrin and Weitzer (2003) argue that there are two ways in which formal control is central to the social disorganization theory: first, formal control directly influences crime and disorder because authorities are more effective at maintaining order and enforcing legal codes, and second, formal control influences residents’ informal control practices because the residents and
police work together to identify and solve problems in the neighborhood through community policing. According to Kawachi et al. (1999), formal social control includes supervision of leisure-time youth activities, interventions in street corner gatherings, and challenging youth who appear to be unsupervised by adults.

Although Shaw and McKay (1942) prescribed four indicators that effect the social organization in a community, they failed to provide a way to measure social organization. Sampson and Groves (1989) created three measures of the level of social organization: (1) The ability of a community to supervise and control teenage peer groups (e.g., gangs), (2) the presence of local friendship networks, and (3) the rate of participation in formal and salutary organizations in the local community. After testing these three measures by surveying 10,905 subjects in Great Britain and using data from British Crime Reports for 238 neighborhoods in England in Wales, Sampson and Grooves concluded that these three measures were accurate (Sampson and Groves 1989). Communities that tend to have street corner peer groups usually have higher adult crime rates (Sampson and Groves 1989). Local friendship networks allow residents living in a community to better recognize strangers and to become more likely to engage in “guardianship behavior” against victimization (Sampson and Groves 1989). Lastly, when youth are involved in formal community organizations, they have less time to be congregating with street corner peer groups and committing delinquent acts (Sampson and Groves 1989). In Community Structure and Crime: Testing Social Disorganization Theory, Sampson and Groves (1989) cites Ruth Kornahauser (1978), who suggests that institutional instability (when organizations similar to the YMCA lose funding and have to cut programs) and the isolation of institutions (when youth refuse to be involved in community organizations) contribute to social disorganization.

Sampson and Groves’ (1989) evaluation of organization in a community was dependent upon particular questions for each measurement. To measure the social control and the supervision of teen peer groups, each respondent was asked (on a scale of 1-4) how common it was for youth to congregate in the neighborhood and annoy others while doing so. Juvenile delinquency is seen as a group phenomenon. Therefore, the researchers also asked questions regarding crime such as vandalism, which is considered a common youth crime (Sampson and Groves, 1989). After collecting and analyzing the data, Sampson and Groves found that disorderly teenage peer groups in the neighborhood were a common problem. In the selected communities street corner peer groups ranged from zero up to seventy-five percent; however, lower-class communities were less effective at controlling or supervising youth compared to upper-class communities (Sampson and Grove 1989).
As a measurement for Sampson and Groves’ (1989) second measure of local friendship networks in the community, the researchers asked respondents how many friends they had in their local community. Local community was defined as the area within a 15-minute walk of the respondent’s home. According to the data, researchers found about four percent of local friendships networks within the 238 selected communities.

Regarding Sampson and Groves’ (1989) third measure of participation in community organizations, respondents were asked about participation in formal organizations during their leisure time. To receive an accurate measurement of their involvement at the meetings of committees and clubs, the researchers listed attendance as a category. The data showed a lack of organizational participation, ranging from zero to a little over one-third of the residents throughout the selected communities (Sampson and Groves 1989).

In 2004, Gainey et al. concluded that Sampson and Groves’ (1989) study was a modest measure of social organization. According to Gainey et al. (2003), there were three issues regarding Sampson and Groves (1989) study. First, the research was limited to two studies that were conducted in England and Wales using data collected by British Crime Survey (BCS). Second, another study shows local friendship networks as having little effect on neighborhood assaults because friends are less likely to cause harm to one another, while having a significant effect on burglary, which is typically by a stranger to a victim. Lastly, Sampson and Groves’ (1989) model needs further exploration and explaining between the following relationships: (1) local social ties and organizational participation, (2) residential mobility and supervision of youth, and (3) the relationship between family disruption and organizational participation.

To test the validity of Sampson and Groves’ (1989) study, Gainey et al. (2004) conducted their own survey. Gainey et al. (2004) study was conducted in the United States, gathering data from 4 neighborhoods in seven different cities and states. Although these researchers used Sampson and Groves’ (1989) measurements of a socially organized neighborhood, they did not use the same questions.

According to Gainey et al. (2004) the measures are not as simplistic as Sampson and Grove (1989) made them appear. They suggest that there is more of a complex relationship among some of the concepts in the model than was originally mentioned (Gainey et al. 2004). While measuring unsupervised teenage peer groups, Gainey et al. (2004) had difficulties using secondary data. However, to measure the control of teenage peer groups, Gainey et al. (2004) asked respondents on a three point scale (including
the categories of No, Some, and Too Big), if disruption around schools (fights, hanging out, etc.) or truancy is a problem in their neighborhood. The Sampson and Groves question related to local friendship networks and asked about friendship ties. In contrast, Gainey saw that neighborhood ties were more important and asked about whether neighbors spent time together and helped each other (Gainey et al. 2004). Lastly, Sampson and Groves’ measure of participation in formal organizations asked about participation in any organization, and did not specify whether the organization was community based. In contrast, Gainey et al. (2004) asked respondents about the frequency (in the last 6-12 months) of their attendance at meetings held for the purpose of battling drug and crime problems. That is, Gainey focused on participation in organizations that had a direct affect on controlling crime in the community. Gainey et al. (2004) chose these particular questions because they felt that they could get a more accurate measurement on Sampson and Groves’ (1989) three measures as they relate to crime and delinquency.

Gainey et al. (2004) concluded that Sampson and Groves’ model was partially supported from the analysis of American data. Crimes such as robbery and burglary typically involve strangers as victims. As such strong local friendship ties and high rate of participation in formal organizations have little effect on robbery and burglary crime rates. In contrast, the crimes of assault and rape typically involve a victim known to the assailant. As such strong social ties and high rate of participation tend to reduce assault and rape crime rates (Gainey et al. 2004). Gainey et al. (2004) concluded that Sampson and Groves’ (1989) theoretical framework did not account for the complex, interrelationship between some of the measures.

**METHOD**

This researcher chose *Boyz n the Hood* (1991) because of the director/producer’s attempt to accurately portray life in a lower-middle class African American neighborhood in South Los Angeles. According to Massood (1986), it was the first film to “map the hood on land and put it into the mainstream media” (Dyson 1992). In addition to *Boyz N the Hood*, John Singleton directed and produced *Poetic Justice* (1993), *Higher Learning* (1995), *Shaft* (2000), and *Baby Boy* (2005) (Internet Movie Database, 2011). During an interview, Singleton mentioned that *Boyz n the Hood* was his first movie and it was semi-autobiographical. Singleton says that filmmaking saved him from delinquency because he was able to express himself through media opposed to committing crime; however, he mentions that people are scared to have a viewpoint. Siskel and Ebert said that Singleton’s movies have altered their lives or made them think in different ways (Siskel and Ebert 2010). Those
comments make Singleton proud that he is making a difference as a film maker (Singleton 2010).

*Boyz n the Hood* follows the lives of three young African American teens growing up together in a low-middle class neighborhood in Los Angeles where there are many social problems. Ricky and Doughboy are half-brothers raised in a single parent household by their mother, while Tre, their friend, is also being raised in a single parent household with his father, Furious. Ricky is an “All-American” athlete looks forward to earning a full-ride scholarship to the University of Southern California. Doughboy’s friends are violent and they abuse alcohol and commit crimes. Tre is the only one in the group that has a male role model—and he’s the only one to leave the hood to pursue a higher education at Morehouse College.

To analyze *Boyz n the Hood*, this research uses Sampson and Groves’ (1989) three measures of social organization. This researcher watched *Boyz n the Hood* to determine the frequency of the following measures of social disorganization:

1. **The ability of the community to supervise and control teenage peer groups (gangs).** Sampson and Groves (1989) asked respondents how frequently they saw youth hanging out on the corner making a nuisance. This researcher counted the number of scenes that depicted youth engaging in street corner peer groups.

2. **Local friendship networks.** Sampson and Groves (1989) asked respondents how many of their friends lived in their local community, defined as living within a fifteen minute walking distance from their residence. This researcher counted the number of scenes that showed youth who were congregating with friends that lived in the same community.

3. **Participation in formal and salutary organizations in the local community.** Sampson and Groves (1989) asked respondents about their rate of participation in formal organizations during their leisure time. This researcher counted the number of scenes showing youth involved in social and leisure activities with formal organizations. The researcher looked for churches, friendship networks, community centers and organizations, and neighborhood watches, to see if there is evidence of a formal community organizations.

**Social Disorganization in “Boyz n the Hood”**

There is a high amount of juvenile delinquency in the film, such as shootings, killings, stealing, fighting and street corner peer groups. The x-axis of Figure 1 shows the characteristic of a social disorganized neighborhood; while the y-axis shows the number of times the characteristic is observed in *Boyz n the Hood*. 

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Throughout the film, this researcher observed (six) street corner peer groups, which led to the youth committing delinquent acts, such as shooting, stealing, gambling, etc.

Figure 1. The inability of the community to supervise and control teenage peer groups (gangs)

According to Sampson and Groves’ (1989), the youth who grew up together in the hood were a local friendship network because there were 12 scenes that showed youth who were congregating with friends that lived in the same community. In Boyz n the Hood, Ricky and Doughboy lived across the street from Tre and they were together almost every day, which, according to Sampson and Groves (1989), would be a local friendship network.

Participation in formal and salutary organizations in the local community was depicted in the film. This researcher observed one scene in Boyz n the Hood that depicts male characters’ involvement in clubs, committees, or any other voluntary organizations. Ricky, who played for his high school football team, was the only youth in the neighborhood involved in a formal organization.

DISCUSSION

According to the three Sampson measures, the community depicted in Boyz n the Hood should had been socially organized since the strong local friendship ties, under Sampson’s theory, should have mediated against street corner peer groups delinquency. However, the lack of structure in the community depicted in Boyz n the Hood indicates that the community was unable to realize the common values of its residents and maintain social control (Shaw and
Doughboy, who was aspiring to attend college, dies during a gunfight. Throughout the film, youth gangs commit violent and criminal acts. According to Shaw and McKay’s definition, the community depicted in the film was socially disorganized.

Sampson and Groves’ first measurement of social disorganization, the inability for the community to supervise and control teenage peer groups (gangs), is apparent within the film. Out of all the youth in the film there are only three individuals (Tre, Brandi and Ricky) who strive to pursue a higher education. The residents in the neighborhood in the film *Boyz n the Hood* (1991) were unable to supervise its teenage peer groups. Many youth were in the film were living in a single parent household, Tre was raised by his father, while Doughboy and Ricky who were brothers were raised by their mother (Dyson 1992). Since there were a majority of single parent households in the film there was one less set of protective eyes to control the youth. This film depicts teenage peer groups as unsupervised, which may lead to delinquent acts, such as burglaries, fights, killings, shootings, and gambling. Furious is the only parent who monitors Tre’s activities, and he challenges youth who seem to be looking for trouble. On the other hand, there is no intervention in street corner gatherings or the monitoring leisure-time of youth activities. This lack of monitoring and intervention leads to the arrest of Doughboy for stealing.

Sampson and Groves’ second measurement of social disorganization, presence of local friendship networks, was strong in the film. The bond of friendship between Tre, Ricky, and Doughboy depicts a strong friendship tie. According to Sampson and Groves’ (1989), this friendship tie should have served as a deterrent to juvenile delinquency. However, it was ineffective at deterring juvenile delinquency, which led to many criminal acts. For example, although there was a strong local friendship tie in the community in *Boyz n the Hood*, they were unable to recognize outsiders who were a potential threat and causing trouble in their community. A red car occupied by troubled youth was constantly entering the neighborhood of Ricky, Doughboy, and Tre serving as a threat to their neighborhood. The individuals in this particular car almost ran over an infant and, in another instance, held members of the neighborhood at gun point. The strong friendship ties should have provided a means for the community to engage in “guardianship” behavior to protect the community from strangers. In the film, it did not.

Sampson and Groves’ third measurement of social disorganization, participation in formal and salutary organizations in the local community, is virtually missing from the film. The only person involved in an organization is Ricky, a football player for Crenshaw High School. None of the other
youths were depicted as involved in any community organizations. Therefore, the lack of participation in community organizations is evidence of social disorganization.

Though the three measures show that the community in *Boyz n the Hood* should have been socially organized, the measures failed to explain why the friendship tie between the three boys did not mediate against delinquency. Doughboy was torn between the street-corner gang and his friendship tie with Tre and Ricky. According to the ideas contained in Sampson’s work, Doughboy’s friendship tie should have prevented him from committing crimes. In addition to the red car being observed in the community in many instances, it led to the killing of the star football player at Crenshaw High School, Ricky. After the death of Ricky, his brother Doughboy decided to take matters into his control, and he murdered all the individuals who were involved in his brother’s death. The implications of the failure of the friendship tie to prevail over social disorder is that, as Gainey et al. (2004) concluded, there is more of a complex relationship among the three measures than was originally believed. Specifically, the implication is that local friendship ties do not always mediate against street-corner peer groups and outside intruders. Instead, the particular dynamics of the friendship ties may be more of a measure of its ability to counter delinquent behavior.

**LIMITATIONS**

The findings of this research is limited to the film *Boyz n the Hood* and does not reflect any of the other films directed or produced by John Singleton or any other films of this genre. This research does not consist of surveys or interviews of people to determine the effects of this film on the audience.

**FUTURE RESEARCH**

Since *Boyz n the Hood* was the first film to “map the hood on land and put it into the mainstream media” (Massood 1986), this researcher would like to review other films to see if the representation of African American youth depicted as living in socially disorganized neighborhoods is continuing or changing. This researcher would also like to survey law enforcement officers to see how they view *Boyz n the Hood* in regards to its impact on community policing. Future research can also be conducted regarding the dynamics of friendship ties and its ability to mediate against street-corner peer groups.
CONCLUSION

In the film *Boyz n the Hood*, John Singleton depicted African Americans living in a lower class neighborhood in Los Angeles as socially disorganized. Applying Sampson’s three measures, this researcher found that the neighborhood was not effective at controlling teenage peer groups, there was a strong local friendship network between the boys in the neighborhood, and there was low participation in community organizations. Although there was a strong presence of local friendship networks, they were ineffective at deterring youth from committing delinquent acts. Therefore, people in the neighborhood were unable to realize the values of its residents and control delinquent behavior, which, according to Shaw and McKay (1942), are the markings of a socially disorganized community.

More importantly, the film depicted a complex interrelationship between friendship ties and street-corner peer groups where the boys’ friendship did not prevent one of the boys from delinquent behavior. As other researchers such as Gainey et al. (2004) have noted, Sampson’s three measures may have been simplistic and the relationship between the three measures needs more study. In particular, the film implies that the dynamics of friendship ties may have more of a mediating affect than the mere existence of the friendship.
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STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT OLDER ADULTS: CARING AND CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

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ABSTRACT
The present study was conducted to see whether students at California State University, Sacramento had different attitudes toward older adults based on their cultural background and whether they provided care for older adults. Kogan’s Attitudes Toward Old People Scale (KAOP), the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans II - ARSMA-REVISION, and a demographic questionnaire were administered. A comparison of 88 participants found that students who had cared for an older adult reported a more positive attitude \(M = 4.20, SD = .83\) and a less negative attitude \(M = 4.06, SD = .56\) toward older adults than students who had not cared for an older adult [positive attitude: \(M = 4.07, SD = .76, t(86) = .66, p = .51\); negative attitude: \(M = 4.14, SD = .53, t(86) = -.59, p = .56\)], although this difference was not statistically significant. Results also revealed non-significant negative correlations between assimilation to non-Western culture with positive attitudes toward older adults \(r = -.04, p = .37\) as well as with negative attitudes toward older adults \(r = -.04, p = .36\). Consistently, findings showed non-significant correlations between assimilation to Western culture with positive attitudes toward older adults \(r = .09, p = .21\) and with negative attitudes toward older adults \(r = .12, p = .13\). Although the findings were not significant, the need to consider ethnicity, race and culture remains important for the future, especially as America’s population ages and becomes more diverse.

Over the years, the older adult population (age 65 and older) has been increasing (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2008). As a result, there has been increased research on attitudes towards older adults. Gerontology, nursing, and developmental psychology are just a few areas in which this research is conducted.

Despite the increase of older adults, Heffner (1999) observed that many American students continued to place a high value on early life, education, work, social life and attractiveness, but old age, with its concomitant loss of health, income and status has been less valued. Older adults need family support and family care as well as support from the community (Kenny and Oettinger 1991), but many students do not realize this until they reach old
age themselves (Baer 1982). In many ways, our society is insensitive to the needs and experiences of older adults, which can lead to negative attitudes regarding old age (Heffner 1999). If older adults have a negative attitude of themselves, then younger individuals may have negative attitudes of them as well, but being able to provide support to older adults could change their attitudes about themselves and the caretakers, and vice versa (Kenny and Oettinger 1991, 112). When older adults are respected by younger individuals, they feel a sense of belonging and acceptance. With positive attitudes, a positive relationship is created between younger individuals and older adults.

The current investigation was inspired by the researcher’s observation of students’ attitudes towards older adults, by previous research, and by studies based on attitudes towards the elderly. The literature is replete with articles on negative, stereotypical, and unfavorable attitudes towards older adults (Brown et al. 1992; Heffner 1999; Tovin et al. 2002). Many scholars and practitioners fear that such negative attitudes may affect the profession’s ability to meet the demand for qualified clinicians in the geriatric setting and in other settings where older adult may be represented (Tovin et al. 2002). As many current students will be entering these fields, possibly holding negative stereotypes, research on students’ attitudes towards older adults is vital and should emphasize the goal of increasing positive attitudes towards older adults.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The current research was intended to answer the following research questions: What is the relationship between students’ past experiences with taking care of an older adult and students’ current attitudes toward older adults? What is the relationship between assimilation with Anglo/Western culture and attitudes about older adults?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The population of Americans who are over the age of 65 years has been increasing. In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the population to be 10.6 percent at 65 years old and older in California and 11.2 percent in Sacramento; these percentages have grown in the past decade. In 2008, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that 11.2 percent of the population was 65 years old and over in California, and that 12.8 percent of the country’s population was 65 or older (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2008). According to the Seniorjournal.com report released in August 2009, it is predicted that, by 2050, 87 million Americans will live to be 65 years of age or older and 21 million will live to be 85 years old or older.
Students’ experiences with older adults throughout their lives can influence their attitudes toward this group. A study based on nursing students suggests that students had negative attitudes towards the population of patients who were 65 years old and older, but had positive attitudes toward younger patients. This difference in attitude was due to facing the difficult problems associated with old age for the first time during these encounters (Heffner 1999). To determine whether students’ stereotypes influenced their clinical decision-making, Johnson et al. (1986) studied 349 medical students who were presented with five simulated patients on videotape. The students attributed both positive and negative stereotypic characteristics to the patients. The five simulated patients ranged in ages with one elderly patient who received ratings in the bottom third of the positive characteristic ratings and in the top third of the negative characteristic ratings. Furthermore, Tuckman and Lorge (1951) indicated that graduate students substantially accepted misconceptions and believed negative stereotypes about older people.

While research by Cheong et al. (2009) shows that Americans hold negative attitudes toward older adults, a study based on medical students shows that younger adults have positive attitudes towards older adults in Singapore. Cheong et al. (2009) studied 366 medical students, measuring their attitudes with the Kogan’s Attitudes Towards Old People Scale (KAOP). Results indicated that the majority of first-year (98.2%) and third-year (99.2%) medical students had positive attitudes towards older adults, reporting a KOAP score above 102. Third-year students had higher scores on the KAOP scale than first-year students, possibly because the third-year students had provided more care to older adults than the first-year students. The researcher in Singapore also showed that the students who had provided care for an older family member showed more positive attitudes towards older adults than students who did not provide care for an older family member. In Singapore and other non-Western countries, students are expected to participate in family care, while students who are more assimilated to Western culture are not expected to participate in family care. While there might be a difference in attitude based on cultural orientation, Cheong et al. (2009) revealed a difference in attitude among students within the same culture as well. In America, Brown et al. (1992) conducted a study that revealed that positive attitude scores increased significantly for students who spent time with older adults outside a mock geriatric clinic. Thus, experience with older adults may transcend the effect of cultural orientation.

The research on medical students in Singapore and nursing students in America both used Kogan’s Attitudes Towards Old People Scale to measure attitudes towards older adults. The comparison of these studies suggests that
culture and experience with older adults in the student’s lifetime affects the student’s attitudes towards older adults. As Levine and Murray (2005) argue, “culture goes beyond religion, ethnicity, or language; it focuses on collective understanding of principles, attitudes, values and behaviors universal to members in a group, whether that group is a family, professional discipline, an institution, or an agency” (1). Thus, culture may also influence perceptions of older adults. For example, Lang (1946) argues that “one reason why Asian students had positive attitudes toward older adults was because respect for older persons is a notable tradition among people of East Asia” (859). The traditional basis for elder respect according to Choi (2001) is “Confucian teaching of filial piety, which recommends children to honor and appreciate older adults” (21). According to their research, Malays, Pakistanis, Indians, Singaporeans, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and Sri Lankans are all people who practice “filial responsibility”, meaning that the offspring of the adults take responsibility to provide for the needs (shopping, household tasks, living arrangements, personal contact, financial aid) of their aging parents, even when the offspring are married and have families of their own (Lang 1946; Mehta et al. 2000). For example, parents frequently help their children establish their own families, and children help their parents in return.

Eastern culture is often seen as more collectivist than Western culture, which is seen as more individualistic (Fowler and James 2009, 38). In Eastern culture, family bonds and caring for an older family member are important, and keeping the older family member at home rather than at a nursing facility is seen as a sign of respect (Cantor and Brennan 2000, 283), while in the Western culture, older adults are placed in nursing homes more often than being cared for by a family member at home (Kenny and Oettinger 1991, 67). The rise in the older adult population in the U.S. includes increasing numbers in the minority group populations of elder Americans (Kenny and Oettinger 1991, 263). In a report from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), a 2001 survey of 2,300 people (Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, African Americans and Caucasians) in Santa Ana, California, found that Asian populations provided the most care to their elderly, but that 72 percent of Asian Americans still felt the quality of that care was not satisfactory (Haas 2001). In addition, the AARP survey indicates that people born outside the United States are more likely to provide care to their elderly than those born in United States.

While many people feel comfortable with their culture, some immigrants might question their cultural identity, due to assimilation into a new culture. In the most general terms, “assimilation” can be defined as “the decline, and at its endpoint the disappearance, of an ethnic/racial distinction and the
cultural and social differences that express it” (Alba and Nee 1997, 863). In addition, “this definition does not assume that one of these groups must be the ethnic majority; assimilation can involve minority groups only, in which case the ethnic boundary between the majority and the merged minority groups presumably remains intact” (Alba and Nee 1997, 863). Students from an Eastern culture who are less assimilated to the Western culture may have more positive attitudes toward older adults than their more assimilated counterparts.

Not much research has been conducted on the cultural attitudes of students about older adults. The present research examines this potentially important aspect of attitudes toward older adults among university students at Sacramento State. The researcher hypothesized that individuals who provide care for or have experience with older adults would have a positive attitude towards older persons, while individuals who had not provided care for or have not had experience with older persons would have negative attitudes. Second, the researcher hypothesized that those individuals who are less assimilated into Western culture would have more positive attitudes towards older adults than individuals who were more assimilated into the Western culture.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study was a quantitative analysis of scale and questionnaire.

Participants

A total of 83 students from entry-level psychology courses and 5 haphazardly selected volunteers from California State University, Sacramento participated in this study. The entry-level psychology students participated in the study to earn extra credit points in their classes, but the other volunteers did not receive any compensation. Descriptive statistics show that, of the 88 participants, over half (66) provided care to older adults from 1 to 50 hours a week, whereas only 22 provided no care to older adults over the course of a typical week. The majorities of students were women (75% of total sample), never married (89.8%), held junior class standing (30.7%) and were born in California (77.3%). The mean age of the sample was 23.5 years. Of the 88 participants, 69 of them identified with the Western cultural lifestyle, whereas 6 participants identified with the Eastern cultural lifestyle. Nine participants chose both Eastern and Western as their cultural lifestyle, and only four participants selected “Other” to represent their lifestyle.
Procedure
When students arrived at the study location, they were ushered into a room and seated. The researcher provided the participants with an informed consent form to sign. After signing the informed consent form, participants returned it to the researcher who placed it in a separate envelope to ensure that personal identifying information could not be linked to questionnaire responses. After the consent form was signed and returned, participants were told that they could withdraw from the study at any time and to respond honestly using the scale and questionnaire provided. Participants were instructed not to place their name or any other identifying mark on the materials. The participants were given the following scale and questionnaires in random order: Kogan’s Attitudes Toward Old People Scale (KAOP), Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans II- ARSMA-REVISION (ARSMA-II), and the demographic scale and questionnaires (see Appendices A, B and C). Participants took from 10 to 30 minutes to complete the scale and questionnaires. After completion, the researcher collects the scale and questionnaires and placed them in another envelope completely separate from the consent form envelope so that the participants’ names could not be linked in any way to their responses. The researcher then handed out the debriefing sheet for the participants to keep and answered any questions that participants might have had.

Variables
The independent variables for this study were experience providing care for an older adult versus no experience, and assimilation into Western culture versus assimilation into a non-Western culture. The dependent variable was the students’ individual attitudes about the elderly.

Materials
This study utilized the following scale and questionnaires to better understand students’ caring toward older adults, attitudes about older adults and cultural assimilation style.

Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans II- ARSMA-REVISION
The ARSMAII is a 30-item scale that measures assimilation to the non-Western culture (17 items) and assimilation to the Anglo/Western culture (13 items). Participants rate how they feel using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (Cuellar et al. 1995). In addition, participants were also asked to identify the language they speak, the ethnicity with which they identify, the ethnic group with which they interact, and their parents’ ethnic group. The scale has 17 items for the Mexican Orientation Subscale (MOS), which are also used for Asian Orientation, and 13 items for the Anglo Orientation Subscale (AOS). The means for the MOS and AOS
were calculated, and then the AOS mean was subtracted from the MOS mean to give participants’ assimilation scores. Cuellar et al. (1995) recommend cutoff scores for classifying respondents into categories (e.g., people with a Mexican Orientation score > .7 and an Anglo Orientation score < .24 are classified as “Traditional Mexican.” This cutting score was based on “standard deviation units or fractions thereof about the mean of the original standardization sample of ARSMA-II” (Cuellar et al. 1995).

Kogan’s Attitude Toward Old People (KAOP)
The KAOP Scale (Kogan 1961) consists of 34 items rated on a 6-point scale. There are 17 items that state negative attitudes about older adults and 17 items that state positive attitudes about older adults. For the present research, the negative and positive items were placed in random order on the questionnaire per the Kogan’s recommendation (the original scale has both items paired). The KAOP Scale was scored using the methods summarized by Kogan (1961), where the negative and positive items are scored separately. Higher scores on the positive scale represent positive attitudes, while lower scores on the negative scale also represent positive attitudes (negative statements were reverse scored). The range of possible scores is 4 to 238. Kogan (1961) used odd-even Spearman-Brown reliability coefficients for the negative scale, ranging from 0.73 to 0.83 for his sample of 168 respondents. The coefficients for the positive scale ranged from 0.73 to 0.77. The Pearson product-moment coefficients between both items ranged from 0.46 to 0.52 \((p < .01)\).

Demographics
Students were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire, which contained questions regarding age, sex, ethnicity, education, spiritual concerns, household income, marital status, activities enjoyed with elders, past/present relationship with older adults, and culture lifestyle.

Statistical Analysis
The researcher analyzed the data using the computerized Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 17.0, to conduct \(t\)-tests and calculate descriptive statistics.

RESULTS
A two tailed \(t\)-test was completed to assess the difference in attitudes towards older adults between students who had provided care for older adults and students who had not cared for older adults. Students who had cared for older adults scored higher on the positive attitude measure \([M = 4.20, SD = .83, n = 66]\) than students who had not cared for older adults \([M = 4.07, SD = .76, n = 22]\). However, the analysis showed that this difference was not
statistically significant \( t(86) = .66, p = .51 \). In addition, the negative attitude mean score was not significantly greater for students who had not cared for older adults \( [M = 4.14, SD = .53, n = 22] \) as compared to students who had cared for older adults \( [M = 4.06, SD = .56, n = 66, t(86) = -.59, p = .56] \). Both groups scored in the intermediate range of attitudes, and there was not a statistically significant difference between the positive or negative attitudes of students who had cared for and students who had not cared for older adults.

A two tailed \( t \)-test was next completed to assess the difference between students who had cared for older adults and students who had not cared for older adults on cultural assimilation. Students who had cared for older adults scored higher on Western cultural orientation \( [M = 4.07, SD = .61, n = 66] \) than the students who had not cared for older adults \( [M = 3.40, SD = .45, n = 22] \). However, the analysis showed that this difference was not significant \( [t(86) = .55, p = .58] \). In addition, students who had cared for older adults scored lower on the assimilation to non-Western culture measure \( [M = 3.05, SD = .74, n = 66] \), than the students who had not cared for older adults \( [M = 3.23, SD = .81, n = 22, t(86) = .97, p = .33] \). Both groups scored in the intermediate range of assimilation to Western culture, so there was not a statistically significant difference between students who had cared for and students who had not cared for older adults on cultural assimilation.

Results for cultural assimilation and attitude revealed non-significant and negative correlations between positive attitudes toward older adults and assimilation to the non-Western culture \( [r = -.04, p = .37] \), and between negative attitudes and assimilation to the non-Western culture \( [r = -.04, p = .36] \). The findings also revealed non-significant and positive correlations between positive attitudes toward older adults and assimilation to the Western culture \( [r = .09, p = .21] \), and between negative attitudes and assimilation to the Western culture \( [r = .12, p = .13] \).

**DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to compare students’ attitudes toward older adults based on their caring and assimilation status. While students who cared for older adults had a higher mean score for positive attitudes toward older adults than the students who had not cared for older adults, this difference was not statistically significant. In addition, when attitude was compared by assimilation, students who were less assimilated into the Western culture had a non-significant higher positive attitude score. While the direction of the mean scores and correlations are congruent with the hypotheses, the findings
suggest that time spent with older adults is not significantly associated with attitudes about older adults.

LIMITATIONS

There are a number of limitations in this study due to the way the research was designed. First, there was not sufficient existing research on students’ attitudes about older adults from a cultural perspective. Much of the literature was based on nursing and health care students’ attitudes about older adults, and did not focus on or emphasize culture. Therefore, the researcher was unable to compare her findings with others studies. In addition, the present study needed to be conducted in a longer time frame to allow more participants. In addition, the majority of the participants were from the psychology major, therefore, the researcher was unable to compare the attitudes of students from different majors within the same campus. Thus, the data do not reflect the general population of the institution. In addition, this study focused on a single college campus and no comparisons were made with similar college campuses.

FUTURE RESEARCH

There are a number of potential areas for future research as a result of the present study. Future researchers could examine the attitudes of older adults who are of different cultural backgrounds towards students. In this manner, researchers could examine if the difference in attitude occurs in older adults as well as in students. Another potential area to focus on would be comparing the attitudes of students from different universities located in the same city and those with different majors on the same campus. Replicating the current study with more participants and minority groups is also needed. In addition, further study of student attitudes about older adults needs to examine different cultural backgrounds and should extend to different countries. The ability to conduct research in a different country and compare these results with the results from the present study would show which country and culture has more positive attitudes about older adults and which one has more negative attitudes.

CONCLUSION

The older adult population in the U.S. continues to increase. Harvey and Anderson (2005) cited that colleges and universities in the United States are now more ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse than at any time previous. The present study was concerned with student attitudes about older adults. According to Cantor and Brennan, the “change in attitudes among
the children and their elderly about appropriate sources of social care, as well as financing need, could radically alter the picture of family caregiving in the future” (2000, 283). In other words, with time, attitudes towards older adults can change in various cultures. Professor Dowell Myers at the University of Southern California predicts that “assimilation will change these attitudes in a generation or two because at least three-quarters of Asian and Hispanic families will, in the future, go toward the Anglo standard.” So, a positive attitude is much more productive than an explosion of anger and irritation because “you are a product of what they (older adults) were capable of producing” (Haas 2001). Students of any culture would benefit from having positive attitudes toward older adults because having a positive attitude toward older age could make a difference in students’ lives when they themselves reach an older age. Overall, it is clear that the need to consider attitudes, ethnicity, race and culture will be even more significant in the preparation and provision of formal services to older adults in the future (Cantor and Brennan 2000, 263).
## APPENDIX A. KOGAN’S ATTITUDES TOWARD OLD PEOPLE SCALE (KOAP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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</table>

1. It would probably be better if most old people lived in residential units with people their own age.
A..................B..................C..................D..................E..................F

2. It would probably be better if most people lived in residential units with younger people.
A..................B..................C..................D..................E..................F

3. There is something different about most people; it’s hard to find out what makes them tick.
A..................B..................C..................D..................E..................F

4. Most old people are really no different from anybody else; they’re as easy to understand as younger people.
A..................B..................C..................D..................E..................F

5. Most old people get set in their ways and are unable to change.
A..................B..................C..................D..................E..................F

6. Most old people are capable of new adjustments when the situation demands it.
A..................B..................C..................D..................E..................F

7. Most old people would prefer to quit work as soon as pensions or their children can support them.
A..................B..................C..................D..................E..................F

8. Most old people would prefer to continue working just as long as they possibly can rather than be dependent on anybody.
A..................B..................C..................D..................E..................F

9. Most old people tend to let their homes become shabby and unattractive.
A..................B..................C..................D..................E..................F

10. Most old people can generally be counted on to maintain a clean, attractive home.
A..................B..................C..................D..................E..................F
11. It is foolish to claim that wisdom comes with age.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

12. People grow wiser with the coming of old age.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

13. Old people have too much power in business and politics.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

14. Old people should have power in business and politics.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

15. Most old people make one feel ill at ease.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

16. Most old people are very relaxing to be with.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

17. Most old people bore others by their insistence on talking “about the good old days.”
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

18. One of the most interesting and entertaining qualities of most old people is their accounts of their past experiences.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

19. Most old people spend too much time prying into the affairs of others and giving unsought advice.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

20. Most old people tend to keep to themselves and give advice only when asked.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

21. If old people expect to be liked, their first step is to try to get rid of their irritating faults.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

22. When you think about it, old people have the same faults as anybody else.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

23. In order to maintain a nice residential neighborhood, it would be best if too many old people did not live in it.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F
24. You can count on finding a nice residential neighborhood when there is a sizeable number of old people living in it.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

25. There are a few exceptions, but in general most old people are pretty much alike.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

26. It is evident that most old people are very different from one another.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

27. Most old people should be more concerned with their personal appearance; they’re too untidy.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

28. Most old people seem quite clean and neat in their personal appearance.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

29. Most old people are irritable, grouchy, and unpleasant.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

30. Most old people are cheerful, agreeable, and good humored.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

31. Most old people are constantly complaining about the behavior of the younger generation.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

32. One seldom hears old people complaining about the behavior of the younger generation.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

33. Most old people make excessive demands for love and reassurance more than anyone else.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

34. Most old people need no more love and reassurance than anyone else.
A....................B.......................C...................D....................E........................F

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APPENDIX B. ACCULTURATION RATING SCALE FOR MEXICAN AMERICANS II ARSMA-REVISION (ARSMA-II)

Circle the generation that best applies to you. Circle only one.

1. 1st generation = You were born in a country other than the USA.
2. 2nd generation = You were born in USA; either parent born in a country other than USA.
3. 3rd generation = You were born in USA; both parents born in USA and all grandparents born in country other than USA.
4. 4th generation = You and your parents born in USA and at least one grandparent born in a country other than USA with remainder born in USA.
5. 5th generation = You and your parents born in the USA and all grandparents born in the USA.
6. I do not know what generation I am.

**Scale 1**

Circle the response that best applies to you. Circle only one answer.

1. I speak another language other than English. (Specify: ____________)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very little or not very often</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Much or very often</th>
<th>Extremely often or almost always</th>
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2. I speak English.

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3. I enjoy speaking the language I specified.

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4. I associate with Anglos.

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5. I associate with people of my culture/ethnicity.

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6. I enjoy listening to music in the other language I speak.

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7. I enjoy listening to English language music.

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8. I enjoy watching TV in the other language I speak.

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9. I enjoy English language TV.

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10. I enjoy English language movies

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11. I enjoy movies in the other language I speak.

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12. I enjoy reading books in the other language I speak.

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13. I enjoy reading (e.g., books in English).

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15. I write (e.g., letters in English).

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16. My thinking is done in the English language.

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17. My thinking is done in the other language I speak.

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18. My contact with the country of my ethnicity and culture has been:

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19. My contact with the USA has been _______

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20. My father identifies or identified as ____________________________

21. My mother identifies or identified as ____________________________

22. My friends, while I was growing up were of my ethnic/cultural origin.

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23. My friends, while I was growing up were of Anglo origin.

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24. My family cooks foods of my ethnic/cultural origin.

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25. My friends now are of Anglo origin.

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26. My friends now are of my ethnic/cultural origin.

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27. I like to identify myself as an Anglo American.

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28. I like to identify myself as someone of my ethnic/cultural origin and of American origin.

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29. I like to identify myself as someone of my ethnic/cultural origin.

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<th>Not at all</th>
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30. I like to identify myself as an American.

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**Scale 2**

1. I have difficulty accepting some ideas held by Anglos.

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<th>Very little or not very often</th>
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2. I have difficulty accepting certain attitudes held by Anglos.

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<th>Not at all</th>
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3. I have difficulty accepting some behaviors exhibited by Anglos.

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<th>Not at all</th>
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4. I have difficulty accepting some values held by Anglos.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. I have difficulty accepting certain practices and customs commonly found in some Anglos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very little or not very often</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
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6. I have, or think I would have difficulty accepting Anglos as close personal friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very little or not very often</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
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<th>Extremely often or almost always</th>
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7. I have difficulty accepting ideas held by some people of my ethnic or cultural background.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
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<th>Very little or not very often</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
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</table>

8. I have difficulty accepting certain attitudes held by people of my ethnic or cultural background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very little or not very often</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
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9. I have difficulty accepting some behaviors exhibited by people of my ethnic or cultural background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very little or not very often</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. I have difficulty accepting some values held by people of my ethnic or cultural background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very little or not very often</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Much or very often</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. I have difficulty accepting certain practices and customs commonly found in my ethnic or cultural background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very little or not very often</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Much or very often</th>
<th>Extremely often or almost always</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. I have, or think I would have difficulty accepting people of my ethnic or cultural background as close personal friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very little or not very often</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Much or very often</th>
<th>Extremely often or almost always</th>
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</table>

APPENDIX C. DEMOGRAPHICS CHARACTERISTICS

1. What is the year of your birth? ________

2. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Transgender

3. What race or ethnicity do you consider yourself to be? (Please circle only one response.)
   a. White and/or European American
   b. Black and/or African American
   c. Mexican/Latino and/or Mexican/Latino American
   d. Native American or Aleutian Islander/Eskimo
   e. Asian/Pacific Islander and/or Asian American
   f. Middle Eastern and/or Middle Eastern American
   g. Other (Please Specify:_____________________________)
   h. Multi-racial (Please Specify:_________________________)

4. What is your current class standing?
   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
   e. Graduate

5. What is your annual current household income?
   a. Less than $10,000
   b. $10,001 to $20,000
   c. $20,001 to $50,000
   d. $50,001 to $75,000
   e. $75,001 or more
6. Are you married, separated, divorced, widowed, or never married?
   a. Married
   b. Separated
   c. Divorced
   d. Widowed
   e. Never Married

7. Are you currently living with your romantic partner?
   a. No
   b. Yes

8. What culture is your life style based upon? (circle one)
   a. Western (America, Canada etc.)
   b. Eastern (Asian, African)
   c. Both (Western and Eastern)
   d. Other (Please specify: ________________________________)

9. Where were you born (e.g., China, India, France, California, etc.)?
   (Please specify: ________________________________)

10. What is your religious affiliation? (Circle one.)
    a. Protestant Christian
    b. Roman Catholic
    c. Evangelical Christian
    d. Jewish
    e. Muslim
    f. Hindu
    g. Sikh
    h. Buddhist
    i. Atheist
    j. Agnostic
    k. Other (Please specify: ________________________________)

11. Currently do you provide care to older adult (age 60 or older)?
    a. Yes
    b. No
12. What kind of activities do you enjoy doing with your elders (e.g., cooking, scrapbooking, etc.)? (Please write your answer)_________

13. With whom do you currently live? (e.g., mother, father, friend, spouse, etc.). (Please write your answer)_____________________

14. Currently, how many hours do you spend with older adults (age 60 or older). (Please specify: _____________________________)

15. Currently, how many hours do you care for an older adult family member (e.g., mother, father, grandparent, sibling, etc.). (Please specify: __________________________________________)

16. Currently, how many hours do you care for an older adult non-family member (e.g., neighbor, friend, etc.). (Please specify: __________________________________________)

17. With whom did you live while growing up? (e.g., mother, father, relative, grandparents, etc.). (Please write your answer)___________

a. While growing up, how many hours did you spend with older adults (age 60 or older). (Please specify: _____________________________)

b. While growing up, how many hours did you care for an older adult family member (e.g., mother, father, grandparent, sibling, etc.). (Please specify: _____________________________)

c. While growing up, how many hours did you care for an older adult non-family member (e.g., neighbor, friend, etc.). (Please specify: _____________________________)
REFERENCES


Baer, G. “Attitudes Toward the Aged: Actual and Perceived for Young and Old Samples.” PhD diss., California State University, Sacramento, 1982.


Community Violence Exposure: Protective and Risk Factors in Hmong Young Adults

Susan Her
Dr. Gregory Kim-Ju, faculty mentor

ABSTRACT
Individuals who are exposed to violence in their communities are at greater risk for internalizing and externalizing the effects of violence. There are protective and risk factors that can positively or negatively affect individuals' psychological and behavioral outcomes. This study investigated community violence exposure and violent behaviors in 100 Hmong young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 in Northern California. Specifically, this study investigated the relationship among community violence exposure, ethnic identity, violence and at-risk behaviors in Hmong young adults. As expected, the results showed that Hmong young adults reporting higher exposure of community violence through victimization also reported higher internalizing symptoms and externalizing behaviors. As expected, the results showed that Hmong young adults reporting higher levels of witnessing community violence reported more school misconduct. As expected, the results showed that Hmong young adults reporting higher ethnic identity reported lower externalizing symptoms and school misconduct.

In the past decade, there has been a rise in violence in local communities in the United States. According to the Statistical Abstract of the United States (2010), the total number of violent crime offenses (e.g., murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) was 1,345,000 in 1980 and 1,408,000 in 2007. Although violence can affect all people, research has demonstrated that adolescents are at a higher risk for exposure to community violence during their lifespan (Voisin 2007). Researchers have noted the rise in youth violence, especially in urban areas. However, even young adults in low-risk areas such as rural communities have seen high rates of violence exposure (Scarpa 2003). Violence rates for ethnic minorities have also increased, with studies showing that ethnic minority youth are disproportionately affected by community violence (Cooley-Quille et al. 2001). Exposure to community violence continues to be a public health concern and threatens youth development for all racial, ethnic, and social groups (Lambert et al. 2005). However, there is a dearth of research on Asian Americans and violence, especially on Hmong Americans. The purpose of this study
is to investigate violence exposure and at-risk behaviors in the Hmong population. Specifically, this study focuses on the relationship between the amount of community violence exposure, exposure through victimization and witnessing, and ethnic identity in Hmong young adults. The following literature review examines youth violence, with a focus on internalizing and externalizing behaviors, as well as the role of protective factors such as ethnic identity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community violence affects all people, including those who may witness violence through exposure or victimization. Although there is a large amount of research on the effects of violence on African Americans and Latinos, there is limited research on Asian Americans. Part of the issue involves positive images of Asian Americans achieving the American dream, which may mask at-risk and violence rates. For example, Asian Americans are often viewed as the “model minority,” a group of people who adapt to and are highly successful in U.S. society. Chao, Chiu and Lee (2010) describe the term “model minority” as “a hardworking, successful, and law-abiding ethnic minority that overcomes hardship, oppression, and discrimination to achieve great success” (44). Yet, these researchers go on to state that Asian American youth are more likely to be arrested for criminal offenses than other racial groups. Interestingly, Tsunokai (2005) found that Asian American college students who were involved in gangs showed problem behaviors in school. Ho (2008) suggested there is a need to investigate Asian American adolescents and how the witnessing of or victimization in community violence is associated with internalizing behaviors.

Community Violence Exposure and Consequences

Research on violence has demonstrated relationships between community violence exposure and a number of outcome variables for those living in these communities. Research has shown an association between personal victimization and internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Ho 2008). One study found that community violence exposure was associated with negative outcomes for children; specifically, exposure to community violence put children and adolescents at risk for distress-related symptoms, behavioral problems, and poor school functioning (Farver et al. 2005). Gorman-Smith, Henry, and Tolan (2004) suggest that the risk for aggression, delinquent behaviors, and violence later in life can be explained by violence exposure. Haden and Scarpa (2008) state that:
“...understanding outcomes for young adults is essential given that these individuals are experiencing a period of increased responsibility, transitioning between adolescence and middle adulthood when decisions regarding career, partnering, and children are often made” (1214).

The negative outcomes can be physiological in nature as well. With exposure to violence and the risk of negative outcomes, the consequences of violence have become a growing concern for researchers investigating community welfare.

**Community Violence Exposure and Internalizing Symptoms**

In children and adolescents, exposure to violence in the community is a risk factor for depression (Sieger et al. 2004). Rosenthal (2000) investigated recurring real-life exposure to violence that included direct victimization and witnessing violence against others and their relationship with psychological trauma symptoms. Findings suggested that exposure to recurring community violence (whether witnessing the violence or being directly victimized) was associated with psychological trauma symptoms (e.g., anger, anxiety, depression, and dissociation) in late adolescence (Rosenthal 2000). Specifically, this study suggested that there is a possibility that the type of exposure to community violence produces different types of psychological trauma symptoms (Rosenthal 2000). Other scholars have discovered a relationship between exposure to violence and internalizing behaviors (e.g., depression and anxiety) (Fitzpatrick et al. 2005; Hammack et al. 2004). Community violence exposure also has a negative impact on adolescent physical and mental health (Berenson et al. 2001).

**Community Violence Exposure and Externalizing Behaviors**

Research shows that adolescents’ risk of engaging in delinquent behaviors and substance use increase with repeated violence exposure from peers and relatives in their community (Zinzow et al. 2009). According to Raghavan et al. (2006; 2009), when individuals live in neighborhoods with high exposures to violence, there is a direct increase in the community members’ use of violence. Wilkinson and Carr (2008) found a link between the stress of community violence exposure through victimization and people’s violent behaviors in the future. The impact of community violence exposure is not confined to that respective community; research shows that youth exposed to violence were more likely to report poor educational outcomes (Voisin 2007).

**Protective Factors in Relation to Violence**

A body of literature on violence has demonstrated a number of risk and protective factors that may be related to increasing or buffering at-risk and
violent behaviors. Researchers have identified a number of protective factors that reduce the impact of exposure to violence and risk factors that can increase the impact of community violence. For example, studies have shown that the type of parental support one has can serve as either a protective or risk factor in relation to violence exposure. Of concern in the present study is the relationship between ethnic identity and violence.

**Social Identity Theory and Ethnic Identity**

Tajfel defines “social identity” as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from [his] knowledge of [his] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significant attached to that membership” (Phinney and Ong 2007). Adolescents may strive to maintain a positive social identity in order to maintain higher self-esteem (Phinney et al. 2001). Among many ethnic minority group members, ethnic identity is considered to be an important social identity (Phinney and Ong, 2007). “Ethnic identity” is broadly defined as “a sense of self as a group member that develops over time through an active process of investigation, learning and commitment” (Phinney et al. 2001). The concept of “ethnicity” generally consists of self-identification, belongingness, commitment, sense of shared values, and attitudes towards one’s ethnic group (2001). Research shows that adolescents from lower status ethnic groups may have a desire to seek knowledge about their ethnicity, which can then lead to positive outcomes. For example, psychological well-being and better school adjustment has been associated with a strong and secure ethnic identity (2001). In addition, anger, depression, and violence may result when minority group members and immigrants feel that they have to conform to the larger group (2001). Ethnic identity provides a sense of belonging to and an awareness of a person’s ethnic group and serves as a protective factor for a number of psychological variables, including discrimination (Lee 2003). This study examines the role of ethnic identity in relation to at-risk and violent behaviors.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this study is to investigate violence exposure and at-risk behaviors in Hmong young adults. Specifically, it is expected that the amount of community violence to which Hmong young adults are exposed (through victimization or witnessing) will predict their at-risk and violent behaviors. It is also expected that this study will show that having an ethnic identity serves to protect participants from violence and at-risk behaviors.
METHOD

Participants included 100 Hmong young adults from Northern California. The sample consisted of 36 female participants and 64 male participants. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 30, with a mean age of 22.9 (SD = 3.21). Participants’ education level ranged from high school, some college, bachelor’s degree, graduate school, and master’s degree. The yearly household income included 28.1% reporting less than $14,999 per year; 25% indicating $15,000 to $24,000; 20.8% reporting $25,000 to $34,999; 7.3% reporting $35,000 to $44,999; 8.3% reporting $45,000 to $54,999, and 3.0% reporting $55,000 or more. For “generational status,” which looks at the family’s history and birth place, 31.6% reported first generation, 65.3% reported second generation, and 3.2% reported third generation or higher. For participants born outside of the U.S., 6% of participants were born in Laos and 18% of participants were born in Thailand. The length of time living in the U.S. for those participants who were born in another country ranged from 10-30 years.

The participants were selected based on the following eligibility criteria:
1. Self-identified as Hmong
2. Were at least 18 years of age and younger than 40 years of age
3. Could speak and read English

Participants were recruited via flyers posted on the campus of California State University, Sacramento and in local Hmong stores; a separate recruitment flyer was sent via e-mail to the researcher’s contacts in the community. Participants voluntarily agreed to participate in this study without compensation.

Procedures

At the beginning of the study, the researcher explained the general procedures of the study to the participants. Participants were told that participation in the study would be entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participants were instructed that their responses would be confidential and anonymous, and that the researcher would not be looking at individual responses but rather only at the overall trends among Hmong young adults. Participants read and signed a written consent form if they agreed to participate in the study. After participants signed the consent form, they returned the forms to the researcher, who placed the consent form in a separate envelope to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.
Once the consent forms were collected, the researcher distributed the packet of inventories (see “Measures”). After the participants completed the inventories, the researcher collected the packets, placed them in a separate envelope from the consent forms, and debriefed the participants. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and discussed any questions/concerns participants might have had about the study.

**Measures**

Participants completed the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), an assessment that focuses on ethnic identity, especially one’s sense of attachment, belonging, and understanding related one’s own ethnicity (Phinney and Ong 2007). MEIM-R measures “the strength and security” of one’s ethnic identity using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree).

Participants also completed the Community Experience Questionnaire (CEQ), a self-reported assessment of exposure to community violence (Schwartz and Proctor 2000). The CEQ consists of two subscales that are administered separately. The first subscale consists of 11 items that assess community violence with direct exposure by victimization. The second subscale consists of 14 items that assess community violence exposure through witnessing. Participants were instructed to exclude incidents from family or other members in the home and to report only real-life events from their communities and neighborhoods. They ranked the frequency of each item on a four-point Likert rating scale (1 = never, 2 = once, 3 = a few, 4 = lots of times).

Participants completed the Youth Self-Report Inventory (Achenbach 1991), a self-reported assessment that asks if participants have experienced any of the problems indicated now or within the past six months. The full Youth Self-Report Inventory has a total of 112 items using a three-point response scale (0 = not true or not at all, 1 = sometimes or somewhat true, and 2 = very true or often). In the current study, only part of the Youth Self-Report Inventory was utilized; the participants used a survey containing 15 items to better evaluate internalizing behaviors. The items inquired about a range of issues, from feelings of sadness and worthlessness to thoughts about self-harm.

Participants completed the Delinquent-Type Behavior Scale (Jessor et al. 1989), an 11-item inventory that examines externalizing behaviors, aggressive behaviors and school misconduct. For school misconduct, participants responded to five items regarding attendance. Another variable for behaviors related to school performance is trouble avoidance; participants responded to four items regarding how often the indicated incidents occurred. This scale uses a five-point rating scale (0 = never, 1 = once, 2 = twice, 3 = three or four times,
and 5 = five or more times) adapted from the National Education Longitudinal Study. When scoring the items, lower scores indicate better school behavior and higher scores indicate poorer school behavior.

Participants also filled out a demographics sheet that asked them about their ethnicity, social class, generational status, and gender.

RESULTS
The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to test the main hypotheses in this study. All tests were analyzed at an alpha level set at \( p < .05 \). Standard regression analyses were conducted to test the main hypotheses in this study.

Descriptive Analysis
Overall, participants reported a mean ethnic identity score of 3.94 (Table 1). Participants reported low community violence exposure through victimization, with 77.3% indicating “never,” 20.7% indicating “once,” and 2% indicating “a few times.” Participants reported moderate community violence exposure through witnessing, with 18.7% indicating “never,” 27.4% indicating “once,” 33.3% indicating “a few times,” and 10.3% indicating “lots of times.” For internalizing symptoms, 79% of participants reported “not at all” and 21% of participants reported “sometimes.” For aggression, 69.5% of participants reported “never,” 23% of participants reported “once,” 6% of participants reported “twice,” and 1% of participants reported “three or four times.” For school misconduct, 42.8% of participants reported “never,” 28.5% of participants reported “once,” 13.2% of participants reported “twice,” 8.1% of participants reported “three or more times,” and 4% of participants reported “five or more times.” All mean scores are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean scores of main study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness to Violence</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim of Violence</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalizing Behaviors</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externalizing Behaviors</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Misconduct</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regression Analysis for Internalizing Behaviors
The first regression analysis assessed the relationship between community violence exposure through victimization and witnessing, ethnic identity, and
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internalizing symptoms. Community violence exposure through victimization and witnessing and ethnic identity served as the predictor variables, and internalizing behaviors served as the outcome variable. The results showed significance for community violence exposure through victimization predicting internalizing symptoms $F(1, 99) = 12.914, p < 0.05$ (Table 2). The results failed to show any significance for community violence exposure through witnessing and ethnic identity on aggression.

### Table 2. Regression analysis for variables predicting internalizing behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Witness to Violence</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim of Violence</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>.344**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>-.065</td>
<td>-.154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $R^2 = .15 (N = 100, p < .05); *p < .05; **Significant level with $p = .003$

### Regression Analysis for External Behaviors

The second regression analysis assessed the relationship between community violence exposure through victimization and witnessing, ethnic identity, and aggression. Community violence exposure through victimization and witnessing, and ethnic identity served as the predictor variables, and aggression served as the outcome variable. The results showed significance with community violence exposure through victimization and ethnic identity on aggression, $F(1, 99) = 12.278, p < 0.01$ (Table 3). Specifically, as community violence exposure through victimization increased, there was an increase in aggression; as ethnic identity increased, there was a decrease in aggression. Community violence exposure through witnessing did not predict aggression.

### Table 3. Regression analysis for variables predicting externalizing behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Witness to Violence</td>
<td>.175</td>
<td>.204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimization to Violence</td>
<td>.463</td>
<td>.367**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>-.198</td>
<td>-.200**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $R^2 = .305 (N = 100, p < .01); *p < .05; **Significant level with $p = .001$

### Regression Analysis for School Misconduct

The third regression analysis assessed the relationship between community violence exposure through victimization and witnessing, ethnic identity, and
school misconduct. Community violence exposure through victimization and witnessing, along with ethnic identity served as the predictor variables, and school misconduct served as the outcome variable. The results showed that community violence exposure through witnessing, along with ethnic identity significantly predicted school misconduct, $F(1, 99) = 13.069, p < 0.01$ (Table 4). As community violence exposure through witnessing increased, there was an increase in school misconduct. As ethnic identity increased, there was a decrease in school misconduct. Community violence exposure through victimization did not predict school misconduct.

### Table 4. Regression analysis for variables predicting school misconduct behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Witness to Violence</td>
<td>.540</td>
<td>.387**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim of Violence</td>
<td>.290</td>
<td>.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>-.567</td>
<td>.349**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $R^2 = .31$ ($N = 100, p < .01$); *$p < .05$; **Significant level with $p = .001$

### DISCUSSION

This study investigated violence exposure and at-risk and violent behaviors in Hmong young adults. These results are partially congruent with the first hypothesis that community violence exposure to violence would predict at-risk and violent behaviors. The results also partially supported the second hypothesis that ethnic identity would serve as a protective factor for at-risk and violent behaviors. In particular, the study found that Hmong young adults reporting higher exposure of community violence through victimization reported higher internalizing symptoms, but failed to find a relationship between community violence exposure through witnessing on internalizing symptoms and externalizing behaviors. The study also found that Hmong young adults reporting higher exposure of community violence through victimization were found to report higher symptoms of aggression. These findings are consistent with past research that found that exposure to community violence affects behavioral problems (Farver et al. 2005). An alternative explanation for the current finding is that violent behavior may be normalized to the participants and become familiarized with specific reactions to situations (Wilkinson and Carr 2008).

This study also examined the relationship between the impact of community violence exposure (victimization and witnessing) on school misconduct. The results indicated that community violence exposure through witnessing significantly predicted school misconduct; Hmong young adults reporting higher levels of witnessing community violence were found to report
more school misconduct. This finding is consistent with other research, which found that exposure to community violence increases poor school functioning (Farver et al. 2005) and poor educational outcomes (Voisin 2007).

For the protective factor of ethnic identity, the results indicated no significant relationship between ethnic identity as a protective or risk factor for internalizing symptoms and externalizing behaviors. However, the results showed that ethnic identity significantly predicted school misconduct. Hmong young adults reporting higher ethnic identity were found to report lower school misconduct. This finding is consistent with the study by Phinney et al. (2001), which found that immigrant adolescent who have higher positive cultural identities have higher levels of school adjustment. An alternative explanation for this finding could be that Hmong parents place a strong value on education, and understand that an individual who has an education in the U.S. is mostly likely to survive and succeed. When achievement is an aspect of ethnic identity, school performance increases (Phinney et al. 2001). With this strong value for education, Hmong young adults may have a better understanding of their own ethnic group and strongly identify with it.

LIMITATIONS

There were several limitations to the current study. One limitation was that self-reporting was used to collect data from participants; given that this study focused on at-risk behaviors, participants may have been reluctant to reveal this type of behavior to the researcher, even though they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Another limitation is that the findings in this research do not concretely identify causal factors of violence. The findings only suggest that there is a relationship between the main study variables. This study’s focus on a specific Asian American population, which limits comparisons to other Asian population and to other ethnic groups also may be a limitation. Another limitation in this study may be the sample population from which a majority reported their level of education as including some college, which created a sample with little educational and social class variation. These participants may have developed healthy coping strategies to get to a college-level education. Participants from a broader background, including social class and other demographic variables, could have been recruited to better represent Hmong young adults in the greater Northern California area.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research studies can examine other protective or contributing factors of the effects of community violence exposure. One factor involves coping
strategies people may use in the face of challenges. An investigation of coping strategies can give researchers insight into the ways individuals may process and manage stress, and can help further explain the internalizing and externalizing symptoms associated with community violence exposure.

For future research studies, longitudinal studies may be used to evaluate violence exposure to indicate a more direct causality with community violence exposure and the impact on internalizing and externalizing symptoms.

CONCLUSION
The current study found a relationship between community violence exposure through victimization and internalizing and externalizing symptoms. Furthermore, the current study found a relationship between community violence exposure through witnessing and school misconduct. Research on these dimensions can help us to better understand how community violence exposure may impact how Hmong Americans adapt to the culture of the United States. This study also found that ethnic identity serves as a protective factor for externalizing symptoms and school misconduct. An individual’s knowledge of, sense of belonging to, and attachment to his or her own ethnic group plays an important role and can help buffer negative factors (Phinney et al. 2001). This research can help us to better understand the Hmong population as they continue to adapt and form new identities in the United States, and to identify preventative strategies and methods to reduce the impact of community violence on this population.
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Identity Crisis: Multiracial Identity and the Future of America

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ABSTRACT

In the United States, the study of racial/ethnic relations has traditionally focused on the struggles of people who identify with a single race or ethnic group. Few studies have focused on a rapidly growing population: people who identify with more than one race/ethnic group (biracial or multiracial individuals). Interestingly, President Barack Obama has a multiracial heritage background; however, President Obama refers to himself solely as an African American. Through qualitative literary research and using Erik Erikson’s theory of self-identity, this study will examine the psychological reasons why President Obama only refers to himself as African American and not multiracial.

According to Time magazine, Sacramento’s “Crayola” culture (multiracial) is no statistical anomaly (Stroghill 2008). This article illustrates that the multiracial population is increasing and will continue to grow. Indeed, it may well be a sign of the times. Non-Hispanic whites still account for 69% of the U.S. population and maintain a predominant share of the nation’s fiscal and political power (Brower 2002). But by 2059, according to U.S. Census figures, there will no longer be a white majority in America (Brower 2002). Perhaps Sacramento provides the best glimpse into what our neighborhoods, schools, churches and police forces may look like just a few decades from now. The census shows that America can no longer be considered a black and white nation but is instead an increasingly multiracial nation where individuals identify themselves with one or more races. The current president of the United States is a prime example of the future of America’s racial change.

The 2000 census questionnaire was the first to allow respondents to select more than one race. Nationwide, approximately 2.4% of the population (6.8 million Americans) marked identification with two or more races (Laveist 2005). President Obama gave only one answer to the question about his ethnic background on the 2010 census: African American. Many people were offended when he identified himself solely as an African American; by doing
so, it appeared to some that Obama disowned his white mother and maternal grandparents who acted as surrogate parents for much of his childhood (Haffman 2010). It appears that Obama did not have much of a relationship with his African father, yet that absent parent shaped his racial identity.

Phenotypically, or according to his appearance, Obama is African American but in actuality (genotypically or according to biology), he is multiracial, with both black and white lineage. Obama has nationally stated his multiracial background since he became a public icon, yet he is still viewed as an African American because of his physical features. Many African Americans were uplifted at the first suggestion of an African American president. To many African Americans, the chance of having a president of color was a sign of change and progress in America. On the contrary, many multiracial Americans saw his constant media coverage and success as the first African American nominee, then as president, as a major setback to their struggle for recognized identification.

According to an article written in the Washington Post by Kevin Haffman (2010), Obama chose to identify himself as an African American. Obama’s decision to racially classify himself as African American on the 2010 census was not influenced by the media’s agenda, but it was a personal choice that was made while he was a child. Even though Obama hardly laid eyes on his father, he shaped Obama’s racial identity. In his book, Dreams From My Father, Obama stated, “when people who don’t know me well. Black or white, discover my background (and it is usually a discovery, for I ceased to advertise my mother’s race at the age of twelve or thirteen, when I began to suspect that by doing so I was ingratiating myself to whites), I see the split second adjustments they have to make, the searching of my eyes for some telltale sign. They no longer know who I am” (xv). Although Obama identifies as African American he is still multiracial, and this research project will investigate the difficulties that multiracial people face in America today.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Though the focus of the present study is multiracial people, some of the monoracial literature still applies. The following review of literature includes a brief discussion of race and racial identification in general, including an explanation of the “One-Drop Rule” and some background on Obama and his struggle for racial identification.

Many scholars (Root 1992; Zack 1993; Arboleda 2008; Davis 1991) have studied race and racial identification in children as a contributing factor to developing racial awareness in adults. For example, Erikson’s theory of cognitive development states that children develop what is known as “self-
concept” (Wylie 1979, 1). This theory suggests that as children grow older and develop a more clear understanding of their role in society, they begin to change their way of cognitive thinking. By age two or three, children can identify their race and gender as factors in understanding who they are. This identification helps them to begin to understand cultural expectations and sensitizes them to the expectations that society has for them (Hutchison 2008).

As children grow older, their understandings of the world’s social views also become clear. To find their place in society, they have to identify themselves racially. Some scholars have addressed the unique challenges in racial identification faced by people of mixed race. According to Maria Root, author of *Racially Mixed People in America* (1992), when a multiracial person chooses to identify with a particular group, the group in question must accept that person and his/her physical features. The African American culture accepted Obama because his physical features were similar to their own (Root 1992). Although race is biological, society attempts to force multiracial people to identify with only one race due to physical features, culture, location, and economic status. Whatever the case may be, many multiracial people rarely acknowledge both of their racial identities. Root argued that the United States continues to use what is known as the “One-Drop Rule” to classify and identify people with even partial African ancestry.

The idea of racial classification and identification has been a national issue since our nation’s origins. The matter became a legal issue during slavery, and a constitutional issue during Reconstruction. The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granted citizenship to all slaves, and Congress passed the first Reconstruction Act on March 2, 1867, to protect the civil liberties of recently freed slaves (Davis 1994). However, the Reconstruction period was the end of the recognition of multiracial people. Before Reconstruction, multiracial people were given the same rights as whites except that they were not allowed to vote or hold assembly in some parts of the South. Reconstruction freed the slaves and also gave them rights equal to whites. As a result, political officials had to consider the rights of former slaves and whites. This is how the “One-Drop Rule” came into effect; it provided clarification about who one could marry and about which laws affected individuals of a designated race. Those who became “Negro” by law and those who became “Mulatto” by law had the same lack of protection under American law after Emancipation as they did before slavery (Zack 1993). Racial classification became determined by fractional definitions, thus being multiracial became a problem.
The “One-Drop Rule” is a historically colloquial term for a belief among some people that a person with any trace of African ancestry should be identified as black or African American (Davis 1991). The “One-Drop Rule” was declared unlawful in the Supreme Court decision of *Loving v. the State of Virginia* in 1976. However, before this court case was decided, some states such as Hawaii allowed multiracial marriages such as the one between Obama’s African father and white American mother. Today, people of African American descent and multiracial backgrounds have the same rights as whites in America. However, many guidelines today still use the standards of the “One-Drop Rule” to classify people racially.

The 2000 U.S. Census should have been considered the official end of the recognition of the “One-Drop Rule,” because it allowed people to select more than one race in describing their racial/ethnic heritage. Prior to the 2000 census, mixed race people had only two other options: 1) They could mark the box closest to their notion of identification (a mixed race person who identified as African American could mark the African American box, or perhaps the “Other” box); or 2) They could break the rules and fill out the form as they pleased. According to Tyrone Nagai, roughly 500,000 people identified themselves as multiracial in the 1990 U.S. Census (Williams 2005). Former Census Bureau director Kenneth Prewitt reported that people who marked two or more racial categories on the 1990 U.S. Census were assigned to a single race based on which box had the darkest pen mark (Williams 2005). For people who used the “Other” category to write in “black-white” or “white-black” as their race, the census counted the former as “black” and the latter as “white” since the second race listed was ignored (Lee 1993). The 2000 U.S. Census was an example of multiracial people acknowledging their multiracial identity.

For the 2000 U.S. Census, the inconsistencies described previously were eliminated. In 2000, 6.8 million Americans (or 2.4% of the country’s population) reported two or more racial identities (Stroghill 2002). Based on this data, Jones and Smith (2001) wrote a comprehensive report on the multiracial population, including maps and data tables showing the cities and states with the most multiracial people. For example, the most multiracial city is Honolulu, Hawaii, with nearly 15% of its population claiming two or more races. Jones and Smith (2001) also documented that American Indians/Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders reported the greatest incidence of multiracial identity.
METHOD
The researcher used qualitative content analysis to conduct this research. “Qualitative content analysis” is the empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts, following content analytical rules and step-by-step models, without rash quantifications (Mayering 2008). Content analysis is used for systematically describing the form and content of written or spoken material. It has been used most often in the study of mass media. However, the technique is also suitable for any kind of material, including various publications. This method can use material such as recorded interviews, letters, songs, cartoons, advertising and circulars (Sommer 2002). Content analysis allows a person to conduct social research without coming into contact with people (Sommer 2002).

RESULTS
The purpose of this study is to reveal how people of multiracial background such as President Barack Obama come to terms with racially identifying themselves. The quest for self-identity for African Americans is very complex. This quest becomes even more complex if the child’s phenotype does not match his or her immediate family members (i.e., the mother is white but the child looks African American). The goal of this research is to bring awareness to people who are not from a multiracial background. The more educated we are about multiracial people the less complex their racial classification will be. Obama chose to identify as African American because of his phenotype and this is made evident in his book, Dreams From My Father (1995). Throughout the book, Obama tells the story of the challenges he faced growing up as a multiracial child raised by a white family, but viewed in society as an African American male.

Erickson is a pioneer of the concept of “identity”; he defines it as “the creation of a sense of sameness, a unity of personality now felt by the individual and recognized by others as having consistency in time of being, as it were, an irreversible historical fact” (Bowles 1993, 418). Erickson also believes that personal identity is developed with the influence from family and personal relationships. Family relationships are the foundation of peer and community relationships. President Obama developed his self-identity as a child from his mother and grandparents. For example, in his book, Dreams From My Father, Obama states: “Gramps would wander into my room to tell me stories of his youth, a new joke he has read in Readers Digest, or a story about my father. I can still picture Gramps leaning back in his old stuffed chair after dinner, sipping whiskey and cleaning his teeth with the cellophane from his cigarette pack, recounting the time that my father almost
threw a man off the Pali Lookout because of a pipe” (55). This is a perfect example of Erickson’s theory of self-identity because President Obama gained a positive view of his African father from the stories told by his white grandfather. This also helped him to develop a positive view of being African American.

The most popular study of the impact of color on children was conducted by Clark and Clark in 1939. They presented African American children with black dolls and white dolls, and recorded more negative reactions by black children to the black dolls. A similar study reported similar results (Hutchison 2003). Findings from such research suggest that children first learn their own racial identity before they are able to identify the race of others. The family can also influence (positively or negatively) their children’s identity. Barack Obama was not raised in a traditional African American home. His mother was Euro-American and his father was an immigrant from Kenya who came to the United States on a student visa. Obama was raised in Hawaii by his two Euro-American grandparents. This environment caused Obama to have questions about his ethnicity at a very early age. In his book, Dreams From My Father, Obama describes how at the age of 12 or 13 he decided not to discuss his Anglo heritage with people because his phenotype was that of an African American (Obama 1995). Obama stated that when people would discover his background, he could see, “the split-second adjustments they have to make, the searching of my eyes for some telltale sign. They no longer know who I am” (xv). Obama had difficulty as a child because his phenotype was that of an African American male but his family was Anglo.

Erickson’s theory says that self-esteem is an important factor in choosing one’s identity, and if one lacks self-esteem and confidence it may cause character and identity problems. However, identification of others by race is limited by skin color (Hutchison 2003). Obama’s grandparents embraced his father’s Kenyan ethnicity. For example, when Obama attended school in Hawaii, his grandfather informed his teacher of Obama’s Kenyan heritage. The book stated, “Miss Hefty took attendance and read my full name, I heard titters break across the room. Frederick leaned over to me. ‘I thought your name was Barry.’ ‘Would you prefer if we called you Berry?’ Miss Hefty asked. ‘Barack is such a beautiful name. Your grandfather tells me your father is Kenyan. I used to live in Kenya, you know. Teaching children just your age, it’s such a magnificent country’” (60). This is an example of how Obama’s grandparents helped him develop a positive self-esteem about being African American; this type of positive influence made him proud to identify with being African American.

In the following quote, Obama recalled his mother’s description of his father:
She would remind me of his story, how he had grown up in a poor country, in a poor continent; how his life had been hard, as anything that Lolo [his step-father] might have known. He didn’t cut corners, though, or played all the angles. He was diligent and honest, no matter what it cost him. He had led his life according to principles that demanded a different kind of toughness, principles that promised a higher form of power. I would follow his example, my mother decided. I had no choice. It was in the genes. ‘You have me to thank for your eyebrows and…. your brains, and your character, you got from your father’ (50).

Obama added:

Her message came to embrace black people generally. She would come home with books on the Civil Rights Movement, the recordings of Mahalia Jackson, the speeches of Dr. King. When she told me stories of school children in the South who were forced to read books handed down from wealthier white schools but who went on to become doctors and lawyers and scientists, I felt chastened by my reactance to wake up early and study in the mornings (50).

These lessons and lectures from his mother greatly affected him. He elaborated:

Every black man was Thurgood Marshall or Sidney Poitier, every black woman Fannie Lou Hammer or Lena Horne. To be black was to be the beneficiary of a great inheritance, a special destiny, glorious burdens that only we were strong enough to bear. Burdens we were to carry with style. More than once, my mother would point out: ‘Harry Belafonte is the best-looking man on the planet’ (51).

Obama noted his mother’s contributions to his autobiography:

During the writings of this book, she would read the drafts, correcting stories that I had misunderstood, careful not to comment on my characterizations of her but quick to explain or defend the less flattering aspects of father’s character (xii).

He also shared his white grandparents’ description of his father in his book:

I recalled my first year as a community organizer in Chicago and my awkward steps toward manhood. I listen to my grandmother and father, sitting under a mango tree as she braided my sister’s hair, describing the father I have never truly known (xiv).
At the time of his death, my father remained a myth to me, both more and less than a man. He had left Hawaii back in 1963, when I was only two years old, so that as a child I know him only through the stories that my mother and grandparents told (5).

My grandfather would shake his head and get out of his chair to flip on the TV set. 'Now there's something you can learn from your father's confidence. The secret to a man's success (8).

Phonotype also played a role in Obama’s development, as the following quote suggests: “My father looked nothing like the people around me that he was black as pitch, my mother white as milk-rarely registered in my mind” (10). These are all prime examples of how a family’s influence can shape the outcome of a multiracial person’s identity, since Obama’s grandparents and mother raised him to be proud of being African American. As a result, it made it easier for him to identify with being African American.

Bowles (1993, 1998) studied ten teenage and young adults from black/white, multiracial backgrounds. In four cases, the mothers were white and the fathers were African American. Of the four cases, three teenagers and young adults identified themselves as white because their white mothers did not want them to identify with being black. Each of these mothers had told their daughter’s the same story: because they were females, their identification should be with their mothers who are white. In fact, two mothers expressed the idea that being white would make for an “easier life” for their daughters.

In each of these cases, there were feelings of shame by the daughters at denying a part of who they were. They expressed feelings of isolation, feeling false and of not being real. In addition to feelings of shame, these three young women all experienced varying levels of anxiety, which seemed related to a sense of danger they felt given the discrepancy between their core-multiracial self and being coerced by family or society to identify with only one part of themselves. One of the subjects stated: “I am 20 plus years of age and deep down, I don’t know who I am. I am always fearful that others will not see me as white and that makes me anxious all the time. My boyfriend asked me why I don’t identify as black or as mixed and I fell apart. I cannot be who I am” (Bowles 1993, 421). This study highlights identity problems of multiracial children because many do not feel that they are allowed to be who they really are. Their parents did not give them a choice. They were told to identify with one specific racial identity; whereas Obama was given a choice by his white family. Obama’s family made Obama confident about being both Anglo and African American, leaving the choice of his racial identity solely up to him.
As a child, Obama was seen as an African American and not a multiracial person because his phenotype is that of an African American. Throughout his life Obama faced the same discrimination and prejudice just as if he were solely an African American and not multiracial. Growing up multiracial and feeling like an African American confused Obama, who lived in an all-white household. According to Erikson’s theory of self-identity, peers can influence the ways in which multiracial people identify themselves. In Obama’s case, he acted as an African American with his African American friends as the following quote illustrates: ‘White folk’. This term itself was uncomfortable in my mouth at first, I felt like a non-native speaker tripping over a difficult phrase’ (80). Obama was influenced by his friends just as many multiracial people are. There have been studies that have proven peers to have influence over how multiracial people racially identify themselves.

Lerner (2004) argues that peer groups are important reference groups who share similar kinds of goals and aspirations, particularly if they are intimate friends (101). Obama’s childhood friend Ray played an important role in helping him make the transition to identifying as an African Americans: “Sometimes I would find myself talking to Ray about ‘white folks this, white folks that,’ and I would suddenly remember my mother’s smile, and the words that I spoke would seem awkward and false” (80). He elaborated further about the influence of Ray by stating: “Through Ray I would find out about the black parties that were happening at the university or out on the Army bases, counting on him to ease my passage through unfamiliar terrain” (73). Ray exposed Obama to the African American culture. Although Obama embraced the African American culture he still questioned his identity as he reported in his book when with his friends, Obama acted as an African American, and discussed questioning his feelings about being white. Because Obama did not look white and did not socialize with whites, he came to accept himself as African American. Much of his identity came from his interactions with his friend Ray and with other African Americans, through which he indulged himself in the African American culture. Obama was taught through his interactions with other African Americans to be proud of his background. Throughout Obama’s high school and college years he would learn more about his roots, something his white family could not teach him despite all their best efforts.
In college, Obama met African Americans who confessed that they were different:

I’m not black,’ Joyce said. ‘I’m multiracial.’ Then she started telling me about her father who happened to be Italian and was the sweetest man in the world and her mother, who was part Native American and part something else. ‘Why should I have to choose between them?’ She asked me. Her voice cracked, and I thought she was going to cry” (99).

This confused Obama because, since the age of 12 or 13 he had worked hard to see himself as a black man and now he was faced with a woman who openly acknowledged her multiracial background.

Obama faced problems even when it came to his name. People found it difficult to pronounce his non-traditional name so he solved this problem by changing it from Barack to “Barry.” It was not until Barry went off to college that he felt comfortable with using his birth name. For example, Obama met an African American young lady named Regina who found his birth name beautiful. She said: “Why does everyone call you Barry?” Obama answered, “Habit, I guess, my father used it when he arrived in the states. I don’t know whether that was his idea or somebody else’s. He probably used Barry because it was easier to pronounce. You know—help him fit in. Then it passed on to me. So I could fit in” (104). This seemingly innocent conversation between peers seemed to have a lasting impact: Obama stopped calling himself “Barry.”

Lerner (2004) argues that the peer group is an important context where future-related issues are discussed and debated (101). Social scientists believe that individuals develop a sense of self in relation to those around them and their interactions with others. However, little research has been conducted to understanding the social constructions of race involving neighborhood, community and peer influences (Rockquemore 2008, 268). For a multiracial person to choose to identify with being of a particular ethnicity, he or she must be able to articulate strengths and weaknesses within their multiracial family (Rockquemore 2008, 270). Obama was able to rationally decide to identify with being African American because of his family’s regular support and the constant interaction with his African American peers.

Peer influence is an important consideration in racial-identity development. Harring found that multiracial teens, may be rejected by both majority and minority peer groups because they are neither (Rockquemore 2008, 271). Obama was able to identify with being African Americans because he found more of a connection with his African American peers and because
his phenotype was more similar to his African American peers. Some studies found appearance to be a strongly influential factor in racial identity development. Multiracial individuals who were both white and black more often identified as African American (Rockquemore 2008, 280). In the case of phenotype, Obama’s complexion is browner when compared to an Anglo person.

In contrast, Williams’ research focused on multiracial people with ambiguous appearances. Her study explored how they negotiated their identities in everyday life. Most were confronted with the question, “What are you?” Acquaintances and strangers asked them this question to classify them racially. Williams concluded that multiracial individuals “do race” by adjusting to their circumstances, activities, and environment. Obama also engaged in “do race” behavior as the previous quotes from his book illustrate.

**DISCUSSION**

Researching the topic of this paper demonstrated to this researcher that there is a general lack of knowledge and education in reference to multiracial identity issues. It is the responsibility of not only the parents of these individuals to provide them with the proper support and guidance when identifying themselves, it is also the responsibility of the community to be accepting of their choices. With more education and emphasis on multiracial identification, the future of multiracial Americans can become more understanding of the complexity of multiracial people in the 21st century.

This researcher has many friends and family who come from multiracial backgrounds. For example, the inspiration behind this research was a friend name Araina who has a four month-old multiracial child. The researcher asked Araina how she feels about raising a biracial child. She stated, “I don’t even think about it because I know that once she enters school she will be surrounded by so many biracial children who are like her.” The researcher asked Araina what race her daughter would choose and what race Araina would prefer her daughter to select considering that Obama choose African American as his sole race? In response, she stated:

*Unlike Obama, my daughter does not have a phenotype of being African American, although she has African American blood in her. My daughter looks Mexican, Native American and an African American with a tan. In the end, I will tell her that she is mixed with German descent, African American, French descent, Blackfoot Indian, Caucasian and probably a few more I do not know. I will give her this information, but she can choose whatever*
she wants and feels more comfortable in. I don’t know what else to say because her race should not be an issue. It is her personality and how she treats people that I want to matter not her race (2010).

The researcher was really intrigued by the mother’s comments because she seemed very nonchalant when discussing race. It is imperative that American society come to understand the growing multiracial population within our borders. Oftentimes, people from multiracial backgrounds are left to deal with their identity issues without any understanding or support from family members or communities. In the studies discussed previously, some parents of multiracial children teach them to ignore part of their ethnicity. For example, the Bowles study demonstrated that if children only identified with their white side they pay a psychological price. With the proper education, parents like Ariana will be able to allow her daughter to fully embrace all of her multiple ethnicities.

LIMITATIONS
The researcher acknowledges limitations in this study by focusing on President Barack Obama’s book, *Dreams From My Father*, and relying mostly on Erikson’s self-concept theory as well as other theorists. This narrow focus was designed to link a well-known public, multiracial figure to better understand the multiracial experience in America.

FUTURE RESEARCH
In future studies the researcher would like to focus on our late President Thomas Jefferson. The Thomas Jefferson–Sally Hemming’s story involves race, sex and slavery. These are highly sensitive issues even in our time, let alone given the 200 years of controversy over the paternity of Sally Hemming’s children.

Future research also could be conducted to see how Americans view Obama’s racial identity, since many Americans assumed they were voting for an African American president and not a multiracial president. Why does Barack Obama only identify himself as an African American? Is phenotype the only answer? Although this paper has identified several reasons why multiracial people chose to identify with only one of their ethnic backgrounds, this researcher would like to explore further why Obama only sees himself as an African American male.

Other questions to be addressed in future research include: Are there other well-known political and famous people affected by multiracial identity
Family influences and phenotype play major roles in how multiracial people identify themselves. From the analysis of President Barack Obama’s book using Erikson’s self-identity theory, the researcher was able to link the importance of racial identifications to the experiences of multiracial children. The researcher also discovered a need for more education on multiracial children, not just for their parents but also for the community. There is some research on multiracial identity development but America needs to be educated further about it. The number of multiracial children is rapidly increasing every day. There is a demand for educated parents, professionals, and communities to make sure multiracial children grow up with an adequate amount of guidance and understanding. Hopefully, through President Obama’s book, *Dreams From My Father*, viewed through Erikson’s theory, we might gain new insights about self-identification among multi-racial children.

The 2010 U.S. Census was only the second census in which respondents could choose more than one racial identity, and two of the ten census questions dealt with ethnicity and race. The eighth question asked about Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish race and ethnicity. Within the four affirmative boxes, twelve possible ethnic and racial identities were given, including a write-in box. The ninth question asks about four non-Hispanic racial groups. Within the fifteen different boxes, twenty-six possible ethnic and racial identities were given, including three write-in boxes. The inclusion of such questions suggests there is a growing and complex ethnic and racial diversity present in the U.S.

Most demographers expect to see an increase in the numbers and of multiracial people reported in the 2010 U.S. Census. For example, Edmonston et al. (2002) projected the racial composition of the U.S. population will be 38.8% white, 30.6% Hispanic, 15.6% black, 14.9% Asian and Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian up to the year 2100—at which time the total U.S. population will eclipse 550 million people. The model created by Edmonston et. al., (2002) uses the existing racial categories set by government-wide standards for the collection of data on race and ethnicity and accounts for multiracial people by numerating them for each racial group that composes their identity. Thus, someone like President Obama would essentially be counted as two people in their projection: one white and one African American. Edmonston et. al. (2002) also factored in immigration, fertility,
and intermarriage to help the model account for the expected demographic growth of this population.

The concept of multiracial identity is not emphasized in most educational disciplines. This researcher combined her educational background from social science with ethnic studies to conduct the present research. There was no mention in any of the literature that combined about combining these two fields, which is why research in this area is so important. In Obama’s book he stated, “In the wake of some modest publicity, I received an advance from the publisher and went to work with the belief that the story of my family, and my efforts to understand that story, might speak in some way to the fissures of race that have characterized the American experience, as well as the fluid state of identity the leaps through time, the collusion of cultures that mark our modern life” (vii). Future research will aid us in understanding this dynamic population and providing multiracial people with the proper guidance and support they need to discover their true identities.
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ABSTRACT
African American college graduation and retention rates are alarmingly low. Factors such as social engagement, student involvement, and academic motivation influence academic achievement for African American male students. This study used in-depth interviews to examine the college experience of African American students at a public four-year university in northern California. The data collected in this study explored the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities, sense of belonging, and academic motivation. The results showed that participation in extracurricular activities helped African American male college students gain a sense of belonging and academic motivation at California State University, Sacramento.

Research shows that college students drop out for a variety of reasons (Bean 1990; Cabrera et al. 1992; Peltier et al. 1999; Tinto 1993). Some of the most common factors that lead students to drop out are background characteristics such as first generation college experience, lower socioeconomic status, and lack of pre-college academic experience. Other factors include the structural characteristics of institutions such as curriculum not reflecting certain students and a lack of interaction with faculty and peers. These characteristics are some of the most common factors that make being successful in college more difficult. Furthermore, studies have shown that race can be a significant predictor of persistence in college (Astin 1997; Murtaugh et al. 1999; Peltier et al. 1999). For example, some studies have indicated that, compared to their white peers, students of color perceive the college environment to be less supportive and are, thus, less likely to persist and graduate (Carey 2004; Pascarella et al. 1996).

The academic achievement of African Americans has been a topic of great concern to many scholars and educators (Allen 1992; Cokley 2000; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Rowley 2000; Sellers et al. 1998; Steele and Aronson 1995). Researchers examining the academic achievement gap between African
American and European American students have shown consistent disparities between these two groups (Gordon 2004; US Department of Education 2009). Specifically, African American college students have a 20% lower college graduation rate than do European American college students (US Department of Education 2009). The rate of African American enrollment in institutions of higher education has increased in the United States from approximately 20% in the 1980s to 30% in the 2000s when compared to the 1970s (Coakley and Moore 2007). Although this increase in enrollment may appear to be a substantial rise in African American academic success, that is not necessarily the case. Because the graduation rate for African American college students is still low at 38% (African-American College Graduation Rates 2002). The growth in minority student enrollment in higher education institutions, along with a low graduation rate and external pressures for institutional accountability for student learning, have made understanding the factors that influence student success in college vital (Bok 2006; Commission of the Future of Higher Education 2006).

In response to disparities in college enrollment and dropout rates, a number of studies have examined factors that may be related to the lower rates of academic success of ethnic minority students compared to their white counterparts (Lau 2003; NCES 2001; Tierney 1999). One factor that may contribute to the low rates of success among ethnic minority groups is a negative perception of campus climate (Gloria 2001). In a study that included nearly 3,000 multiethnic college freshmen, Johnson (2007) found that white students reported a stronger sense of campus belonging than did African American, Latino and Asian students. The results from a study of students attending the University of California showed that African American students reported lower levels of campus belonging than did other ethnic groups (Chatman 2008). Other studies suggest that African Americans have more negative descriptions of campus life, including perceptions of prejudice, discrimination, racial conflict, and marginalization (Ancis 2000; Gossett 1998; Parker 1998; Suarez-Balcazar 2003). “Marginalize” means to relegate or confine to a lower or outer limit or edge and, in this case, it means students feel like they are not being accepted into the college campus community. A positive attitude toward campus climate is associated with academic success. Gloria (1999) found that positive perceptions of social support, cultural congruity and college environment were all associated with persistence among African American college students. In another study, African American students expressed that positive faculty and peer relationships, such as perceptions of trust and openness, contributed to a sense of community (Booker 2007). The students in these studies who did not have such positive faculty and peer relationships reported that they were
not a part of their campus communities. These studies illustrate that being a part of the campus community influences whether or not African American students stay in school and are academically successful. The findings suggest that African American university students may not feel as if they belong on campus and do not have academic success. The low graduation rate that the US Department of Education (2009) reports for African Americans suggests that many of these African American students do not feel involved at their universities. There are a number of reasons why African Americans have a low success rate at institutes of higher education. This study will examine factors related to African American university student experience and academic success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past 20 years, several theories have been developed to explain the underachievement of African American college students. One theory is the sociological perspective, which focuses on the sociological factors that affect academic achievement among African American college students (Majors and Billson 2001). Theorists who use the sociological perspective believe that the social status of African Americans is the main factor affecting their academic success. The anthropological perspective suggests that anthropological factors influence how well African Americans do in institutes of higher education (Ogbu 1998). Theorists who use this perspective believe that cultural and historical factors such as the forces under which African Americans migrated to the US as well as their treatment in mainstream society are the biggest influences on African American academic success. Psychological factors that influence academic achievement also are used to explain disparities in African American academic experiences by psychologists (Steele 1997). Theorists who use this perspective believe that the settings in which African Americans are situated impact the way they think and feel, and that the setting affects African Americans’ academic success. The present research will use the psychological perspective to examine the students’ sense of belonging to their college or university. In the present study, “sense of belonging” is defined as the psychological sense that one is a valued member of the college community. Studies have shown that one’s sense of belonging and motivation are factors that can influence college retention and persistence (Tinto 1975; Baumeister and Leary 1995; Elliot 1999). These studies suggest that such factors in African Americans may be a direct reflection of the way they feel about their experiences at universities. Studies have also shown that sense of belonging and motivation can be enhanced by participation in extracurricular activities (Pasacarella 1986; Meza 2009).
Factors Related to Academic Achievement
A number of studies have shown that sense of belonging, student involvement, social adjustment, motivation, and extracurricular activities are factors that can positively affect retention and academic success in college (Tinto 1975; Baumeister and Leary 1995; Elliot 1999). The following sections review these factors and how they impact college retention and academic success.

Sense of Belonging
Research has identified a number of individual and institutional factors related to academic achievement for African Americans students. For example, studies have shown that failing to achieve an adequate sense of belonging can have negative consequences, including poor grades and a higher possibility of dropping out (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Durkheim 1951). Because one's sense of belonging is important, models of college persistence have often included it. “Persistence” is defined as lasting or enduring and, in this case, it is used to describe those who last and endure in college. Integration into the social and academic college environment is one predictor for whether college students are likely to remain in college. A student who is integrated into the college environment is someone who is involved on campus, both socially and academically. Socially involved students are a part of their respective campus communities. Academically involved students are those who use the resources on campus to help them with their course work. Students who fail to meet these criteria are not considered integrated.

Student Involvement
Student involvement and perceptions of integration play an important role in academic persistence (Milem and Berger 1997). A number of studies have found that perceptions of campus climate and campus involvement have an impact on academic outcomes (Farley 2002; Gloria and Ho 2003; Parker 1998). For example, Thompson (2007) examined the campus perceptions of college freshmen and found that student academic success was linked to the feeling of campus belonging. McKinney (2006) studied the impact of developing a classroom community on student attitudes and behaviors, and results indicated that an enhanced sense of community was associated with a variety of positive outcome variables including students’ performance on exams.

Milem and Berger (1999) found that first-year students who reported more involvement also reported higher academic and social integration, as well as more institutional commitment; integration into social networks is associated with institutional commitment and retention. Student involvement and
perceived integration creates a sense of belonging, which suggests that developing a sense of belonging is important to retention (Hausmann et al. 2007). For college students, involvement in meaningful activities outside of their classes is an important transitional step (Kuh et al. 2005). The extracurricular activities in which they participate may help students develop connections with their peers (Yarzedjian et al. 2007).

Social Adjustment

According to Mitra, Van Delinder, and Von Robertson (2005), researchers have suggested that social adjustment is best measured by three aspects: social integration, student adjustment, and student institutional fit. These aspects are incorporated into Tinto’s (1975) model of student retention, which is considered to be one of the most useful models of college student persistence because it explains the various types of student behaviors and decisions that are involved in student departure. This model of student attrition explains what is required of students who stay in school and graduate (Tinto 1975). The researcher suggested that persistence and withdrawal behavior is a longitudinal process that is primarily influenced by how well the student fits into the structure, social and academic life, and goals of the institution (Tinto 1975). His findings also suggest that student experiences have more influence on retention than the characteristics they bring to the university (Tinto 1975). If a college student is not engaged and has a bad first or second year, the chance of that student staying in school is not as high compared to a student who is socially integrated and has positive campus experiences (Tinto 1975).

Tinto based part of his retention model on the theory of anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep (1975; 1987). There are three stages to Van Gennep’s developmental process: separation, transition, and incorporation. Tinto applied these stages to the development of college students in the university community. There must be separation from the previous environment in order to progress through the stages. The transition phase involves adjustment to the new environment. This adjustment could mean taking risks, managing anxiety, and coping with new experiences. The incorporation phase includes full acceptance and integration into the new environment (Boyle 1989). The separation stage is equivalent to departure from the student’s previous community, which basically means leaving home. The student must make mental and physical breaks from the previous community. The transition phase is equivalent to the student’s methods of adjusting to the university community. Methods of adjustment are what the student uses to become integrated into the university community. The incorporation
phase is the outcome of the student’s adjustment and the success of his/her integration efforts.

**Motivation**

Motivation is also a strong predictor of persistence as shown in several studies (Ames and Ames 1984; Caraway et al. 2003; Dweck 1986; Elliot 1999). Motivation is a key component in retention, but it is not easy to reach certain types of goals. In a study by Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2005), the results suggested that students may have trouble setting goals for social integration and yet social integration is a necessary component of a successful college experience. Students with clearly defined academic and social goals typically experience higher academic achievement because these clearly defined goals motivate them to succeed in college.

Stipek (1988) suggests that there are a variety of reasons why individuals may be lacking in motivation. The first reason is that the student does not have a written list of important goals that define success for her or him personally. The second reason is that some people believe that their present goals or activities are wrong for them. Some students’ feelings and emotions about their present activities are generally negative. Another reason Stipek (1988) cited was that some students do not have (or believe they do not have) the ability to do their present activities or obtain their future goals. Some students believe that the satisfaction of achieving their goals seems to be in the distant future or that their present activities are not seen as related to important goals. Students who lack motivation also could have important goals that conflict with each other and have low extrinsic incentives. According to Stipek (1988), some students have personal problems that interfere with their present activities and those personal problems are amplified by current problems such as the economic recession.

**Extracurricular Activities and Student Involvement**

Interactional factors, or experiences the student has after entering college, include the quality and extent of social interactions and the student’s perception of how well the interactions meet his or her needs (Pasacarella 1986). Forming friendships and social networks, having a support group, participating in extracurricular activities, and interacting with faculty members are interactional factors. Pasacarella (1986) found that students who participated in college orientation had higher levels of persistence and higher grade point averages during their freshman year than those who did not participate. These participating students also were able to successfully integrate into the social system of the university, had increased ability to cope with challenges, and were able to establish relationships with faculty.
Research has shown the correlation between extracurricular activities and academic achievement. McNair Scholar Maria Meza (California State University, Sacramento, 2009) made a comparison between students in the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) and those not associated with this program. Meza’s research showed that CAMP students had a higher rate of participation in extracurricular activities and also had higher GPAs on average than the rest of the Latino students at California State University, Sacramento. A majority of these students who explained that they participated in extracurricular activities also said that participating in those activities had a positive impact on their academic success. Students believed that the extracurricular activities helped with time management and kept them focused in order to keep participating (Meza 2009).

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

As the literature review has shown, African American college graduation and retention rates are alarmingly low. Factors such as social engagement, student involvement, and academic motivation influence academic achievement for African American students. The data collected in the present study will be used to examine whether or not African American university students who participate in extracurricular activities are more academically successful compared to those who do not.

**HYPOTHESIS**

The hypothesis being investigated in this study is: Will extracurricular activities help the retention and persistence of African American students at California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State).

**METHOD**

A qualitative approach that employs semi-structured interviewing was used to gain a better understanding of the experiences of African American students’ participation in extracurricular activities. The interview also was used to compare the students’ feelings of belonging and academic motivation.

**Qualitative Interview: Process and Selection**

The researcher gained approval from the Sacramento State Psychology Department to conduct the research. This study included 15 African American male students enrolled at Sacramento State during the 2009-2010 school year. The 15 students who participated in this study were volunteers who willingly participated in the interview. The recruitment process was as follows: 1) The researcher contacted the student via email. 2) The student
voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. 3) The researcher then proceeded to conduct the interview.

**Participants**
Of the 15 African American participants students, 4 students began attending Sacramento State in the fall of 2006, 6 began attending in the fall of 2007, 4 began attending in the fall of 2008, and 1 began attending in the fall of 2009.

**Qualitative Method**
The qualitative analysis used in this study examined the individual experiences of the African American students in regard to their extracurricular activities. This method was used to examine the students’ feelings of belonging to the university and academic motivation based on how extracurricular activities affect the two items from the participants’ perspective. Extracurricular activities can include student clubs/organizations, student government positions, and collegiate athletics for this study. The students who confirmed they participated in extracurricular activities were asked questions during the interview (Appendix A). The answers to these questions illustrate the ways in which extracurricular activities can be beneficial to African American students’ sense of belonging and academic motivation. The students who confirmed that they did not participate in extracurricular activities were asked a different set of questions during the interview (Appendix B). This set of questions illustrates factors that prevent students from participating in extracurricular activities.

The analysis employed in this study focused on themes generated from the interviews with the 15 participants. The researcher digitally recorded the interviews and also took notes in order to make sure nothing important was omitted. The researcher listened to the recordings, transcribed them, and then attempted to identify themes consistent across the interviews, which were then explored in greater depth.

**RESULTS**
Interviews were conducted in the University Union on the Sacramento State campus on May 17 and May 18, 2010. Figure 1 shows participant responses to the interview questions. The dark bar on the graph represents the ‘yes’ answers and the light bar represents the ‘no’ answers.
Figure 1. Participant responses to interview questions

Figure 2 shows the results for the interview questions that the students were asked about their representation at Sacramento State. Participants were asked to rate the level of representation they felt at the university on a scale from one to ten. The results show that the participants generally feel underrepresented at Sacramento State.

Figure 2. Level of representation felt by participants on their college campus
QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The following are the results of the interviews conducted in this research.

Motivation

When interview participants were asked if they participated in extracurricular activities as defined by the researcher during the interview, participants who answered ‘yes’ were asked a series of open-ended questions, including: Why did you decide to get involved in the activity you are involved, and how does the activity make you feel? Open-ended questions such as this were the most important questions in the study. In general, interview participants answered that extracurricular activities allow them to be more involved in campus life. The following is an example of what was shared by one of the interview participants:

Being a student wasn’t enough. To feel more involved and get the full college experience I feel like you need to join a club or organization on campus. Being in the clubs and orgs that I am in makes me feel like I am a part of something. Being involved has given me responsibility and purpose.

This statement illustrates how involvement in extracurricular activities has increased the participant’s motivation to be involved. It also illustrates that the student has gained a purpose or reason to remain at the university due to social support. The student reported feeling a part of the campus community, and does not feel marginalized as reported in other studies of students who do not succeed.

Another student reported similar positive feelings about participating in extracurricular activities:

I got into PRSSA (Public Relations Student Society of America) to make connections for the future. One of my favorite teachers is the coordinator of this club. He has already given me letters of recommendation for the internships I’m going to start this summer. My mom told me it is not what you know all the time, but who you know also.

This statement illustrates that the student has a positive relationship with a faculty member, which has helped during his time at the university. One of the factors that promote academic success and a sense of belonging is positive faculty relationships. Without participating in this club, the participant's college experience may not have turned out as well as he indicates.
Another participant had this to say about his participation in extracurricular activities:

*My grades have actually gotten better since I have joined this organization. Most of my friends are in the same org and they always keep me on my P’s and Q’s….. I always have somebody to keep me headed in the right direction.*

Positive peer relationships have been helpful to this participant. The participant indicated that he would not have had the same success had he not been a part of this student organization. This response illustrates the positive affect extracurricular activities can have on a college student.

These interview excerpts are the most representative of how most participants responded to questions about their college experience and extracurricular activities. These excerpts suggest that engagement in extracurricular activities makes African American students feel more involved in their campus community. They also show how a sense of belonging can lead to academic motivation. These finding are similar to what previous studies on extracurricular activities have shown.

**Grades/Graduation**

Students who participated in extracurricular activities were also asked the following questions that pertained to their academics: Have your grades changed since you began your extracurricular activity? If your grades have changed, in what way have they changed? Some participants reported that their grades stayed the same and others reported that their grades had improved since they joined their club or organization, but none of the students reported that their grades dropped after they joined their club or organization. This finding is congruent with previous studies that show participation in extracurricular activities help students achieve academic success.

Interview participants were asked if they felt they would graduate from college. In general, the participants strongly felt that they would be successful and graduate from Sacramento State. When asked why he felt he would graduate from Sacramento State, one of the interview participants said:

*Yes, I have come this far and I can’t stop now. At first I wasn’t sure, but then in talking to fellow students and being around people who go through the same things I do, I started believing in myself a little more, you know?*

This statement is an example of how cultural congruity has a positive influence on a student’s college experience. Because the participant is
seeing success, the participant believes in success. With the graduation and retention rates of African American male college students being very low, seeing examples of success does not happen on a large scale for this group. Through participation in extracurricular activities and seeing others succeed, this particular participant gained the motivation to succeed.

When asked the same question, another participant had a similar response, saying:

\begin{quote}
I actually already put in my petition to graduate in spring 2011. 
I feel like I came to college with a goal, and I told myself I wasn’t leaving until I accomplished that goal.
\end{quote}

This participant came into college with a clearly defined goal. Studies have shown that clearly defined goals help students achieve academic success. Studies have also shown that it is sometimes hard to achieve these goals if a student does not feel these goals are obtainable. However, this participant is involved in a student organization that has helped him achieve his goal.

In general, the participants in this study reported feeling like they were going to graduate from college. Previous studies have shown that students with a sense of belonging and motivation have more success in college, and the findings in the present study are similar.

All of the participants except one were involved in extracurricular activities. When asked why he did not participate in any extracurricular activities, the participant explained that he worked full time. The participant also explained that he could not financially afford to not work and that he did not have the time to participate in extracurricular activities. When asked if he felt he would graduate, the participant was very positive in stating that he felt that he would graduate.

**ANALYSIS**

The findings gleaned from this study suggest that the participants had positive feelings about their college experiences. This includes the student who did not participate in extracurricular activities, yet reported that he had positive feelings about his college experience. Students who were involved on campus shared their experiences about extracurricular activities and how those activities impacted their lives.

The interviews furthermore suggest that the students who participated in extracurricular activities felt more involved in their campus community, even though they generally felt underrepresented at Sacramento State. Through their involvement in extracurricular activities, participants gained a sense of
belonging in an environment in which they felt they were underrepresented. Participants have stayed in school and report having strong ambitions to graduate from Sacramento State. Previous studies (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Durkheim 1951) have shown that a sense of belonging is a major factor in retention at universities, similar to the finding in the present study.

Many of the students shared that they were encouraged by their involvement in extracurricular activities and remained successful academically. Participants shared that they met friends in their clubs and organizations who shared similar life experiences and goals. Having people around them who shared the same goals motivated the participants to achieve their goals. Some participants reported that their grades remained steady and others reported that their grades rose after they started participating in extracurricular activities; however, none of the participants reported that their grades dropped. Previous studies have shown that students who participate in extracurricular activities typically have academic success, and the present study had similar results (Meza 2009).

It is important to note that one participant who did not participate in extracurricular activities did well in school despite not being very involved in campus life. During the interview the participant revealed that he had siblings in college and his parents went to college as well. The participant had role models at home who provided examples of success, which helped the student throughout his time in college. This participant had support at home that many of the other participants did not.

LIMITATIONS

The study provided several noteworthy findings. However, it also has several limitations in its examination of college experiences among African Americans. One limitation in the present study is that it is based on a single campus using a small sample. Because the sample for this study is small, the findings would be difficult to compare with student experiences from other universities. Therefore, the results should be viewed with caution. For example, the research done in this study cannot be applied at historically black universities because the feelings of marginalization and the lack of a sense of belonging may not be the same at such universities because the majority of students there are African American as well. Another limitation involves the role of social class and other variables not included in this study but that have been shown to play a role in college experiences. As in the example of the participant who had family members who helped him through college, factors not measured in this study such as socioeconomic
status, educational background, and other personal issues could play a role in academic success for African American college students at Sacramento State.

FUTURE RESEARCH
At the very least, the present study contributes to the growing number of studies that examine African American college experience. Interest in the topic of extracurricular activities and retention in African American male students could lead to further research on the experiences of African American female students. It is necessary to include African American female students in order to see if extracurricular activities benefit all African American college students or if there are other factors that contribute to retention for males versus females. It is also necessary to do similar research at the high school level to see if participation in extracurricular activities plays a role in academic success in young children. If we can reduce feelings of marginalization and the lack of a sense of belonging for young students before they enter college, they might have greater academic success overall.

If students at the K-12 levels of education have a means to greater success, it may help retention in the future when they do attend college. Involvement in extracurricular activities at a young age may also help these young students be motivated to go to school at a young age.

This research could also be applied to other minorities to see if they face similar problems or perhaps different ones with retention and graduation rates. This research shows that African Americans generally feel underrepresented at Sacramento State. This study can be used to see if other minorities feel the same way. If they do, then they might have the same feelings of marginalization and lack a sense of belonging similar to African American males at Sacramento State.

The findings in this study can also lead researchers to do future research on other factors that contribute to retention and academic success in African American college students. Studies on life at home, financial status, positive role models, and other forms of engagement should be considered to determine which factors play a role in the African American college experience. All of the participants in this study reported feelings of underrepresentation at Sacramento State; the present results contribute to prior research in this area that shows these feelings of underrepresentation exist on many campuses in the US.
CONCLUSION

The present study shows that African American students participate in extracurricular activities and their participation benefits their college experience at Sacramento State. Based on the interviews with the participants, the analysis shows that participation in extracurricular activities builds a sense of belonging to the student's campus and increases motivation to succeed academically. These results are important to help African American retention and graduation rates increase. The findings of the present study could influence African Americans to get involved on their campuses to combat feelings of underrepresentation at their institutions. The results from this study can also lead to school administrators doing something to change the demographics at institutes of higher education to combat negative feelings toward campus climates.

Based on the results of this study, the researcher recommends African American students at Sacramento State increase their engagement in extracurricular activities to gain a sense of belonging to their university, which in turn can motivate their academic experience. Involvement in extracurricular activities can help student retention, create academic motivation, and help students with their grades.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS FOR THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Name:
Age:
Year:
Major:
Do you receive financial aid?
Did your parents attend college?
Do you have siblings?
Did any of your siblings go to college? If so, are any of your siblings still in college?
Do you feel like you are underrepresented at Sacramento State?
   Rate on a scale from 1-10 the level of representation on campus
Do you participate in any extracurricular activities? If so, what is it?
Why did you decide to get involved in the activity you are involved?
How does the activity make you feel?
Does the extracurricular activity have grade requirements? If so, what is it?
Did you meet any friends while participating in your extracurricular activities?
Does your extracurricular activity make you feel involved at Sacramento State?
Have your grades changed since you began your extracurricular activity? If so, in what way?
Do you feel like you will graduate from Sacramento State? Why?
APPENDIX B: QUESTION FOR THOSE WHO DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Name:
Age:
Year:
Major:
Do you receive financial aid?
Did your parents attend college?
Do you have siblings?
Did any of your siblings go to college? If so, are any of your siblings still in college?
Do you feel like you are underrepresented at Sacramento State?
   a. Rate on a scale from 1-10 the level of representation on campus
Is there a reason why you don’t participate in extracurricular activities?
Do you feel like you will graduate from Sacramento State? Why?