

**FORMER MINORITY STUDENT'S PERCEPTIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM FROM
ATLANTA K-12 PRIVATE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Faculty of Argosy University, Atlanta Campus
In Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

by

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September, 2014

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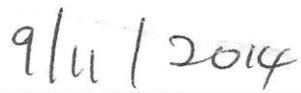
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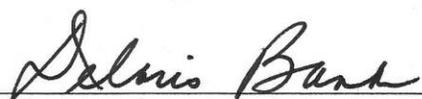
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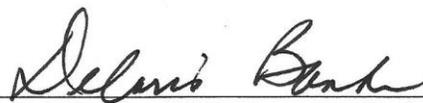
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ABSTRACT

The underrepresentation of minorities in schools has been predicted to be extremely detrimental to a person's long-term social mobility (Carter, 2006). Research revealed that school environments had tremendous influence on the development of adolescent self-esteem, influencing a student's academic experience and self-esteem during developmental stages (Connor, Poyrazli, Ferrer-Wreder, & Grahame, 2004). Therefore, the purpose of this quantitative survey research methods study was to investigate perceptions of self-esteem between two minority groups. Through iChange Collaborative Summer Diversity Institute, 105 former Latino(a) and African American students, of predominantly white Atlanta based K-12 private schools, electronically completed the State Self-esteem Likert scale survey to rate their performance and their social and appearance self-esteem. The results of this study from testing all four hypotheses revealed there was no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of these two groups. Concluding, despite ethnic group differences, that the private school experience that minority students were exposed to in a tradition predominantly white environment possibly had similar impact on minority students, influencing the minority perception of self-esteem. The researcher recommends a qualitative version of this study as well as other topics related to the private school experiences of these two groups; the exploration of the perceptions of Latina and African American females in other areas of private education and the minority student private school experience on the impact of higher education experiences of minority students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the iChange Collaborative Summer Diversity Institute for establishing the mission and goal of changing the way the educational field views the topic of diversity. Through your organization, you have set a standard, placed a value on this topic, and have made others aware that there is much work to be done. By challenging a few students, teachers, and administrators at a time to be transparent, many have learned from your work that being honest and fearless will continue to make a huge difference in the educational experience of all students.

The inspiration for this study was my personal journey as a product of an independent school. I would like to acknowledge those who have contributed to my independent school experience during K-12 and as an adult. The experience which you have afforded me has provided unforeseen challenges, taught me about myself, and has taught me about my place in this world, in order to effectively make a difference in the lives of others and to confidently know that I am powerful enough to implement change.

I would also like to finally acknowledge those who find themselves in the minority. Your experience is a unique journey of strength building. Strength is not measured by numbers nor by the challenges that find you. Strength is measured by the determination you find in order to survive and overcome those challenges and exceed your own expectations. Know that there are many who support you.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to those who have supported me along this journey, including the family, friends, and loved ones who unwaveringly stand by my side, as well as those who will always be in my heart. You might not have fully understood every step of this path, yet you offered just the right words of encouragement and an overwhelming amount of love and prayers.

I would like to especially dedicate this work to my parents, Roy and Earlene Stewart, and my sister and brother, Royshelle and Terry Burr, who have never questioned my bold decision to further pursue this degree. You have given me the gifts of unconditional love, patience, and peace that are invaluable and that I will treasure forever. Mommy and Daddy, you have been my inspiration to take on this challenge as you have raised me to believe that I can do absolutely anything. Having you witness the fruits of your labor is my honor and privilege. This journey has been made possible because of the faith which you have instilled in me. You remind me that even when we do not fully understand every step you must maintain your faith and remember that God is the author and the finisher.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

School enrollment in the United States has experienced the impact of racial diversity (Orfield & Lee, 2007). Despite this trend in the changing presence of minority students, there has continued to be an underrepresentation of minorities in many educational communities. There are issues that have been identified concerning the underrepresentation of these minorities (Carter, 2006). Studies have proven that positive student outcomes, especially among minority students, derive from positive racial experiences, which can come from interactions with other students, faculty, and staff of diverse backgrounds (Hurtado Albir, 2001).

According to Chung et al. (2013), Rutter (1996) explained that self-esteem development actively takes place during the transition to adolescence, which is typically identified as the age that children go to middle school. During this age especially, self-esteem can be influenced by the instability and uncertainty that can come from turning points, events, and transitions in a person's life. The authors of the journal, *The Relation of Age, Gender, Ethnicity, and Risk Behavior to Self-Esteem Among students in Nonmainstream Schools*, made reference to Chubb, Fertman, and Ross (1997), relating that the school environment had a tremendous influence on the development of adolescent self-esteem. Therefore, concluding that a lack of positive interactions within this type of nurturing environment could influence, not only a student's academic experience, but also have some impact on a student's self-esteem during its developmental stages (Connor, Poyrazli, Ferrer-Wreder, & Grahame, 2004).

Previous studies have explored the general correlations between racial and ethnic diversity and its impact on the educational experiences of minority students in

predominantly white schools. Some of the evidence of this impact was reflected in the overall academic achievement of minority students (Harper & Tuckman, 2006).

According to their study of racial identity, beliefs, and academic achievement, Harper and Tuckman (2006) concluded that the perceptions of race and racial identity of minority students in schools was strongly related to how the students performed academically.

Issues, which were stimulated by disproportionate numbers of minority students in schools, created some consequences that are seen throughout the K-12 experience. However, these issues often extended beyond the 12th grade. Carter (2006) made reference to the research of Keller (2001), as well as Pascarella and Terenzini (1997), that there were a growing number of students of color in grades K-12 who, although had pursued higher education, were not graduating from college. This raised the question of what the underlying issues were for minority students in predominantly white educational settings.

The underrepresentation of minorities in schools, as well as that of other groups, has been predicted to be extremely detrimental to the impact of a person's long-term social mobility (Carter, 2006). Based upon the concepts of self-esteem development, the continued underrepresentation of minorities in Atlanta K-12 private schools has raised concerns that might have a negative influence on the perceptions of self-esteem which former minority students have of themselves. The overall lack of diversity within institutions raises the question of how schools prepare for this demographic transformation of students (Orfield & Lee, 2007).

Within the past thirty years there has been evidence of an increase in racial and ethnic minority students across the entire United States educational system (Snyder & Dillow, 2012). Despite the increase of racial diversity in school enrollment, students from minority racial groups perceived barriers to their K-12 educational experience (Ruggs & Hebl, 2012). One of these barriers was the relationship between the racial makeup of teachers and the impact that one's racial ethnicity has on the educational experiences of minority students (Frankenberg & Seigel-Hawley, 2008). Researchers predicted that the lack of diversity among teachers in institutions would impact the educational experience of minority students tremendously (Davis, 2012). The perceptions of these students, as it pertained to their experiences, resulted from how students had felt they were treated as a result of their race, as well as students who felt as though their teachers lacked understanding of them and their culture (Ruggs & Hebl, 2012).

Background

The underrepresentation of minorities in education has been in existence since before the Brown vs. Board of Education ruling (Torres, Santos, Peck, & Cortes, 2004). The importance of racial diversity in educational settings has been a reoccurring topic due to the fact that, statistically, the demographic makeup for some institutions has not changed, but remained minimally diverse for both the student body and the faculty and staff of these schools. Despite any increase in the recruitment of minority students, the diversity of the faculty and staff has remained almost unprogressive (Orfield & Lee, 2007).

Most recently, according to the Proximity Private School Ranking Table for

Atlanta, Georgia, the average percentage of African American students who attended metropolitan Atlanta schools was approximately 25%, whereas the percentage of Latino(a) students who attended metropolitan Atlanta schools was approximately seven percent. These percentages were the average from approximately 70 Atlanta private schools, including segregated, non-segregated, religious, and non-religious schools (2014). Several studies have explored the issues centered around the lack of diversity in the educational system, focusing on the performance of minority students in predominantly white settings. The assumption has been that minority students have had a challenging time in these particular settings and were not as successful in comparison to the white majority group due to their feelings of inadequacies, lack of resources, and their inability to compete. Furthermore, the challenges that minority students have faced extended beyond the K-12 ages. These issues continued in predominantly white higher educational settings and created long term issues for these students.

In exploring the subject of minority students and providing a more productive learning environment for their success, many researchers supported the theory that the lack of minority instructors was significantly responsible for the issues that minority students faced. Several years ago, The National Education Association (NEA) began to pay attention to the shortage of minority instructors and the general impact that the shortage had on the educational field. The findings were alarming, as the United States Department of Education predicted that, in the near future, only five percent of instructors might be of a minority, despite the fact that the student minority population will increase to 40%. Gerald N. Tirozzi, Director of the National Association for Secondary School Principals, believed that this concern was great (Dunne, 2006).

Furthermore, Tirozzi believed that minority teachers were extremely necessary and that the problems which minority students experienced throughout their academic careers were only going to worsen without intervention to remedy the problem. Additionally, he believed that it was important for all schools to represent the diversity in their communities in order for students to have a well-rounded understanding and positive learning experience (Dunne, 2006).

Some studies were able to directly recount the feelings towards the self-esteem of minority students who experienced learning in predominantly white educational settings, whether in public educational settings or higher educational institutions. In private school settings, studies have explored the academic performance that minority students who came from predominantly white schools have displayed. Through test scores and academic achievement, the interpretation was that minority students generally faced challenges due to the inadequacies felt as a result of issues that stemmed from being a minority student. Through pupil assessment, schools could self-evaluate resources and curriculum in order to better service their students of color. Beyond the immediate needs of resolving the issues that minority students faced in K-12 settings, being able to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of the experiences of minority students might also help bring clarity to the shortage of minority students in Ivy League colleges as well (Fryer, 2006). Schools can determine what issues, if any, are not being addressed, as well as what demands are not being met, as the populations of such minority groups have increased over the past few years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research was based on two theories: the social identity theory and the identity theory. It has been concluded from previous studies that there is not a theory for self-esteem. However, these two theories did come fairly close to exploring the topic at hand. According to Cast and Burke (2002), self-esteem was produced, in part, by how individuals viewed themselves, but also how they viewed themselves in comparison to other groups through the relationships that were formed.

The social identity theory primarily studied the topic concerning the distinction of groups, including how people categorized, identified, and saw themselves in comparison to other groups (Tajfel, 1981). Hinkle and Brown (1990) believed that there were taxonomies of cultures and individuals as a result of two categories: individualism/collectivism and autonomous/relational. The first concept was developed by Hofstede and Triandis. What was discovered was that individualism and collectivism were orthogonal constructs. Furthermore, “cultural syndrome” was described as the following: a) self-inter-dependence, when people perceive themselves according to the group they are a part of (family, relatives and geographically); b) coherence between individuals and collectives which mean that, if incoherence exists, collective aims prevail; c) collectivistic cultures are guided by norms and obligations; and d) relationships are maintained independently as a result of personal advantages. Additionally, “cultural syndrome” is defined as a) self-independence, b) prevalence of personal over communal aims, c) behaviors are guided by what is right rather than what must be done, and d) relationships are maintained with the expectation of benefits

(Capozza, Voci, & Licciardello, 2000).

According to researcher Henri Tajfel, in his study on social factors and perceptions, the social identity theory was based on the study of group relations, group processes, and social self (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). The premise of this theory was that there was a specific social category in which one felt comfortable identifying with and felt they needed to belong to. This provided a definition of who this person was in terms of the defining characteristics of this category. Self-definition has been considered a major factor in self-concept (Hogg et al., 1995). The social identity theory supported the idea that an individual had knowledge of the fact that he or she belonged to a specific social group. More specifically, a social group was defined as a group of individuals who had a common social identification and viewed themselves as members of the same social group (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Identity theory was the explanation of social behavior as it pertained to self-identity through the process of defining self in the midst of society (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), which is derived from two other concepts. The first concept was to better understand how identities were formulated and how those identities worked (Ferguson, 1792). The second concept was to better understand the purpose and the goals designated for the conceptualized identities (Powers, 1973). The identity theory played a very important role in how people viewed themselves through categorization. The principle of the identity theory was that individuals had expectations of certain roles and explanations as to what certain roles were defined as, which later determined how they then identified with those assumed roles (Burke & Tully, 1977; Thoits, 1986).

According to Jan Stets and Peter Burke (2000), the identity theory dealt with the

components and roles of social structure, where social identity theory looked more at how individuals saw themselves in relation to those roles. In this theory, self-categorization was just as important to how a person processed the formation of their own identity. One of the main focuses of this theory was the categorization process. During the age of adolescence, there was great emphasis on understanding what each role meant and what the expectations of what the particular role chosen would be.

Authors Hogg et al. (1995), compared both of these theories to one another and their relationships to the development of the perceptions that people had of themselves. Social identity theory and identity theory are considered to be very similar. However, they have been viewed very differently in regards to how individuals have perceived and formulated structured opinions of themselves, particularly of themselves as it has related to others. The identity theory looked more at the personal roles, feelings, and behaviors of individuals, whereas the social identity theory looked at how individuals viewed themselves within their groups or socially. Together, these theories have complemented one another and the development process that has existed within a person as they have collectively incorporated how social structure has influenced perceptions and the behaviors of the individual.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this quantitative research method study was to explore how former Latino(a) and African American students who had previously attended predominantly white Atlanta, Georgia based K-12 independent schools, perceived their self-esteem in comparison to one another. This comparison included performance self-esteem, social self-esteem, and appearance self-esteem. There have been minimal studies conducted

that have compared the perceptions of Latino(a) individuals to those of African American individuals, specifically in this particular setting. Very few studies have explored how being the product of a private institution may have impacted the way these two groups view themselves. Therefore, this study sought to fill this gap with the support of numerical data from the State Self-Esteem Scale Survey, which summarized the perceptions of these two groups. The identity theory (IT) and the social identity theory (SIT) supported the theoretical framework and research for this study.

Research Questions

1. Do the perceptions of “performance self-esteem” differ between former African American and former Latino(a) students from Atlanta K-12 private schools?
2. Do the perceptions of “social self-esteem” differ between former African American and former Latino(a) students from Atlanta K-12 private schools?
3. Do the perceptions of “appearance self-esteem” differ between former African American and former Latino(a) students from Atlanta K-12 private schools?
4. Do the perceptions of overall self-esteem (including performance, social and appearance) differ between former African American and former Latino(a) students from Atlanta K-12 private schools?

Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools regarding how they rate their “performance self-esteem.”

H_a1: There is a significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools regarding how they rate their

“performance self-esteem.”

H₀2: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools regarding how they rate their “social self-esteem.”

H_a2: There is a significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools regarding how they rate their “social self-esteem.”

H₀3: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools regarding how they rate their “appearance self-esteem.”

H_a3: There is a significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools regarding how they rate their “appearance self-esteem.”

H₀4: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools regarding how they rate their “overall self-esteem.”

H_a4: There is a significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools regarding how they rate their “overall self-esteem.”

Significance of Study

The significance of this study was that there were benefits for all stakeholders involved including students, parents, schools, faculty, and staff. The research revealed that minority students associated with different ethnic groups do share similar perceptions

regarding self-esteem. This may extend to other areas of concern as well. This study adds to the body of the literature review by proving that perhaps there are more general solutions in problem solving the challenges that accompany the underrepresentation of minority students in an effort to meet the needs of multiple minority groups. The benefit to students and parents is the supporting evidence that this study provided ensuring that single minority groups are not facing challenges alone; however, they are experiencing similarities with other minority groups. The benefit to schools, including the faculty and staff, was knowing that efforts for diversity in their schools can have multiple impact and influence that supports more than just a single ethnic group, signifying that a continued positive campus climate can reap positive outcomes for multiple ethnic groups.

The United States has been known for becoming increasingly diverse recently. This appeared more evidently within the educational field. This study identified the perceptions of overall performance, as well as social and appearance self-esteem of those who had spent a part or all of their academic careers in predominantly white settings. Furthermore, this research took a closer look at the relationship between former Latino(a) and African American students and whether they rated and viewed their self-esteem similarly, additionally determining whether their experiences were, in fact, similar.

For current and former students, the significance of this study is the revelation that the experiences faced were not necessarily unique to one particular ethnic group. The significance of knowing this is that some challenges might be associated less with one particular ethnic group. Furthermore, the result could be that minorities will feel less isolated and negatively labeled. Taking a closer look at the potential issues that come with the topic of racial diversity was imperative. Failure to do so is an issue in and of

itself (Gurin & Nagda, 2006). There have been very few studies previously conducted that have explored the perceptions of former minority students with Atlanta K-12 private school experiences. This study explored the topic of self-esteem development for Latino(a) and African American students, including the documented experiences, history, and concerns that private institutions have reported, in an effort to determine the correlation between these groups.

Limitations

Limitations for this study included possible feelings intimidation regarding the sensitive topic of racial identity. Additionally, there could have been a level of discomfort in answering questions related to the topic of how an individual viewed their own self-esteem, in the event that a person's views were negative and not easy to reflect on. In reference to the survey instrument, such limitations included whether the questions were specific yet broad enough for participants to display their perceptions. They survey also measured different types of self-esteem as opposed to focusing on one type. Therefore, the survey was designed to cover several topics which limited the number of questions that catered to one specific area.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study included the following regarding participants: former student participants were to have been high school graduates for at least three months. Participants did not necessarily graduate from a private institution, however, must have spent part of their academic career in a K-12 Atlanta private school. Participants also must have a high school diploma. Participants resided in the city of Atlanta, or in the state of Georgia, for at least part of their lives.

Terms and Definitions

African American - Citizens or residents of the United States who have at least partial ancestry from any of the native populations of Sub-Saharan African (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

Appearance self-esteem - Refers to how people view their bodies. It includes athletic ability, body image, and physical feelings and stereotypes about race and ethnicity (Hetherington & Wyland, 2014).

Diversity - Recognizing and appreciating the variety of characteristics that make individuals unique in an atmosphere that promotes and celebrates individual and collective achievement (Landson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Ethnicity - Classification of one who belongs to a group that has similar national or cultural traditions (Edwards & Schmidt, 2006).

Latino(a) - The U.S. Government has defined Hispanic or Latino persons as "persons who traces their origin to Central and South America, as well as other Spanish cultures" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013).

Minority - A group that is different racially, politically, and otherwise from a larger group of which it is a part. More specifically, any group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society, in which they potentially live, for differential and unequal treatment (Open Stax College, 2012).

Performance self-esteem - Reference to an individual's sense of competence, including intellectual abilities, school performance, self-regulatory capacities, self-confidence, efficacy, and agency. People who are high in performance self-esteem believe that they are smart and capable (Heatherton & Wyland, 2014).

Private Institution - An institution under the financial and managerial control of a private body or charitable trust, or otherwise known as independent (Kennedy, 2008). Also, private institutions can sometimes be identified as charter schools or non-mainstream schools (Connor et al., 2004).

Self Esteem - An affection that gives a value or worth that we attach to our own self-assessments. It focuses more on how individuals feel about their strength and weakness capabilities (Vialle, Heaven, & Ciarrochi, 2005). Self-esteem is, basically, a student's overall evaluation of his or herself.

Social self-esteem - Refers to how people believe that others perceive them. Note that it is perception, rather than reality, that is most critical for self-esteem. If people believe that others value and respect them, they will experience high social self-esteem. People who are low in social self-esteem often experience social anxiety and high public self-consciousness (Heatherton & Wyland, 2014).

Overview

According to previous research, self-esteem development predominantly occurs during grades K-12. Most of the development has been proven to take place during middle school ages. Self-esteem development is cultivated by many factors, including the events that take place in one's life, and the interactions that a person experiences. This study determined whether individuals who identified with one of two racial groups comparatively perceived their self-esteem similarly or differently to one another, as a result of having the experiences of growing up as a minority student within predominantly white academic settings and being exposed to the obstacles and challenges that schools reportedly faced in regards to diversity efforts.

Chapter Two covers topics, including: the importance of diversity, the impact that the lack of diversity has had on stakeholders in education, and the experiences as a minority student in predominantly white schools as well as the ethnic specific challenges of those students. Additionally, this chapter incorporates the findings of previous research as it pertains to the social identity and the identity process. Chapter Three further lends details regarding the plan for the chosen quantitative research survey design. It reiterates the hypotheses and how they were to be tested and analyzed. This chapter explains the survey instrument and how each dependent variable was to be measured and finally offers the details for the procedures of how this study was to be executed.

CHAPTER TWO: THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provided a review of the research and the literature that was used throughout the completion of this study. The information presented by the researcher of this study included information on both the social identity theory and the identity theory. Additionally, this chapter included information regarding various views on diversity and education from stakeholders, including student, educator, and institutional perceptions. These perceptions reported the initiatives, challenges, and goals of schools for making their educational environments comfortable for minority students to succeed in, in spite of the underrepresentation of minorities. The goal of this chapter was to further research the perceptions of minority students in order to better understand how they viewed their own self-identity and self-esteem as members of the private school community. This was in an effort to better understand former students who, at some point, attended a K-12 predominantly white private school in Atlanta, Georgia. Using both the social identity theory and the identity theory for the theoretical framework allowed this study to not only focus on how participants potentially viewed themselves, but viewed themselves in comparison to other former minority students, as well as if there were any similarities between the perceptions that they felt. This meant taking a closer look at their experiences as a minority within a predominantly white private school setting. The social identity theory helped guide the research and findings, including how individuals who have had the experience of being a minority within an academic setting may have viewed themselves in comparison to other minority students and, as a result of the experiences in which they may have had, whether former students felt the same way about themselves.

The identity theory assisted in guiding the research and findings, including how

minority students generally viewed themselves in the midst of majority standards. Both theories guided this research by establishing a foundation for this study, in order to better understand the experiences of both former African American students and Latino American students. This chapter also explored the topics and concepts regarding ethnic, racial, and social identity and how independent schools have cultivated such environments for minority students. Furthermore, research on the impact of diversity in independent schools and the general issues that educational institutions have faced, and are still facing, regarding diversity in educational settings, was conducted. Additionally, this research explored the topic of diversity in education and what this meant for stakeholders, specifically, for current minority students and the long term impact that this had on these students post-graduation. Exploring findings of previous studies that have reviewed the topic of correlation between academic achievement and the self-esteem of current students, has helped support this study regarding how former students felt about themselves after having the experience of a private education.

Ethnic and Social Identity Process

Ethnic diversity has generally created challenges for existing social and educational hierarchies of citizenship; however, it has also lead to new social cohesion. It has been important to focus on the issues of social identity and intergroup relations. Social psychology produced many concepts, theories, and empirical findings concerning the issues that were central to debates on ethnic minority identity and the management of cultural diversity. For example, part of the rationale behind social identity theory was to analyze large-scale groups in which members were geographically dispersed (Verkuyten, 2004). It was possible to examine how ethnic identities were socially established and

negotiated, but also to ask what belonging to an ethnic group felt like and what it meant. Social attributes were considered to have an indirect impact on self through the effects on the roles and positions that people have had in their environments, including how they are valued within their environments as well as how they interact with others in their social environments (Hogg et al., 1995). Society has played a very important role in formulating a person's identity. In this process, a person will develop a sense of self-meaning and self-value through the impact of social behavior (Hogg et al., 1995). Ethnic identity has been socially defined and constructed, but it has also provided a foundation for self-understanding and a source of positive or negative self-feelings.

Ethnic identity is a concept that was designed in order to provide a sense of identity and belonging to different groups that embrace likeminded people who share similar cultural routines, activities, and social knowledge and involvement (Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997). Ethnic identity was extremely significant for young people during their developmental stages (Erikson, 1968). After being able to culturally identify with a group, one could not only experience a sense of belonging, but could also experience the issues associated with belonging to a particular group (Phinney et al., 1997). Vasti Torres made reference in his study to Phinney's ethnic identity model, which was developed in 1993. Phinney created a model for ethnic identity that was inspired by research that he performed on multiple ethnic groups, which was comprised of three stages. The first stage focused on and was titled the Unexamined Ethnic Identity. Throughout this stage it was revealed that there is a deficit that exists regarding the general topic of ethnicity. This was when a person did not challenge the subject of ethnicity, nor did one try to be accepted by the majority as a representation of their

culture; however, they accepted the rules, values, attitudes and cultural habits that had been created by the majority. The second stage was referred to as Ethnic Identity Search. During this stage, an individual was faced with a scenario which coerced them to initiate an ethnic identity search. The third stage was Ethnic Identity Achievement, which was when an individual, through achievement, was able to feel a greater level of confidence in being a part of their ethnic group (2003).

Ethnic identity, which was considered to be a part of the identity theory, has a direct relationship to self-esteem. In the journal, *The Role of Ethnic Identity on Self-Esteem for Ethnic Minority Youth*, Toomey and Umana-Taylor (2012), indicated the ways in which ethnic identity correlates with self-esteem by way of: ethnic identity exploration, ethnic identity resolution and ethnic identity affirmation. Toomey and Umana-Taylor (2012) made the statement that having a clear sense of confidence in a person is ethnically directly reflective of how a person feels about his/herself. Toomey and Umana-Taylor (2012) further explains that adolescents who feel positive about their ethnicity are also reflective of how a person feels about his/herself.

In addition to parents, another factor that is important to the identity development of youth is the school context, which encompasses teacher-student interactions and peer relationships, as well as the overall school culture (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; Lannegrand-Willems & Bosma, 2006). Given that adolescent youth spend the majority of their day attending school or engaged in school-related activities (e.g., extracurricular activities), it was understandable to say that these interactions influenced identity-related processes.

Existing studies suggested that the interactions and experiences occurring within the school context may be of particular relevance to the identity of African American

youth and their subsequent achievement outcomes (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Robinson & Biran, 2006). As it is related specifically to racial socialization, schools may overtly and covertly indoctrinate race-related messages to African American youth. Surprisingly, very little has been known about schools functioning as a racial socialization agent. However, studies have suggested that the school setting was an important factor in African American students' global and academic self-views (Rowley, Cooper, & Clinton, 2005; Tatum, 2004). The structure and culture of a school may have influenced the manner in which these race-related messages were conveyed. This was particularly the case for African Americans in independent schools. Although there was some indication that race and class interacted in complex ways to impact the educational opportunities of African American students, fewer studies examined the experiences of African American youth from middle and upper class backgrounds (DeCuir-Gunby, Martin, & Cooper, 2011).

Experience of African Americans in White Schools

The underrepresentation of minority teachers and students has been an issue for many years. During the events of Brown vs. Board of Education, minorities were being transferred to predominantly white schools, while simultaneously; black teachers were transferred less often. There was no plan expedited in order to integrate the school faculties, administrations, or the staff, and consequently, black teachers and administrators were terminated or reduced in ranking while the schools hired white teachers and administrators to cope with the increase in the student population (Torres et al., 2004). Post desegregation, the amount of minority teachers was again reduced, especially after the ruling of Brown vs. Board of Education (Madkins, 2011).

Brown v. Board of Education was founded on scientific evidence that supported the act of desegregation, along with such cases as Gratz v. Bollinger. Gratz v. Bollinger established the importance of diversity within educational institutions, explaining further that students in diverse settings could learn from one another while, simultaneously, being exposed to and learning to appreciate the differences in opinions and perspectives. They also gained the experience of being able to work with others who did not share the same background, resulting in social justice for all (Gurin & Nagda, 2006).

At the University of California, a ban prohibiting race-conscious admission policies had recently taken place. Similar to other educational institutions, the school had found a challenge in enrolling minority students, as opposed to non-minority students. There was concern that this pattern also had an impact on the diversity of the school's faculty and staff. According to school records, the representation of minority faculty was only eight percent. On college campuses nationwide, the University Study Group discovered that faculty members that were minorities represented a very small number of the overall group. Berkeley University created a Strategic Plan for diversity in 2009, altering hiring policies for faculty in order to create a greater diverse population amongst faculty on campus (Berryhill, 2012).

According to Ingersoll and May (2011), the teaching force had become less diverse as the student body population had grown more diversified. The minority teacher issue was being associated with a civil rights concern, as the minority teacher shortage has been linked to the minority achievement gap. Minority teacher candidates typically faced barriers when they attempted to enter this profession. In 2009, statistics showed that the national minority population was 34%. Furthermore, 41% of national elementary

and middle school students were of a minority, yet just 16.5% of teachers were minorities (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Minority students in America have been subject to a lack of minority role models. With the lack of diversity in teachers, minority students were also deprived of educators who might understand cultural and racial similarities. Researchers have concluded that the lack of minority teachers may be partially responsible for the achievement gap issues that exist (Ingersoll & May, 2011).

Schools located in the United States revealed that the Black and Latino students made up approximately 65% of student bodies, whereas the groups of teachers were primarily Caucasian women. In the United States, there were more than three million schools at the time this research was conducted. Out of this number of schools, 17% of teachers were minorities. The shortage of black teachers was not a recent epidemic, as this decline began sometime during the 1970s. Although there have since been some political recruitment changes, the number of minority teachers has never been the same. When the minority teacher population declined, minority students who were in college had other professions of choice which they wanted to pursue. Fields which became more popular were included business, math, and other choices (Madkins, 2011).

In the study called *Increasing Faculty Diversity*, researchers explored the possibilities concerning why there was such a shortage of African American professors in universities in America. What their research discovered was that the shortage begins, not necessarily with the employment process, but while students are still in school. While students were still in school, there needed to be an increase of diversity amongst the student body, as well as an increase of interaction between minority faculty and minority students. There needed to be an increase in the amount of exposure of African American

students to teaching opportunities. Finally, African American students needed to develop a stronger commitment to academic success, which was more than likely a result of being encouraged by minority instructors (Barrett & Smith, 2008).

The American Association for School Personnel Administrators (AASPA) had acknowledged the need for a study to be conducted in order to better understand the need for minority teachers. The AASPA wanted to address the challenges posed by the minority teacher shortage. The AASPA had determined that there were many benefits to having more minority teachers in our schools, as they not only increased the level of cultural sensitivity, but also displayed cultural sensitivity and helped those students who needed to feel that they were not necessarily all alone. The American schools have become even more multicultural and multi-ethnic; however, the teaching force has reflected quite the opposite. Minority teachers are needed in all subjects, grades, and locations. History has revealed that teaching has been important for African Americans, who are in the minority at many schools. Ironically, the majority of African Americans who attended college had majored in education. The lack of minorities appeared to be a result of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case (Kearney-Gissendaner, 2010).

Teacher retention has been labeled a national problem and an even greater concern for the state of Georgia. African American and Hispanic students were once the fastest growing populations in the state of Georgia. A few years ago, the minority student population was reported to be approximately 37%, however, the percentage of minority teachers was only 5-10%. The small percentage of minority teachers has stemmed from a lack of academic preparation, the attraction to other professions, a lack of support in the teaching field for minority teachers, and a lack of cultural and social

support groups that have existed for minority teachers (Lau, Dandy, & Hoffman, 2007).

Some trends in demographics among schools in the United States supported the speculation that minority teachers desperately needed to be recruited. One reason this was imperative was because the students that were in the K-12 age range were becoming increasingly more diverse every year, while the number of minority teachers did not seem to increase. The level of diversity amongst students was not only increasing racially, but ethnically as well. Nearly 17% of students were speaking languages other than English in the homes that they were raised in. Since the early 1970s, when less than five percent of students were born outside of the United States, that percentage had more than doubled, displaying the rapid speed in which this country was growing in diversity (Bennett, McWhorter, & Kuykendall, 2006).

Author Stephen Reeves believes that one of the most challenging obstacles that private schools face in diversifying their faculty is not the desire to want to be more diverse, but to receive the support and resources necessary to fulfill this goal. Outside resources were limited in helping institutions during the recruitment process and did not try to understand what issues these schools were dealing with. Schools surely found the recruitment process challenging, especially when the goal was to recruit minority teachers. This is because there was an uncertainty concerning where and how to recruit quality teachers. Schools that sincerely want to increase the diversity of their staff and understand the significance of this recruitment, not only for their school but for their students as well, will have the appropriate support system, including a person who assumes the role of a Diversity Coordinator and solicitation of the support of the Headmaster (Kennedy, 2013).

Experience of Latinos in White Schools

Cavazos-Rehg and DeLucia-Waack (2009) conducted a quantitative study on the self-esteem of Latino(a) school-aged children. There were 150 Latino(a) participants enrolled in schools, including both bilingual and traditional educational programs. The goal of this study was to determine the influence that language had on the academic experiences and performance levels of Latino(a) students and, as well as how they viewed their self-esteem. The participants were gathered from Buffalo, New York, Boston, Massachusetts and Houston, Texas, and ranged from 7th to 12th grade. Researchers measured the self-esteem of these students by using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, as well as the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure. Both instruments included the Likert scale. The outcome of this study was that there was no statistically significant difference between the level of self-esteem of the Latino(a) students who attended a bilingual educational program versus those who attended a traditional educational program. Additionally, there was no difference in the way that each group identified with their ethnicity.

The research, which focuses on the topic of Latino students with K-12 predominantly white private school experience, is minimal. However, the study that Torres conducted focused on the experience and impact that ethnic identity had on Latino college students, concluding that there can be generalizations and assumptions that come from this study which can give insight to the experiences that Latino students in a K-12 setting might encounter. There has been a drastic increase in the population of Latino students entering United States educational institutions. According to Torres (2003), this is the growing trend of higher educational institutions as well. In the study of Latino

college students and the influence of ethnic identity, the researcher looked more deeply into the role that educational institutions play in the establishment of how students view themselves. Very few studies have explored the subject of Latino students and the processes of their identity development, paying close attention to the self-esteem of these students. The Department of Education has revealed that, of all of the Hispanics that attend school, the majority of them attend schools in which they represent the minority population.

Torres and Magolda (2004) conducted one of the few qualitative studies on the development of the ethnic identity of Latino(a) students. The purpose of this study was to better understand the experiences of Latino(a) students in order for stakeholders to better understand some of the issues that students in this group may face during their college years. What the researchers discovered is that there is a relationship between the way students view themselves and the impact in which their educational settings have on this development. The research included seven campuses, including campuses in which Latino(a) students represented the majority of the population, some campuses in which Latino(a) students were a part of a very diverse environment, and some campuses in which Latino(a) students were considered the minority population. There were 48 participants who were interviewed during the first year of this study and only 28 students during the second year. The results of this study included several themed perspectives, which were exhibited through interviews. Such perspectives included thoughts regarding personal insecurities centered on personal identity.

Campus Climates and Minority Students

Traditionally, it is more than likely that schools will support the positive self-esteem of students as they implement the right strategies to promote the positive self-esteem of students (Manning, 2007). In describing the characteristics of a positive and racially diverse campus climate, researchers Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2001) refer to the work of Carroll (1998), Guinier, Fine and Balin (1997), and Hurtado (1992) to include the following variables:

1. There is inclusion of the students, faculty and staff who are minorities;
2. Curriculum is present which includes minority experiences;
3. There are programs in place that encourage recruitment of minorities;
4. The organization has a mission to achieve diversity.

Researchers have determined that students gain far more during their academic careers if they are exposed to cross cultural interaction while in school. However, there have not been enough studies performed to determine the complex influence that teachers may have pertaining to the actual conducting of this interaction amongst students (Valentine, Prentice, Torres & Arellano, 2012). Many school districts have worked diligently to increase the amount of minority teachers and, whether the result of court orders or other reasons, aggressive recruitment of minority teachers has resulted in no change in the conditions of these schools (Madkins, 2011).

There is alarming concern for the lack of minority teachers within the school systems nationally. Some research concludes that the shortage is a cycle, which begins with the lack of academic success of minority students. The lack of academic success means that fewer minority students are eligible for the teaching field. However, the lack

of academic success is a possible result of the shortage of minority role models that could inspire the success of the students (Bireda & Chait, 2011). Professor, Dr. Kane, is supportive of the fact that the increase of black teachers in United States private institutions has improved by approximately nine percent, as opposed to four percent in the 1980s. However, he believes that schools should gage their diversity to reflect the diversity of America (Kennedy, 2013).

Teacher Diversity Matters, which is a study conducted by the Center for American Progress, concluded that there are high percentages of minority teachers who will more than likely find themselves employed in low-income city schools; however, there will also be a high turnover rate (Rokosa, 2011). The lack of diversity in teaching staffs within private schools in the United States has been a rising concern for the NAACP. Experts state that when diversity is limited in the classroom, especially with teachers, it can disrupt the educational success process. Students are deprived of varying perspectives, minority students are denied role models that represent them culturally, and students miss out on a group of quality instructors. If districts do not improve the hiring of teachers of diverse backgrounds, Carlos McCray states that some minority students could possibly relate better to teachers who share their same ethnicity (Davis, 2012).

Both college and K-12 campuses have spent most of their efforts in diversifying campuses to focus mainly on the student body. Now such campuses are taking a similar look at the diversity of their faculty and staff. Previous research has revealed that increasing the minority numbers of faculty members could provide what is desperately needed in order to positively impact the quality of education for students' needs in order to pursue academic achievement. Mentoring and minority support groups have shown

that there is a positive impact on such resources in the efforts of retaining students (Fujimoto, 2012).

In the case of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, the judge, Robert Potter ruled that public schools were extremely desegregated. The judge believed that schools should take a closer look at their institutions and their respective levels of diversity. Furthermore, he believed that schools should also be excused from having to be considerate of race when assigning students to schools (Wolters, 2009).

In the court case, Green and Swann, the court ruled that the schools should assign students by race in order to ensure that the student population was being diversified. The court determined that desegregation was not important in order to assume balance among the student body, but to reduce the issues of segregation that existed from the past court rulings. What researchers found was that children who attended a school that displayed racial balances within the institution felt more comfortable with peers of different races, as well as the confidence to achieve academically and, as a result, grew up with a desire to work in settings that were also racially diverse. A reflection of the desires of those who implemented such court rulings hopes for a diverse society with students who are educated in diverse schools, encouraging later work in a multicultural environment (Wolters, 2009).

Professor Robert Crain believed that there were many benefits to students who experienced diverse school settings. He believed that the benefits were not just limited to improved test scores and academic exposure. He also believed, specifically, black students who attended a high school which reflected healthy diversity would continue to be able to and desire to work in racially diverse settings. A racially diverse school

influences both minority and non-minority student to have the ability to interact with people from different walks of life. This means that these students are better prepared to work in many capacities and function in environments that are more racially diverse as well (Wolters, 2009).

Gurin and Nagda (2006) performed research on what kinds of diversity and racial interactions supported learning among minority students on college campuses. What this research has justified is that it supports the theory originally concluded years ago by researcher Allport in 1954, which is that is that diverse racial interactions produce more tolerant attitudes with one another as it diminishes prejudices and stereotypes. Initiatives for promoting campus diversity are important, however, these programs need to be guided by theory as well evaluated (Gurin & Nagda, 2006).

Rapidly changing demographics in organizations, including schools, should prompt leaders to engage in a vigorous, ongoing, and systematic process of professional development to prepare all educators in the school to function effectively in a highly diverse environment. Many educational leaders in diversely modified schools are working to transform themselves and their schools to serve all of their students, as well as the community (Howard, 2007).

Minority Instructors and Minority Student Self-Esteem

According to Susan Harter's Developmental Approach (1999), there is a powerful explanation for calculating self-worth. At each level of the development of adolescents, there is a level of important social support that includes classmate or other approval. The greater the support; the greater the self-worth, therefore, it is important to have this

support during the age of adolescence, the most important stage of self-esteem development.

There is proof that, where an individual can identify or connect with more roles and positions, or where an individual can connect a wider social structure with their smaller social network and find where they might fit in, they will have an increase of self-concept. This becomes positive reinforcement as one is then able to identify socially and develop and maintain social relationships (Hogg et al., 1955). It has been proven that there is a correlation between self-esteem and the academic achievement of students, according to educators (Vialle et al., 2005). Communities nationwide are advocating for the nation to recruit more minority teachers as a result of this finding, especially as it pertains to minority students. Although 17% of the students in K-12 Tennessee public schools are black, black teachers make up just eight percent of the profession. This study makes use of data from a study conducted in Tennessee, which was designed to produce higher quality information on this challenging topic. There is evidence that black students have the potential for learning more from black teachers, as well as white students from white teachers, which implies that the racial undercurrents within classes contribute to the racial gap in student performance in Tennessee (Dee, 2004).

United States Education Secretary Duncan's mission has been to find more black teachers, as studies have revealed that black teachers have an impact on the improved test scores for black children who spend at least a year with a black instructor. Duncan said that black teachers currently make up about eight percent of the total profession in the United States. In order to develop a strategy that could increase this number, he wanted

to hear from minority teachers regarding how they each felt about their profession (Reckdahl, 2010).

The impact of diversity amongst teachers and students has been seen by researchers as a positive experience, as this brings both teachers and students together when they more than likely have similar backgrounds socially, racially, and economically, or at least have some commonalities. Therefore, these types of interactions can increase the job satisfaction that an instructor might have as a result of such positive experiences and have a positive impact on the school environment as a whole.

Racial congruency is important to teachers and students when considering the level of job satisfaction. For example, Hispanic teachers who had a classroom that was predominantly filled with Asian students were reported to be less satisfied. Also, Black teachers who also had a classroom predominantly filled with Asian students appeared to be less satisfied as well. However, when both Hispanic and Black teachers had a classroom that was comprised of a majority of students with similar backgrounds, the rate of job satisfaction saw an increase. White teachers delivered similar results as well. When White teachers had a classroom comprised of students with whom they shared similar backgrounds, their level of job satisfaction increased compared to their rate of job satisfaction with classrooms that consisted of predominantly minority students. Very few studies have explored this theory on the level of job satisfaction as it relates to racial commonalities (Fairchild et al., 2012).

Although there may be a positive impact because of the increase of diversity among teachers, students, and the environment, researchers believe that there may be

some concerns, as well as adverse effects of increasing diversity. Creating a racially diverse environment could increase tension within the relationships between minority teachers and principals who are not minorities, and as a result, increase environmental tension. Therefore, this is the significance of a study that researches the rate of job satisfaction between white and black teachers in order to examine the impact of diversity in schools that suffer from higher teacher turnover rates (Fairchild et al., 2012).

According to Rokosa, increasing diversity amongst teachers is significant, as students benefit in a variety of ways, including improved academic performance, when they are instructed by teachers who look similar to them racially. Therefore, the importance of rectifying this matter is even more urgent (2011). Minorities have a greater challenge when it comes to accelerating academically as a result of having a lack of minority instructors who serve as their classroom inspiration for wanting to learn. The lack of academic stimulation and success results in some minority students lacking in the motivation to achieve academic goals, including advancing in their education be prepared for higher educational opportunities (Madkins, 2011).

A study conducted based on the students' perceptions of the satisfaction with their faculty's diversity tested both white and non-white students. There was a comparative analysis performed between both groups to determine what differences existed regarding the subject of their school's diverse staff, their levels of happiness regarding the amount of diversity amongst the staff, their opinions as to whether the level of faculty diversity was an important factor that contributed to their educational experience, and their perceptions that the faculty had a level of respect regarding the diversity of their students. The significance of diversity on campuses has been verified by previous researchers. It

has been discovered that racial diversity was found to relate to the reduction of the retention of students, the increase of confidence in students, and an increase in the satisfaction of students with their school experiences. Certain factors were relevant to this study, including the perceptions of the faculty in the context of the following: Was there any indication of cross cultural comfort, fair treatment, or faculty racism, as well as respect for other cultures and races. What was determined was that African American and Latino students were far more comfortable with racially similar faculty. Furthermore, African American and Asian students, in comparison to white students, had more perceptions or reports of unfavorable treatment. In general, minority students rated the diversity of the campus as less satisfactory than white students (Lee, 2010).

In the study comparing white and black teacher satisfaction with their jobs, researchers determined that the presence of minority teachers has a definite impact on the learning practices of minority students because minority teachers have the ability to persevere in classroom teaching. Additionally, the minority student body is on the rise annually, and minority teachers have had a positive influence on the learning process of minority students (Fairchild et al., 2012).

There has been a drastic increase in the number of teaching certification alternative programs in the United States. California, Texas, and New Jersey were the first states to implement such programs. After the year 2008, the rest of the United States then developed similar statewide programs in order to increase the number of teachers recruited. These alternative programs attracted many minorities with a desire to work in the teaching profession. These programs have also attracted older individuals as well as those who are in the process of changing their career paths (Madkins, 2011).

It is important for human resource departments within the school systems to be aware of the fact that potential minority teachers may be being groomed and prepared in their very own high schools. Training for future educators must begin while children are still in our very own schools (Kearney-Gissendaner, 2013). There are different opinions regarding the subject of alternative certification of teachers. Some believe that alternative certification is not the solution to the minority teacher shortage, as this allows for participants to be excused from taking some of the significant educational courses required in a traditional setting. Certification is imperative to guaranteeing a level of qualified instructors. However, there are questions regarding the intensity of the certification program. Although states will not eliminate traditional certification programs, these programs are on the rise in order to remedy the minority teacher shortage (Peterson & Nadler, 2009).

Some of the exams for aspiring teaching professionals have been characterized by as challenging for certain minority groups to successfully complete, resulting in reduced chances of becoming a teacher. The researcher has concluded that some students do not pass the PRAXIS exam as a result of stereotype assumptions. For example, there is a stereotype of women suggesting their inadequacy in math. Regarding African American students specifically, such testing issues are a result of the lack of intellectual preparedness for the traditional teaching exam (Bennett et al., 2006).

In Florida, they have been faced with a severe teacher shortage, specifically lacking minorities. The American Board of Certification of Teachers was initially created in order to find solutions to the teacher recruitment problems. The coalition, which is sponsored by the ABCTE, has recruited ample support during their movement

for recruitment. The coalition has focused on the importance of the children during this recruitment movement. The ABCTE is determined to focus on the recruiting, certifying, and support of teachers. This pursuit results from a need to abide by the No Child Left Behind Act and proactivity in meeting the needs of minority and non-minority children (The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education, 2006).

The Pathway to Teaching Careers Program is one of the many programs developed in order to recruit teachers of color into the teaching profession. The grant that was given to this program would recruit 3,000 minority teachers, who would teach 100,000 students. To help schools that were at risk of suffering from a teacher shortage, including a minority teacher shortage, the program specifically recruited individuals to fulfill the roles of teacher assistants, substitute teachers, and to help certify other teachers. Out of the first group of participants that were a part of the program, 105 of the students maintained a 2.98 GPA. Furthermore, 97 of the graduates were employed within Georgia schools, 95% of which were African American (Lau et al., 2007).

What the Pathway program discovered is that most programs that provide alternative teacher certification have the advantage of producing candidates who are mature and more than likely, have some exposure to classroom experiences and a level of well- rounded career experience and exposure. All of these benefits mean that the non-traditional programs have lower issue rates than some of the more traditional programs (Lau et al., 2007).

The Future Educators of America program in Georgia is another form of teacher recruitment enacted to diminish the shortage of educators in this workforce. The purpose of alternative certification programs is to quickly replace those who are leaving this

profession. Researchers have estimated that 2.7 million teachers were needed to fill vacant positions between the years of 1998 and 2009. The American Federation of Teachers has reported that 1,300 colleges generate an ample amount of teachers, however, only 3/10 actually enter into a classroom role (Swanson, 2011).

Several Georgia schools have developed certain types of “Grow Your Own” teacher programs, including Examining the Teaching Profession and Future Educators of America. One incentive which has been included is a potential scholarship to students who show an interest in the teaching profession (Swanson, 2011). Data shows that although alternative teacher recruitment and certification programs do increase the pool of qualified minority instructors, they do not address all of the issues facing the minority recruitment processes or the high minority teacher turnover rate that exists. Specifically, resolving the issues of recruitment and retention of minority male teachers has been a challenge, as minority males have the highest turnover rate (Ingersoll & May, 2011).

Kane believes that recruitment of minority students can be done easily by following a few steps. The first recommendation is that private institutions explore the untraditional methods of recruitment in order to attract minority teachers. These schools must work with colleges and universities where black students are being trained and educated in the teaching field. The second recommendation is that private schools recruit minority teachers, not because of their uniqueness and because they do not fit the traditional teacher mold, but because they can relate to part of the student population. The third recommendation is that private schools provide support groups and mentors for minority teachers so that the transition can be smooth and the teachers feel that they are wanted regardless of their race (Kennedy, 2013).

The American Promise

The article, *When Minority Students Attend Elite Private Schools*, which is inspired by the documentary, “American Promise,” discusses the issues that many parents of minority students face when they choose to send their children to predominantly white schools. Despite the challenges, the goal for these parents is to provide their children with better educational opportunities in an effort for them to excel in life (Ohikuaire 2013). The parents who were featured in this documentary discovered and realized that their efforts in providing their children with the best educational opportunities came with many challenges and issues that impacted their children both internally and externally, and in turn, could have had more of a negative impact on the self-esteem of their children than intended.

“American Promise” is a 12-year account of the experiences of two middle-class African-American boys who were accepted into a prestigious, predominantly white, New York City private school. The central perplexities here are summed up by a Dalton administrator who says that, at their school, African American girls perform averagely. Cheshire (2013), further describes the story driving this documentary, as the school is concerned that there seems to be a cultural disconnect between independent schools and African American students, suggesting an apparent higher rate of unsuccessful minority students. The school is concerned with why this is the outcome for these students, as the stakeholders involved in this story are searching for why this problem existed and what the school was doing wrong. What was assumed was that black students often do better academically among their peers than in situations where they feel isolated and constantly compared to more privileged classmates. When the Dalton School had set out on a

mission to recruit students of color, five year-old best friends Idris Brewster and Oluwaseun (Seun) Summers of Brooklyn were two of the gifted children who were admitted (Public Broadcasting System, 2014). The documentary depicts their story of being placed in a demanding environment that provided new opportunities and challenges, but little reflection of their cultural identities.

Throughout the following stories of these two young men, the audience can view the challenges that they both faced in balancing home and academic life, as well as how the transition from both settings impacted their self-esteem as they tried to find their place of acceptance. The challenges that they faced were centered on the struggles of maintaining high academic performance and being competitive with their peers. Additionally, they tried to seek social acceptance outside of the classroom from fellow peers. Finally, they are forced to search for acceptance as they experience the feeling of being and looking different from their peers.

The documentary, “American Promise” (2013), is a film that is based on the experiences of two African American students in a predominantly white private school. The documentary explored the experiences that these two students had, including discovering their social identity and its impact on their academic achievement and self-esteem. The documentary also explained, in general, the lack of diversity that the educational system still faces and how this impacts the experiences of minority students, more specifically African Americans. The challenges posed in this documentary do not just impact the students, but the families as well. The story is based out of a New York private school called the Dalton School, which was known for giving many opportunities to a variety of students with diverse backgrounds, including both race and ethnicity.

Interestingly enough, the mission of the Dalton school was to provide their community with something that other schools could not seem to promise - assurance that they would make their institution reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of New York. This was their promise to these two families, if in exchange, these families would commit to getting their children to this particular school.

The progression of this documentary took the audience from the very beginning of their academic careers in kindergarten to high school graduation, before going and into college. What the film concluded was that the children were going through many changes, especially because they were minority students, and their experience was extremely different from the average adolescent at their school. In finding difficulty as to where they fit in, they were influenced greatly in regard to their academic achievement.

Organizational Diversity and Student Self-Esteem

In the medical school setting, researchers have studied the racial and ethnic diversity within the institutions, as well as the student outcomes. Many institutions support the theory that a racially and ethnically diverse student body is a significant educational element necessary to be capable of meeting the needs of a diverse world. These researchers measured their diversity through the following methods. They first placed students in three separate groups based on their race, including the underrepresented minority, other minorities, and whites. Their study measured student diversity, compositional diversity, and interaction diversity. Compositional diversity represented the number of people that made up each category. Interactive diversity focused on the amount of times that students engaged in positive interaction with one

another. From these measurements, the researchers were able to determine exactly how diverse these institutions were (Saha, Guiton, Wimmers, & Wilkerson, 2008).

Author Nadine Vogel helps companies determine whether their organization is diverse enough, relating to those with disabilities. She believed that the benefits of a diverse organization can lead to great opportunities for stakeholders. In her research, she does not focus on racial equality, but the equality of those who are classified as having special needs. She further describes a successful business or organization as one that moves beyond the tolerance of differences in understanding and accommodating to those who are different by celebrating such diversity. The other incentive to increasing the diversity of any staff is that the organization opens themselves up to the opportunity of a more talented staff (Vogel, 2010).

Creating a truly successfully diverse school means more than just ensuring the diversity of the enrolled students. There are social and academic benefits to diversity, as schools have to ensure that students of all cultures and backgrounds have the respect they need. At the Larchmont Charter Schools, administrators use data that reflects academic achievement and other surveys that show how the performance of these students is rated and how diversity has an impact in certain areas. The key to this success lies in getting parents and teachers involved (Kahlenberg & Potter, 2012).

Additional Identity Influences

In addition to the racial and ethnic factors that have impacted the identity and self-esteem of minority students in predominantly white educational settings, there are other factors that have been explored in previous studies, including those of socioeconomic

status and self-esteem, as well as the correlation between self-esteem and bilingual education.

In a study conducted by Elizabeth Aries and Maynard Seider, researchers explored the influence of social class identity on college students in private institutions. The objective of this study was to examine the role that social class may play in the formation of identity, both as an independent variable (e.g., class position may shape choices, self-conceptions, and ideologies) and as a variable of importance and personal relevance (i.e., a domain that may be actively explored). To assess identity, we drew on Marcia's (1966, 1993) operationalization of Erikson's (1968) construct of identity by using Marcia's Identity Status Interview (ISI). The ISI examines the presence of identity, exploration, and commitment in the domains of occupation, ideology (i.e., politics and religion), and sex-role attitudes. Following the lead of researchers who had added ethnicity to the ISI as a domain of importance in studying ethnic minority adolescents (e.g., Aries & Moorehead, 1989; Phinney, 1989), we added the domain of social class to the ISI as a potential area of importance and exploration in the identity formation process (Aries & Seider, 2007).

What they discovered was that, based on the social identity theory and the self-categorization theory, that social class, just like racial identity, has very strong similarities concerning the way students feel about themselves and one another, how this impacts their self-esteem, and how they analyze themselves and view their self-esteem, resulting in their academic performance (Aries & Seider, 2007).

Social class could function not only as an independent variable that shapes self-concepts, but also as a domain of identity exploration. The literature on working class

individuals who move into more privileged positions (e.g., entering universities or becoming university professors) suggests that social mobility has a significant influence on one's sense of self because identities must be renegotiated, and social class is an important domain of identity exploration for upwardly mobile individuals (Aries & Seider, 2007).

Studies have found a positive relationship between education that is bilingual based and the self-esteem of Latino(a) students. One study took a closer look at the levels of reading and writing of both the English and Spanish languages and the linear self-esteem levels of Latino(a) students. What the 1995 research concluded was that the more articulate students were in both English and Spanish, the more self-esteem they felt that they had. The other study took a closer look at the relationship between identity and language self-confidence exhibited through psychological adjustments. The study participants consisted of 179 Chinese undergraduate students between the ages of 17 and 38. What the research determined was that there was higher confidence in students who displayed proficiency in using their language skills, which in turn lead to a higher rate of self-esteem (Noels, Pon, & Clement, 1996).

Self-Esteem and Self-Concept

Self-esteem remains a popular research topic, especially pertaining to African American communities. Blacks were commonly thought to possess low self-esteem (Adams, 2014). Self-esteem is a personal opinion of oneself and is shaped by individuals' relationships with others, experiences, and accomplishments in life. A healthy self-esteem is necessary for mental well-being and a positive self-concept. This is achieved by setting realistic goals and successfully accomplishing these goals, resulting

in an increase in self-confidence, assertiveness, and feeling valued. Since self-esteem impacts all aspects of life, it is important to establish a healthy, realistic view of oneself (Mayo Clinic, 2009). According to Adams (2014), one of the first scientific inquiries into black identity and self-esteem was made by Lind (1914), by a white psychiatrist who believed that all blacks suffered to some degree from a “color complex.” He asserted that blacks lived in an environment that confirmed their inferiority, which evoked defensiveness and pre-conscious wishes to be white.

According to Heatherton and Wyland (2014), self-esteem is considered to be an attitude which people have regarding themselves and how they feel about themselves in regard to personal appearance, personal abilities, how they view themselves in regard to other people, and how they view what their capabilities are. Although frequently used to refer to the same concepts, there is a difference between self-esteem and self-concept. Self-concept is how an individual views his/herself overall, whereas self-esteem is the more emotional response that people express as they view themselves in relation to different things.

In the study of *Ethnic and American Identity as Predictors of Self-Esteem Among African American, Latino and White Adolescents*, authors Jean Phinney, Cindy Cantu, and Dawn Kurtz examine the external factors that influence the self-esteem of adolescents. In establishing this research, the authors acknowledged that very few prior studies had explored African Americans in comparison to other minority groups, such as Latino(a) groups, but had traditionally been compared to white dominant groups instead. The authors describe self-esteem as something which is cultivated and developed during the younger stages of life, therefore, supporting how significant it is to explore the

educational environments of these students as this is the area that has the most long term impact on how students view themselves during these years and thereafter. This study strongly agrees with previous studies that have been conducted and the findings that support the relationship between minority student academic achievement and the level of self-esteem in such areas of academic achievement, social acceptance, and physical appearance (1997).

There is great importance in understanding that there are many ways for individuals to identify and categorize themselves, including gender, race, and class. However, for individuals who are born in the United States who consider themselves to be American but do not, for appearance reasons, fit into the majority, learn that the idea of being American applies to being a white American and not so much to ethnic minorities (Phinney et al., 1997).

Mruk, in his book *Self-esteem, Research, Theory and Practice: Toward a Positive Psychology of Self-esteem* (2006), references author Susan Harter and her self-esteem developmental approach. Her research has proven that the gap which once existed between the psychological and social views of a person is now nearly nonexistent. Harter shows that there is a relationship between behavior and social approval. They are interrelated and together create something called self-esteem. The level of support and approval that a person receives, depending on age, can be extremely significant. It is important that this support come from different areas, including parents, teachers, peers, friends, and other members of a person's environment.

According to the Health Promotion of Adolescence and Self-Esteem (2014), school experiences had a major impact on the development of the self-concept of a child,

including, identity, body image, self-esteem, and role categorizations. Parents, teachers, and peers have a direct impact on a child's developing feelings, views, and sense of self. Children compare their physical appearance, academic and athletic abilities, and social status to those of their peers and seek approval and acceptance from this group. Negative experiences can inversely affect a child's self-concept development.

Overview

The theoretical framework for this chapter established not only the structure and foundation which this study was based upon, but also identified the important elements needed to support the development and nurturing of the self-esteem of minority students in order for there to be long lasting positive identity throughout their academic career and, subsequently, after graduation. Previous studies explored the various issues that minority students in predominantly white schools faced, as well as what the perceptions of the schools and other stakeholders were in creating a flourishing learning environment for minority students, so that they felt confident, could academically excel, and have a more well-rounded academic experience. This chapter gave a definition to self-esteem, relating how it mostly evolves during adolescence, and better exploring the events that take place during the developmental stages that could have long term effects on a person. The experiences in which minority students expressed had existed during their academic careers in predominantly white schools raised the awareness of schools about how their role was significant providing minority students with educational environments where they could feel equal to other students and could better establish their identity during the years that prove to be the most crucial in their developmental stages. In identifying some of the historical issues, as well as some of the more recent references, better explanations,

exploring what impact the private school experience had on the ways in which African American and Latino(a) students felt about themselves and the way they felt about themselves in comparison to other minority groups, were needed.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presented, in great detail, the quantitative methodological research design and the plans for this study in order to better relate how this research would be executed, including the strategies for the selection of the participants and details of the selected instrumentation, as well as the hypothesis, research questions, and analysis methods.

Research questions and Hypothesis:

1. Do the perceptions of “performance self-esteem” differ between former African American and Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools?

H₀1: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “performance self-esteem.”

H_a1: There is a significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “performance self-esteem.”

2. Do the perceptions of “social self-esteem” differ between former African American and Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools?

H₀2: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “social self-esteem.”

H_a2: There is a significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “social self-esteem.”

3. Do the perceptions of “appearance self-esteem” differ between former African American and Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools?

H₀3: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “appearance self-esteem.”

H_a3: There is a significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “appearance self-esteem.”

4. Do the perceptions of overall self-esteem (including performance, social, and appearance) differ between former African American and Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools?

H₀4: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “overall self-esteem.”

H_a4: There is a significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “overall self-esteem.”

Research Design

The researcher used the quantitative survey design method in order to incorporate statistical data as well as the perceptions of the participants. Survey-based quantitative research is mostly used to assess how people feel about certain outcomes (Scarpa, 2012). The statistical data assisted in providing the researcher with the most recent demographic information that was applicable in supporting this study.

Creswell (2008) described quantitative method research as a design that is based on many assumptions. As a methodology, it includes assumptions based on philosophy that assists the researcher in the right direction of how to proceed with the data collection and analysis. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. The quantitative method study includes an array of quantitative instruments.

This study incorporated survey methodology as this method seemed most appropriate. Thomas (2003) described survey methodology as form of gathering information about the current status of a particular group, providing data in numerical or quantitative form. Regarding this type of method, the wording of the questions on a survey is extremely important. A researcher must provide the participant with information which is being sought after so that the words can serve as retrieval cues to answer the questions appropriately and give desired information (Bradburn, 2004). In this particular survey, the questions were worded specifically to the three categories which were of interest for this study. Author Daniel Muijs (2004) described the most popular quantitative research design, especially in researching social topics, is the survey method. This method is most appropriate for web-based data collection.

Selection of Participants

This study included 105 participants, who were recruited and referred by the organization iChange Collaborative Summer Diversity Institute. iChange Collaborative Diversity Institute is an organization that educates teachers and students who primarily come from independent schools. The organization provides workshops for diversity

awareness and curriculum development for educational settings (iChange Collaborative, 2014).

The researcher incorporated the use of random sampling selection. Random sampling is when each element has an equal probability to be selected as a sample (Haque, Bharati, & Santiniketan, 2014). Each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected as subject, making it a bias free method of sampling (Lund Research, 2014). Desirable participants in this study were former minority students who had Atlanta K-12 private school experience. They must have graduated and obtained a high school diploma and were approximately between the ages of 18 and 25-years-old.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument selected was the State Self-Esteem Scale. This instrument was chosen based on the similarities between this study and a previous study that was conducted within a different educational setting. According to Heatherton and Polivy (1991), one study in particular explored the topic of poor performance of approximately 128 students, in an educational setting, and the negative emotional impact it had on the self-esteem of those students. What the study concluded was that those who had been exposed to negative results of the examination scored differently on the State Self-esteem Scale Survey than those who performed better. In selecting this instrument, there was validity that self-esteem would be measured based upon the expectations of the researcher in measuring the interest areas of performance, social, and appearance self-esteem. These were the specific variables of interest in this study.

The State Self-Esteem Scale was developed by Heatherton and Polivy in an effort to measure self-esteem within three dimensions - performance self-esteem, social self-

esteem, and appearance self-esteem. The scale was created in the early 1990s and had many potential uses, including serving as a valid manipulation check index, measuring clinical change in self-esteem, and exploring the relationship between mood and self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). The State Self-Esteem Scale included 20 items which had been modified from the Janis-Field Feelings of Inadequacy Scale, as well as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The State Self-Esteem Scale measures three categories - performance self-esteem, social self-esteem and appearance self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). The 20 items were scored using a Likert scale ranging from 1-5, representing “not at all” to “extremely” (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991).

The dependent variable “performance self-esteem” was comprised of the following survey items: 1, 4, 5, 9, 14, 18, and 19. The questions read as follows:

1. How does the participant feel about their abilities?
4. Does the participant feel frustrated or rattled about their performance?
5. Does the participant have trouble understanding things that they read?
9. Does the participant feel as smart as others?
14. Does the participant feel confident that they understand things?
18. Does the participant feel that he/she has less scholastic ability right now than others?
19. Does the participant feel like he/she is doing well?

The dependent variable “social self-esteem” was comprised of the following survey items: 2, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, and 20. The questions read as follows:

2. Is the participant worried about whether he/she is regarded as a success or failure?

- 8. Does the participant feel self-conscious?
- 10. Does the participant feel displeased with his/herself?
- 13. Is the participant worried about what other people think of his/herself?
- 15. Does the participant feel inferior to others at this moment?
- 17. Does the participant feel concerned about the impression he/she is making?
- 20. Is the participant worried about looking foolish?

The dependent variable “appearance self-esteem” was comprised of the following survey items: 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 16. The questions read as follows:

- 3. Does the participant feel satisfied with the way their body looks right now?
- 6. Does the participant feel that others respect and admire him/her?
- 7. Is the participant dissatisfied with his/her weight?
- 11. Does the participant feel good about his/herself?
- 12. Is the participant pleased with his/her appearance?
- 16. Does the participant feel unattractive?

Overall self-esteem encompassed all of the above items. According to Briggs and Cheek (1986), Crandall (1973), and Robinson and Shaver (1973), the surveying instrument was inspired by the Janis and Field survey scale, widely regarded as one of the better multidimensional scales of self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991).

Reliability and Validity

The JFS was originally designed to test attitude change research by Janis and Field in 1959, and is described by Fleming and Watts to contain items regarding self-esteem, academic abilities, and social confidence (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). The original version resulted in split-half reliability, estimated by Janis and Field to be .83,

while the reliability based on the revised Spearman-Brown formula was found to be .91. The Janis and Field Scale appeared to be a stable trait measure of self-esteem that did not change readily as a result of laboratory manipulations (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). The scale included a ranking scale survey, known as the Janis and Field self-esteem scale, which was comprised of 36 questions. The State Self-Esteem Scale was also inspired by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Likert Scale. This survey was originally created in 1960 and was used to test 5,024 high school juniors and seniors from 10 randomly selected schools. The scale was typically highly reliable. Both tests and retests showed that correlations had been in the range of .82 to .88 (University of Maryland, 2014).

Procedures

Request for institutional permission were forwarded to the iChange Collaborative Diversity Institute. Permission was then granted to conduct this research with the support and resources provided by this organization. iChange Collaborative is an organization that studies and conducts workshops that focus on identifying and resolving the issues related to corporate and institutional diversity. Their focus on institutions is primarily supporting students, teachers, faculty, and staff through diversity curriculum development, as well as other diversity focused tools.

The organization had a database which was comprised of private school affiliates including educators, administrators, and current and former minority students who have attended private schools in the Atlanta, GA area. This database was comprised of individuals to whom the institute had provided curriculum diversity training and diversity staff development. The organization granted the researcher access to their network database of individuals who fit the participant criteria, as well as contact information to

those who had further contact information for former minority students who had attended private schools. Participants were emailed a link for the survey to the email address provided by iChange Collaborative. Additionally, a link to the survey was posted on the iChange Collaborative private Facebook page.

Confidentiality and privacy of participants was ensured by the researcher. The privacy of all of the participants included are kept on a password protected computer. Any paperwork in which the names and email addresses are logged on was kept in a key locked compartment, which will only be accessed by the researcher, in order to keep the identity and contact information protected. All information will be disposed of in three years.

Data Analysis

Data collection was electronically received through survey monkey after the completion of the surveys. Survey monkey also included an Excel spreadsheet, containing all of the participants' demographic information and responses from the survey, in order for data to be entered into SPSS software. Data were converted, analyzed, and translated with the use of SPSS data statistical software. In determining how former minority students of private schools currently view themselves, participants rated their self-esteem, including performance self-esteem, social self-esteem and appearance self-esteem using the State Self-Esteem Scale Survey. From the survey instrument, performance self-esteem items were represented by the following questions: 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20. Social self-esteem items were represented by the following survey instrument questions: 2, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, and 20. Appearance self-esteem items were represented by the following survey instrument questions: 3, 6, 7, 11,

12, and 16. The scores of the following questions: 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20, were reversed according to the scoring instructions. The overall rating of self-esteem was determined by the numerical results of each participant as a result of how they individually rated their feelings in each of the 20 questions using the Likert scale, ranging from feeling “not at all” to feeling “extremely” about the various subjects.

In analyzing the data, the researcher utilized the independent sample *t*-test in order to conclude the findings of this research for hypothesis one. The independent variables were former African American students and former Latino(a) students. The dependent variable was the score for “performance self-esteem.” In comparing the scores of these two independent groups, the researcher concluded whether or not African American and Latino(a) students viewed their performance self-esteem similarly or differently by comparing the *p* value to alpha. Alpha was set to .05. If the results of the independent sample *t*-test revealed that the *p* value was less than .05, then there was a statistically significant difference. If the results of the *p* value were greater than .05, then there was no statistically significant difference with the way the two groups rated their performance self-esteem.

The researcher utilized the independent sample *t*-test in order to conclude the findings of this research for hypothesis two. The independent variables were former African American students and former Latino(a) students. The dependent variable was the score for “social self-esteem.” In comparing the scores of these two independent groups, the researcher concluded whether or not African American and Latino(a) students viewed their social self-esteem similarly or differently by comparing the *p* value to alpha. Alpha was set to .05. If the results of the independent sample *t*-test revealed that the *p*

value was less than .05, then there was a statistically significant difference. If the results of the p value were greater than .05, then there was no statistically significant difference with the way the two groups rated their social self-esteem.

The researcher utilized the independent sample t -test in order to conclude the finding of this research for hypothesis three. Independent variables were former African American students and former Latino(a) students. The dependent variable was the score for “appearance self-esteem.” In comparing the scores of these two independent groups, the researcher concluded whether or not African American and Latino(a) students viewed their appearance self-esteem similarly or differently by comparing the p value to alpha. Alpha was set to .05. If the results of the independent sample t -test revealed that the p value was less than .05, then there was a statistically significant difference. If the results of the p value were greater than .05, then there was no statistically significant difference with the way the two groups rated their appearance self-esteem.

The researcher utilized the Independent sample t -test in order to conclude the finding of this research for hypothesis four. The independent variables were former African American students and former Latino(a) students. The dependent variable was the overall score for self-esteem, broken down into three categories: performance, social, and appearance. In comparing the scores of these two independent groups, the researcher concluded whether or not African American or Latino(a) students had overall higher or lower perceptions of self-esteem by comparing the p value to alpha. Alpha was set to .05. If the results of the independent sample t -test revealed that the p value was less than .05, then there was a statistically significant difference. If the results of the p value were greater than .05, then there was no statistically significant difference between the two

groups and how they rated their overall self-esteem.

Overview

The most appropriate research method for this study was considered to be the quantitative survey method. In utilizing such a method, statistical results would be translated into numerical data that would then answer the previously introduced research questions and hypotheses. The choice of survey instrument was considered most suitable because of its validity and reliability, as there were measurements for three main categories for measuring self-esteem. In running the appropriate tests through SPSS and reviewing the results of the data collected in Chapter Four, the researcher will better be able to conclude whether former African American and Latino(a) students shared similar perceptions regarding how they viewed their self-esteem within the three different categories.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS, DATA ANALYSIS, AND RESULTS

The purpose of this quantitative research method's design study was to explore how former Latino(a) and African American students, who had previously attended predominantly white Atlanta, Georgia based K-12 independent schools, perceived their self-esteem, furthermore exploring the correlation of the perceptions among these two minority groups. This study included performance self-esteem, social self-esteem, and appearance self-esteem. Scores were gathered from the survey instrument, the Self-esteem Scale Survey, which was a Likert scale 20 question instrument.

Sample

The total sample size number was 105. The sample included 51 African Americans and 54 Latino(a)'s, of which 40 were male and 65 were female. Not all participants were former graduates of a private school in Atlanta, however, all spent partial academic time of at least two years, or a maximum of 12 years or more, within a private institution. The majority of participants predominantly spent four years in private school or spent their entire academic career in a private institution. Twenty-seven percent of minority students had spent most of their entire academic careers in private school, whereas 37% spent at least four years in private school.

Results

Table 1 describes the demographic ethnicity of participants. In using the descriptive frequency table, overall, there were 105 participants who were accounted for by this study. Of those, 54 participants identified themselves of Latino(a) descent and the remaining participants identified themselves of African American descent. The 54

Latino(a)s represented 51.4% of the participants in this study and the African Americans represented approximately 48.6%.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Participants Demography by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
African American	51	48.6	48.6	48.6
Latino(a)	54	51.4	51.4	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 describes the demographic age groups in which the 105 participants identified themselves. In the event that participants felt comfortable revealing their age, there were two optional groups that participants could select from - 18-21 and 22-25. Eighty-one participants categorized themselves between the ages of 18-21. Twenty-three participants categorized themselves between the ages of 22-25. Age group 18-21 represented 77.1% of participants, whereas 21.9% represented age group 22-25.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Participants Demography by Age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-21	81	77.1	77.1	78.1
22-25	23	21.9	21.9	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 describes the demographic gender groups in which the 105 participants identified with. In the event that participants felt comfortable revealing their gender, there were two groups that participants could select from - male and female. Forty participants categorized themselves as male. Sixty-five participants categorized themselves as female. Males represented 38.1% of participants, whereas 61.9% represented female participants.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Participants Demography by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	40	38.1	38.1	38.1
Female	65	61.9	61.9	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 describes the demographics of participants who graduated from an Atlanta, GA independent school. Participants were given the option to select “yes” or “no” in response to this question. Of the 105 participants, 75 responded “yes” to graduating from an Atlanta, K-12 private school. Of the 105 participants, 30 responded

“no” to graduating from an Atlanta, K-12 private school. The answer “yes” represented 71.4% and the answer “no” represented 28.6%.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Participants Demography by Graduate of Independent School

Graduate of independent school	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	75	71.4	71.4	71.4
No	30	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 describes the demographics of the number of years in which former minority students spent in attendance of an Atlanta, GA K-12 private school. Participants were given the option to select from a minimum of at least one year and a maximum of 12 years or more. Thirty-nine of the 105 participants identified with attending an Atlanta private school for at least four years. Twenty-six of the 105 participants identified with attending an Atlanta private school for 12 years or more. Thirty-seven point one percent of the participants in this study spent at least four years in private school. Twenty-four point eight percent of participants spent 12 years or more, representing the majority of their academic career in private school.

Table 5

Descriptive for Participants Demography by Number of Years at Independent School

Years in private school	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	2	1.9	1.9	1.9
2	5	4.8	4.8	6.7
3	11	10.5	10.5	17.1
4	39	37.1	37.1	54.3
5	1	1.0	1.0	55.2
6	9	8.6	8.6	63.8
7	3	2.9	2.9	66.7
9	6	5.7	5.7	72.4
10	3	2.9	2.9	75.2
12	26	24.8	24.8	100.0
Total	105	100.0	100.0	

Table 6

Descriptives for Demographics

Demographics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Latino(a) or African American	105	1	2	1.51	.502
Age of participant	105	0	2	1.21	.432
Male or female	105	1	2	1.62	.488
Graduate from an independent school	105	1	2	1.29	.454
Years spent in an independent school	105	0	12	6.43	3.708
Valid N (listwise)	105				

Table 6 describes the descriptive statistics of the demographic components of participants. The table includes the mean scores and the standard deviations of the demographic information that the 105 participants selected. The mean scores range from a consistent 1.21 to 1.6 range to a maximum of 6.43, which represents the number of years in which participants have attended private school. The large mean score is a result of the demographic options that participants were able to select from. The options were to choose from a minimum of attending at least one year in an Atlanta, GA K-12 private school to attending private school for 12 or more years.

Hypothesis

This section examines the testing of four null hypotheses. The independent variables were former Latino(a) students and former African American students of Atlanta, GA K-12 private schools. The dependent variables were performance self-esteem, social self-esteem, and appearance self-esteem.

The dependent variable, “performance self-esteem,” was comprised of the following survey items: 1, 4, 5, 9, 14, 18, and 19. The questions read as follows:

1. How does the participant feel about his/her abilities?
4. Does the participant feel frustrated or rattled about their performance?
5. Does the participant have trouble understanding things that they have read?
9. Does the participant feel as smart as others?
14. Does the participant feel confident that they understand things?
18. Does the participant feel that he/she has less scholastic ability right now than others?
19. Does the participant feel like he/she is doing well?

The dependent variable, “social self-esteem,” was comprised of the following survey items: 2, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, and 20. The questions read as follows:

- 2. Is the participant worried about whether he/she is regarded as a success or failure;
- 8. Does the participant feel self-conscious?
- 10. Does the participant feel displeased with his/herself?
- 13. Is the participant worried about what other people think of his/herself?
- 15. Does the participant feel inferior to others at this moment?
- 17. Does the participant feel concerned about the impression he/she is making?
- 20. Is the participant worried about looking foolish?

The dependent variable, “appearance self-esteem,” was comprised of the following survey items: 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 16. The questions read as follows:

- 3. Does the participant feel satisfied with the way their body looks right now?
- 6. Does the participant feel that others respect and admire him/her?
- 7. Is the participant dissatisfied with his/her weight?
- 11. Does the participant feel good about his/herself?
- 12. Is the participant pleased with his/her appearance?
- 16. Does the participant feel unattractive?

Hypothesis One

H₀1: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “performance self-esteem.”

H_a1: There is a significant difference between former African American and former

Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “performance self-esteem.”

In analyzing the data, the researcher utilized the independent sample *t*-test in order to conclude the findings of this research for Hypothesis 1. The independent variables were former African American students and former Latino(a) students. The dependent variable was the score for “performance self-esteem.” From the survey instrument, performance self-esteem items represented the following questions: 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20. Of the previously listed questions, items 1, 9, and 14 used the Likert scale scoring options 1-5, one, representing “not at all” and five representing “extremely.” All remaining items pertaining to performance self-esteem, including 4, 5, 18, and 19, used the Likert scale scoring options 1-5; however, reversing the scoring options, with five representing “not at all”, and one representing “extremely.” In comparing the scores of these two independent groups, the researcher concluded whether or not African American and Latino(a) students viewed their performance self-esteem similarly or differently by comparing the *p* value to alpha. Alpha was set to .05.

Table 7 describes the findings of the independent sample *t*-test for Hypothesis 1. The Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances revealed that the variances of the two groups were equal at $F=1.572$, $P=.213$. This shows that the assumption of homogeneity of variance is not violated. Former African American students who attended Atlanta, K-12 private schools perceived their performance self-esteem ($M=23.55$, $SD=4.046$) similarly to former Latino(a) students who attended Atlanta, K-12 private schools ($M=23.61$, $SD=2.645$), $t=(.094)$ $p=.213$. The results of the independent sample *t*-test revealed that the *p* value was greater than .05 when comparing the two ethnic groups. The statistically

significant difference between these groups was .213, therefore, accepting the null hypothesis and rejecting the alternate hypotheses. Concluding that both Latino(a) and African American former students had similar perceptions of their performance self-esteem.

Table 7

Independent Sample T-Test for performance self-esteem perceptions for former Latino(a) and former African American students

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i>
Performance: Equal variances assumed	1.572	.213	.094	103	.213

Hypothesis Two

H₀2: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta, K-12 private schools and how they rate their “social self-esteem.”

H_a2: There is a significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta, K-12 private schools and how they rate their “social self-esteem.”

In analyzing the data, the researcher utilized the independent sample *t*-test in order to conclude the findings of this research for Hypothesis 2. The independent variables were former African American students and former Latino(a) students. The dependent variable was the score for “social self-esteem.” Social self-esteem items were

the following survey instrument questions: 2, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, and 20. All previously listed questions used the reverse Likert scale scoring options, five representing “not at all” and one representing “extremely.” In comparing the scores of these two independent groups, the researcher concluded whether or not African American and Latino(a) students viewed their performance self-esteem similarly or differently by comparing the p value to alpha. Alpha was set to .05.

Table 8 describes the findings of the independent sample t -test for Hypothesis 2. The Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances revealed that the variances of the two groups were equal with $F=.244$, $P=.622$. This shows that the assumption of homogeneity of variance is not violated. Former African American students who attended Atlanta, K-12 private schools perceived their social self-esteem ($M=21.80$, $SD=4.035$), similar to former Latino(a) students who attended Atlanta, K-12 private schools ($M=22.00$, $SD=2.862$), $t=.288$, $p=.622$. The results of the independent sample t -test revealed that the p value was greater than .05 when comparing the two ethnic groups. The statistically significant difference between these groups was .622, therefore, accepting the null hypothesis and rejecting the alternate hypotheses and concluding that both Latino(a) and African American former students had similar perceptions of their social self-esteem.

Table 8

Independent Sample T-Test for social self-esteem perceptions for former Latino(a) and former African American students

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	p
social	Equal variances assumed	.244	.622	.288	103	.622

Hypothesis Three

H₀3: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “appearance self-esteem.”

H_a3: There is a significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “appearance self-esteem.”

In analyzing the data, the researcher utilized the independent sample t-test in order to conclude the findings of this research for Hypothesis 3. The independent variables were former African American students and former Latino(a) students. The dependent variable was the score for “appearance self-esteem.” Appearance self-esteem items represented the following survey instrument questions: 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 16. Of the previously listed questions, items 3, 6, 11, and 12 used the Likert scale scoring option 1-5, one, representing “not at all” and 5, representing “extremely.” All remaining items

pertaining to appearance self-esteem, including 7 and 16, used the Likert scale scoring options 1-5; however, reversing the scoring options, five, representing “not at all,” and one representing “extremely.” In comparing the scores of these two independent groups, the researcher concluded whether or not African American and Latino(a) students viewed their appearance self-esteem similarly or differently by comparing the p value to alpha. Alpha was set to .05.

Table 9 describes the findings of the independent sample t -test Hypothesis 3. The Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances revealed that the variances of the two groups were equal at $F=.484$, $P=.488$. This shows that the assumption of homogeneity of variance is not violated. Former African American students who attended Atlanta, K-12 private school perceived their appearance self-esteem ($M=17.86$, $SD=3.661$) similarly to former Latino(a) students who attended Atlanta, K-12 private schools ($M=18.07$, $SD=2.641$), $t=.341$, $p=.488$. The results of the independent sample t -test revealed that the p value was greater than .05 when comparing the two ethnic groups. The statistically significant difference between these groups was .488, therefore, accepting the null hypothesis and rejecting the alternate hypotheses. Concluding that both Latino(a) and African American former students had similar perceptions of their appearance self-esteem.

Table 9

Independent Sample T-Test for appearance self-esteem perceptions for former Latino(a) and former African American students

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	p
appearance	Equal variances assumed	.484	.488	.341	103	.488

Hypothesis Four

H₀4: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “overall self-esteem.”

H_a4: There is a significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “overall self-esteem.”

In analyzing the data, the researcher utilized the independent sample t-test in order to conclude the findings of this research for Hypothesis 4. The independent variables were former African American students and former Latino(a) students. The dependent variable was the score for “overall self-esteem.” In comparing the scores of these two independent groups, the researcher concluded whether or not African American and Latino(a) students viewed their overall self-esteem similarly or differently by comparing the p value to alpha. Alpha was set to .05.

Table 10 describes the findings of the independent sample *t*-test. The Levene's Test for Equality of Variances revealed that the variances of the two groups were equal at $F=.347, P=.557$. This shows that the assumption of homogeneity of variance is not violated. Former African American students who attended Atlanta, K-12 private schools perceived their overall self-esteem ($M=63.21, SD=9.86$) similarly to former Latino(a) students who attended Atlanta, K-12 private schools ($M=63.68, SD=6.14$), $t=(.295)$ $p=.557$. The results of the independent sample *t*-test revealed that the *p* value was greater than .05 when comparing the two ethnic groups. The statistical significant difference between these groups was .557. The mean score of the Latino(a)s was 63.6852 and the mean score of the African Americans was 63.2157, therefore, accepting the null hypothesis and rejecting the alternate hypotheses. Concluding that both Latino(a) and African American former students had similar perceptions of their overall self-esteem.

Table 10

Independent Sample T-Test for overall self-esteem perceptions for former Latino(a) and former African American students

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	p
overall	Equal					
	variances	.347	.557	.295	103	.557
	assumed					

Overview

Descriptive statistics were used in this particular study in order to examine whether there were any similarities or differences between the perceptions that minority

students had regarding the way that they viewed their personal performance, their social ability, and their appearance from the perspective of an Atlanta K-12 private school experience. The three categories were scored by using two scoring methods - the Likert scale 1-5, ranging from “not at all” to “extremely” as well as the reverse Likert scale 5-1, ranging from “extremely” to “not at all.” The instrument State Self-esteem Scale included an overall 20 questions, of which seven were directed towards how an individual viewed their performance, self-esteem specifically. Seven additional questions were directed towards how an individual viewed his/her social self-esteem specifically. Finally, six of the 20 questions were directed towards how an individual viewed their appearance self-esteem. Of the 105 participants who were randomly selected, the data which was entered and analyzed by using SPSS software concluded that two minority groups, who have rarely been compared to one another within this type of educational background, share similarities in their perceptions of themselves and their self-identity. This study concludes that despite not having knowledge of these participants other than that, at some point, they attended an Atlanta, GA K-12 private school, and that they either classified themselves as African American or Latino(a), the influences, experiences, and factors that minority students are exposed to in a traditionally predominantly white environment might have a similar impact on minority students, influencing the minority perception of self-esteem.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to determine whether individuals who identified with one of two racial groups comparatively perceived their self-esteem similarly or differently to one another as a result of having similar educational exposure and the academic experiences of growing up as a minority student within a predominantly white setting and being exposed to the obstacles and challenges that schools reportedly have faced in regards to their diversity efforts.

Chapter Two presented literature related to this current study based upon the theoretical framework of the social identity and identity theory. The review included information about the challenges that minority students have faced in environments where they are underrepresented, including in areas of academic performance and social behavior as well as taking a closer look at how others have perceived the identity of these students. Finally, the chapter explained further the self-esteem and identity developmental processes that are recognized as taking place during K-12 age groups.

Chapter Three was the methodology. This chapter explored the perceptions of minority students who formerly attended an Atlanta, K-12 private school. A survey called State Self-Esteem Scale was used for data collection. The instrument included questions regarding how the participants viewed themselves. This took a closer look at the unique process of the ethnic identity developmental process of minority students.

Chapter Four presented the findings for the study. Chapter Five, presents the implications, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore and compare how former Latino(a) and former African American students who had previously attended predominantly white Atlanta, Georgia based K-12 independent schools, perceived their performance and social and appearance self-esteem. The support of this study was based on the theoretical framework of two theories: social identity theory and the identity theory. The social identity theory has contributed to the better understanding of the topic of the group distinction as it is best suited for analyzing large-scale groups, such as Latino(a) and African Americans, in which such members are geographically dispersed (Verkuyten, 2004). Such topics centered on self-identity and how they see themselves in comparison to individuals in other groups (Tajfel, 1981) are the rationale for the selected survey instrument. This theory was instrumental in better understanding how former African American and former Latino(a) students viewed themselves within three different dimensions: physically, through the measurement of appearance self-esteem, socially, through the measurement of social self-esteem and externally, through the measurement of performance self-esteem.

Social identity is cultivated by a concept of cultural syndrome. Capozza, Voci, and Licciardello (2000) explained cultural syndrome to be characteristics of the following: a) self-inter-dependence, when people perceive themselves according to the group they are a part of (family, relatives and geographically); b) coherence between individuals and collectives which mean that if incoherence exists that collective aims prevail; c) collectivistic cultures are guided by norms and obligations; and d) relationships are maintained independently as a result of personal advantages. In

understanding the make-up of social identity, one must understand what the elements are that make up this theory. Social identity and cultural syndrome assisted this research when comparing these two groups. The group in which both African American former students were a part of shared similarities, including geographically in the state of Georgia. Both groups were a part of separate groups, such as ethnically defined as well as being a part of a larger group which categorized both African American and Latino(s) as minority. Minority in comparison to the majority predominantly white group.

The identity theory is related closely to the concept of ethnic identity. As it has been stated, ethnic identity is truly significant to youth during identity developmental stages (Erikson, 1986). Ethnic identity, comprised of three stages, is what was used in order to analyze the perceptions of minority students (Phinney et al., 1997). In uniquely comparing two minority groups who traditionally have separately been compared to the dominant white group, gave some insight as to whether those who identify in either category walked away from their private school exposure feeling similarly to one another. These former students had at least a minimum of two years of exposure to a K-12 private school education and a maximum of 12 years or more of exposure to a K-12 private school education.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “performance self-esteem”.

Hypothesis 1 examined the relationship between former Latino(a) and former

African American students and whether their perceptions were similar or different in how they viewed their performance self-esteem. Performance self-esteem refers to an individual's confidence in their abilities including school performance, academic achievement and other capacities (Heatherton & Wyland, 2014). According to Stets and Burke (2000), the identity theory focuses on the expectations of certain roles and the social identity theory looks more at how an individual sees themselves in that particular role. According to Ingersoll and May (2011), the lack of diversity amongst teachers has deprived the minority student population of experiencing being able to identify with instructors who share cultural and racial similarities, resulting in the possible attribution that this might have on the achievement gap that exists between minority students and predominantly white students. In regards to performance self-esteem, the expectations of what performance standards are interpreted by both Latino(a) and African American students prove to be similar, furthermore establishing that both groups have similar perceptions of their performance self-esteem and assuming that the expectations that individuals in both groups have of themselves and the standards that they possess are shared opinions.

According to Ingersoll and May (2011), the lack of minority role models within education are a result of the lack of diversity of teachers who are culturally and racially similar to certain minority student groups. This lack of diversity does have a proven influence on the academic achievement issues that exist amongst minority students. This would imply that the if there are proven academic achievement issues that exist as a result of this lack, there are possibly other challenges that minority students face as a result of this lack as well that are not necessarily ethnically specific but a general

consensus of the challenges of what minority students collectively face.

This is alarming when according to Madkins (2011), the percentage of African American and Latino(a) students make up at least 65% of the student population and only 17% of teachers are classified as minorities. There has been a focus on the shortage of African American teachers specifically and how this lack impacts African American students. However, the research of this study implies that there are some similarities regarding the way that both groups feel and perceive the topic of self-esteem, which could also reflect that there are similarities in the perceptions that might be felt regarding the academic achievement gap, furthermore meaning that this might not just be a concern for African American students who experience a lack of minority teachers, but there could be a possibility that Latino(a) students share in the same issues as well. The results of this study conclude that Latino(a)s and African Americans express similarities regarding their perceptions of performance self-esteem would imply that the feelings and the impact of the diversity of instructors, whether of the same or of different ethnic groups, might have similar impact on the positive experience which minority students would have during their K-12 experience.

The shortage and the issues that have been identified as issues that are associated with African American student challenges, as a result of a lack of African American instructors, could also mean that it would be important to take into consideration that African Americans do not only need to have access to only African Americans within faculty and staff positions. As this study has proven, the similarities in the perceptions of Latino(a) and African American students, an overall increase in diversity could have an impact as well, concluding that regarding the general effort for diversity and the

recruitment of specific minority instructors is extremely imperative.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “social self-esteem”.

The second hypothesis examined the relationship of former African American and former Latino(a) students and how they perceived their social self-esteem. In relation to the first stage of ethnic identity, stage one reveals that there is a lack in the understanding of the topic of ethnic identity. Regarding identity theory, in this first stage of ethnic identity, it is assumed that those who are in the minority tend to not challenge the standards established by the majority, however, they attempt to adapt to those standards instead (Phinney et al., 1997). Such standards include values, cultural habits, and other behaviors.

According to Stewart, Russell, and Wright (1997), in order to better understand minority student social culture in a predominantly white school setting, specifically from an African American culture, one must first understand the patterns of how African Americans perceive their cultural values and beliefs. Frequently, African Americans who attend predominantly white schools are found commonly isolating themselves. However, this form of isolation can be also be viewed as how individuals who identify in this group deal with surviving in this particular setting. For those who are not associated with the minority group, including white students, faculty and staff, they contribute to the isolation process which encourages African American students to establish their own social communities (Allen, 1992; Nagasawa & Wong, 1999; Willie & McCord, 1972).

The implication from this research is that Latino(a) and African American

students perceived their social self-esteem similarly; therefore, there are possible similarities in the ways in which these groups socialize amongst themselves as well as with how they interact with other ethnic groups. Both groups sharing the experiences of having the label of minority in a predominantly white setting could mean that both groups naturally create their own communities and networks as a method for surviving that gives the necessary support that is needed to strive in a predominantly white setting. This method of isolation segregates these groups from the predominantly white group and in some cases, from one another, yet the results of this isolation could offer the same results for each ethnic group, based upon the perceptions of this study. Although there are challenges that do exist as a result of the underrepresentation of minorities in predominantly white schools, the social culture that minorities do exemplify is a likemindedness for empowerment and survival through the establishment of alternative social acceptance.

Hypothesis 3

H₀3: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “appearance self-esteem”.

The third hypothesis examined the relationship of former Latino(a) and former African American students and how they perceived their appearance self-esteem. In analyzing the data, the researcher utilized the independent sample *t*-test in order to conclude the findings of this research for hypothesis 3. The independent variables were former African American students and former Latino(a) students. The dependent variable was the score for “appearance self-esteem.” Appearance self-esteem refers to

how individuals view their physical appearance, athletic ability, and physical feelings about race and ethnicity (Heatherton & Wyland, 2014).

The experiences in which children have during school age have an impact on numerous self-esteem areas including self-identity, appearance and body image, and role categorizing (Health Promotion of Adolescence and Self-Esteem, 2014). As previously mentioned in Chapter Two, a significant amount self-esteem development takes place during K-12; therefore, it is implied by the researcher that individuals who classify themselves in different ethnic groups of which are considered minority, could have similar concepts of themselves based on the premise of self-identity. Those who consider themselves to be different from the appearance of the dominant group conform based upon how they categorize themselves individually.

Categorization takes place during the identity process in which a person initially determines how he or she views different roles, what values are attached to those roles, and how they associate themselves with those roles. In the event a person finds an identity connection with a particular category, whether it be with the majority or minority group, determines how they will feel about themselves. Based upon the findings of this research, it can be implied that whether an individual has classified his or herself within their ethnic group or finds a connection with those who are in the majority, would imply that Latino(a) and African Americans have similar perceptions on how they view themselves based on those external or internal categories. Furthermore, this would also imply that as appearance self-esteem is based on how a person views their self-image based on the value that they have established in others they associate with, would mean that minority or majority group association would prove to be irrelevant however, how

one fits in either group would be what is significant. Regarding both Latino(a) and African Americans, individuals could associate themselves with the following categories: Latino(a), African American, minority or majority groups and not be limited to just one group.

Hypothesis 4

H₀4: There is no significant difference between former African American and former Latino(a) students of Atlanta K-12 private schools and how they rate their “overall self-esteem”.

The fourth hypothesis examined the relationship between former Latino(a) and former African American students and how they perceived their overall self-esteem. Self-esteem is defined as the value or worth that is attached to personal assessments (Vialle et al., 2005). This concludes that both Latino(a) and African American former students had similar perceptions of their overall self-esteem. According to Stets and Burke (2000), both social identity theory and identity theory play a role in collectively developing a person’s overall perception of how they proceed with the categorization process, especially during adolescence because there is great importance in categorizing and understanding what these roles mean as well as understanding what the expectations are for these roles.

The assumption has traditionally been from several studies that have focused on the general self-esteem of African American students, that their self-esteem has been damaged (Porter & Washington, 2011). In the past this has been more evident when in comparison to white groups. More recent studies have taken a look at self-esteem from the perspective of deprivation and alienation. From the perspective of deprivation, the

feeling of inadequacy compared to white groups has shown the reverse outcome of African Americans who have been noted in finding a sense of higher self-esteem and pride within their group. This implies within this study that the views that African American students have in the Atlanta, K-12 setting could be similar to those of the perspective of deprivation. In the midst of the challenges that the underrepresentation of minority students' face could have the impact of developing more internal pride and security and a higher level of self-identity. Latino(a) students who face the similar challenges of feelings of deprivation would then, in fact, share in the same perspectives.

Alienation, according to Porter and Washington (2011), is the feeling of powerlessness of a group that appears through isolation. However, the isolation is when African Americans felt alienated, especially in lower income groups, sought after organizations such as the black power movement in order to build pride and unity. In regards to this study, the implication is that minorities who isolated themselves and retrieve towards others with similarities, gain a sense of security, empowerment, and self-awareness that builds self-esteem. In other words, the alienation process appears to be natural as individuals typically gravitate to and find comfort with those who have commonalities. Therefore, despite the external challenges that a minority may face in a predominantly white setting can possibly build self-awareness that might not otherwise exist, as long as there is the opportunity to categorize and connect with others who share in similar struggles. Therefore, this would further explain why the perceptions of former Latino(a) and African American students would in fact be similar.

It is common to generally see schools making efforts and strides towards creating a positive campus climate for minority students (Manning, 2007), despite the continued

existence of the underrepresentation of these groups. In establishing what a positive campus climate means for minority students is understanding what the challenges are for these types of students as a result of this underrepresentation. As defined by Vialle, Heaven, and Ciarrochi (2005), self-esteem encompasses the feelings that one feels about him/herself generally.

In this study, performance and social and appearance self-esteem produced similar scores between both groups; therefore, the overall self-esteem was also very similar to one another. In establishing whether or not Atlanta, GA K-12 private schools support the goals for positive self-esteem for their minority students, it is important to reconsider that a positive campus climate includes the consideration of how students feel included (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2001). A sense of belonging is connected to the level of self-esteem. This study refers to the identity theory and the process of categorization, in making the assumption that inclusion does not only come from fitting into the majority of the population. There are options for minority students so that they can feel a level of inclusion. Whether it is through the willingness of isolation with others who categorize with the same group, or the acceptance from other minority groups who come from other ethnic groups, acceptance from other minorities from the similar ethnic groups, or with the acceptance that comes from predominantly white peers.

The assumption has been that the underrepresentation of minorities results in challenges, including the inability of finding a place where they can belong. However, the implications of this study conclude that although limitations of identity options might exist, the sense of belonging can come from either a connection with individuals who ethnically classify in the same manner or can connect with others who face similar

challenges and share the same minority experience.

Conclusions

This study reviewed the perceptions of Latino(a)'s and African American former students of Atlanta, GA K-12 independent schools and how they viewed their individual self-esteem to include performance self-esteem, social self-esteem, and appearance self-esteem. Children compare their physical appearance, academic and athletic abilities, and social status to those of their peers and seek approval and acceptance from this group. Negative experiences can negatively affect a child's self-concept development (Health Promotion, 2014). In analyzing and interpreting the data, as well as taking into consideration the review of literature, and the relationship between identity and self-esteem according to Toomey et al. (2012), confirms that a relationship does exist between the two, the following conclusions are presented:

1. Results from this study indicate that the way that individuals associated with Latino(a) and African American groups feel similarly about their self-esteem is not necessarily a result of the impact of the challenges that accompany the underrepresentation of minority students in predominantly white schools. This could also be determined by how an individual identifies with members of their category or group.
 2. The perceptions of self-esteem of Latino(a) and former African American private school students can be reinforced despite the challenges of being a minority student, as individuals who categorize his/herself as members of one of these groups can also categorize his/herself as a member of the minority group.
- Concluding that in referring to the identity theory, a Latino(a) or African

American within this type of setting can relate to or share similar perceptions based on the fact that not only do they have a clear sense of who they are in their racial group but also having a clear sense of what being a minority means (Toomey et al, 2012)

3. African American and Latino(a) individuals who have attended a K-12 private school in Atlanta, GA are considered minority students. Results from this study indicate that perceptions of their self-esteem are similar. Therefore, their experiences might be similar as well.
4. Very few studies have compared these two minority groups to one another but have compared them separately to predominantly white groups in educational settings. Although there are drastic differences between minority to majority groups, minority to minority group comparisons appear to have similar results based upon the perceptions of self-esteem from this study.
5. Whether or not minority students have a higher level of self-esteem, it is important to recognize the foundation for self-esteem and whether or not self-esteem or the lack of self-esteem of an individual is a result of isolation and segregation. Furthermore, it is important to consider whether minorities can develop that self-esteem without that ethnic isolation.

Recommendation for Future Research

This study only reviewed the perceptions of self-esteem from a former Latino(a) and African American private school experience. Not necessarily focusing on whether the individual self-esteem was considered to be high or low, but whether the perceptions of self-esteem were similar between two different minority groups who have similar

exposure and experiences in the educational setting. Recommendations for future research are as follows:

1. Additional research including qualitative research methods should be performed to this type of study in further exploring the perceptions of Latino(a) and African American students currently enrolled in Atlanta, GA K-12 private schools prior to and post significant self-esteem development stages (early elementary and high school).
2. Additional research should look further into exploring the perceptions of the private school experience of female African American and female Latino(a) students, as there have been several studies conducted on the African American male experience.
3. Future studies should be done to on the correlation between the minority K-12 private school experience and its impact on individual self-esteem within post-graduation and higher education experiences.
4. Future qualitative studies should consider exploration of the various categories in which minority students in private school settings identify with and compare those experiences.

Overview

This study examined four hypotheses that focused on the perceptions of former minority student's self-esteem from an Atlanta, GA K-12 private school experience.

With reference to the this current study, the lack of statistically significant differences in the hypotheses revealed that the perceptions that both African American and Latino(a) former students have, vary minimally. The independent variables were former Latino(a)

students and former African American students. The dependent variables were performance self-esteem, social self-esteem, appearance self-esteem and overall self-esteem. In measuring these perceptions, the objective of this study was to determine whether or not members of these two groups shared similar perceptions. These perceptions were measured by using a 20 question Likert scale survey. The results of the responses of the survey show clear indication that both minority groups have strong similarities in how they view themselves. It concludes that although they come from different ethnic backgrounds, their perceptions are similar which could mean that the experiences they face as a minority students within a predominantly white setting are in some ways similar as well.

Ample research has explored the subject of African Americans in predominantly white settings who in comparison have extremely different backgrounds, and as a result sometimes displaying drastic differences amongst these two groups. However, this study explored the comparison of two minority groups who undeniably have strong similarities that come with the underrepresentation of minorities in private schools, including: small percentages of a diverse student body, as well as the underrepresentation of minority faculty, staff and support. The findings of this study represent that perhaps the perceptions that these two minority groups share could be similar to the perceptions of other minority groups, concluding that some of the issues that research has identified are not necessarily isolated to a certain group, but could be the challenges that are faced by minority students in general.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Institutional Consent Form

Appendix A

Institutional Consent Form

+ iChange Collaborative

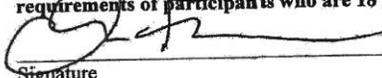
Martha Caldwell and Oman Frame
Atlanta, GA
Phone: (404) 731-4388
E-Mail: oman@ichangecollaborative.com
Martha@ichangecollaborative.com
Web: www.ichangecollaborative.com

Institutional Consent
To: Institutional Review Board

iChange Collaborative

I have read and approve the research study entitled, "Perceptions of former minority student's self-esteem from an Atlanta K-12 private school experience", conducted by Danielle Stewart. I give consent for the study to be conducted at/or through iChange Collaborative Summer Diversity Institute.

As long as the study is shared with our organization and has obtained and meets participant consent requirements of participants who are 18 years and older.


Signature _____ Date 7/2/14

Oman Frame/Co-Founder

Appendix B

Survey Monkey Consent Form

Appendix B

SurveyMonkey Consent Form

February 21, 2014



SurveyMonkey Inc.
www.surveymonkey.com

For questions, email:
support@surveymonkey.com

Re: Permission to Conduct Research Using SurveyMonkey

To whom it may concern:

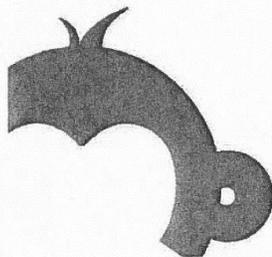
This letter is being produced in response to a request by a student at your institution who wishes to conduct a survey using SurveyMonkey in order to support their research. The student has indicated that they require a letter from SurveyMonkey granting them permission to do this. Please accept this letter as evidence of such permission. Students are permitted to conduct research via the SurveyMonkey platform provided that they abide by our Terms of Use, a copy of which is available on our website.

SurveyMonkey is a self-serve survey platform on which our users can, by themselves, create, deploy and analyze surveys through an online interface. We have users in many different industries who use surveys for many different purposes. One of our most common use cases is students and other types of researchers using our online tools to conduct academic research.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact us at the email address above.

Sincerely,

SurveyMonkey Inc.



285 Hamilton Avenue, Suite 500, Palo Alto, CA 94301 | O: 650.543.8400 | F: 650.289.0335
111 SW 5th Ave, Suite 1600, Portland, OR 97204 | O: 503.225.1202 | F: 503.225.1200

Appendix C
Letter of Informed Consent

Appendix C

Letter of Informed Consent

Dear Potential Participant:

The purpose of this research project is to explore the perceptions of former African American and Latino(a) student's self-esteem from an Atlanta K-12 private school experience. This research project is being conducted by Argosy University of Atlanta graduate student, Danielle Stewart, in an effort to fulfill requirements for completion of a Doctoral Degree. This study will not be used for any decision making purposes by any organization. You are invited to participate in this research project because you fit the desired participant and your opinion is valuable.

Criteria for participants:

- Must be between the ages of 18-25
- Must have attended an Atlanta K-12 private school throughout part of their academic experience
- Must be African American or Latino(a)
- Must have a high school diploma
- Do not have to reside in the state of Georgia
- Do not have to have a college education

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalized.

The procedure involves filling out an online survey that will take approximately 30 minutes. Your responses will be confidential and we do not collect identifying information such as your name, email address or IP address. The survey questions will be about your perceptions of your overall self-esteem including the following areas: performance, social and appearance self-esteem.

We will do our best to keep your information confidential. All data is stored in a password protected electronic format. To help protect your confidentiality, the surveys will not contain information that will personally identify you. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below:

Clicking on the “agree” button below indicates that:

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate
- You are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on “disagree”

- “agree”
- “disagree”

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Danielle Stewart at 678-431-6740 or dstewart5@stu.argosy.edu. This research has been reviewed according to Argosy University and Survey Monkey IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

You may also contact:

Dr. Murray Bradfield
Vice President of Academic Affairs
Argosy University of Atlanta
980 Hammond Drive
Atlanta, GA 30328

Dr. Victoria Landu
Dissertation Chair
Argosy University of Atlanta
980 Hammond Drive
Atlanta, GA 30328

Appendix D

State of Self-Esteem Scale Survey Instrument

Appendix D

State of Self-Esteem Scale Survey Instrument

This is a questionnaire designed by Heatherton and Polivy (1991), was developed to measure what you are thinking at this moment. There is of course, no right answer for any statement. The best answer is what you feel is true of yourself at the moment. Be sure to answer all of the items, even if you are not certain of the best answer. Again, answer these questions as they are true for you **RIGHT NOW**.

1. I feel confident about my abilities.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

2. I am worried about whether I am regarded as a success or failure.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

3. I feel satisfied with the way my body looks right now.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

4. I feel frustrated or rattled about my performance.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

5. I feel that I am having trouble understanding things that I read.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

6. I feel that others respect and admire me.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

7. I am dissatisfied with my weight.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

8. I feel self-conscious.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

9. I feel as smart as others.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

10. I feel displeased with myself.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

11. I feel good about myself.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

12. I am pleased with my appearance right now.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

13. I am worried about what other people think of me.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

14. I feel confident that I understand things.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

15. I feel inferior to others at this moment.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

16. I feel unattractive.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

17. I feel concerned about the impression I am making.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

18. I feel that I have less scholastic ability right now than others.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y

19. I feel like I'm not doing well.

1	2	3	4	5
Not At All	A Little Bit	Somewhat	Very Much	Extremel y