

“Ethnic and American Identity as Predictors of Self-Esteem Among African American, Latino, and White Adolescents”

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Abstract: In order to examine ethnic and American identity as predictors of self-esteem among adolescents, we surveyed 669 American-born high school students (372 Latinos, 232 African Americans, and 65 Whites). Participants completed measures of self-esteem, ethnic identity, American identity, attitudes toward other groups, and demographic variables. Multiple regression analyses of self-esteem were carried out separately for each ethnic group, using ethnic and American identity, other group attitudes, gender, age, socioeconomic status, and grade point average as predictors. Results indicated that for all groups ethnic identity was a significant predictor of self-esteem. For the White students only, American identity was a strong predictor of self-esteem and was highly correlated with ethnic identity. Other predictors varied across ethnic groups. Although ethnic identity was a significant predictor of self-esteem, it accounted for a relatively small proportion of the variance, suggesting the importance of other influences on self-esteem.