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Predictors of African American Attitudes Toward Mental Health Services: An Ecological

Lawanda Harmon
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Lawanda Harmon

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Walden University

2018

Abstract

Predictors of African American Attitudes Toward Mental Health Services: An Ecological

Perspective

by

Lawanda Harmon

MS, Walden University, 2013

BS, Kaplan University, 2011

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Clinical Psychology

Walden University

November 2018

Abstract

While several studies examining African Americans' mental health rates appeared in the past, existing research does not describe internal and external factor influences on positive ethnic identity development and their mediating effects on mental health help-seeking attitudes for this population. This quantitative study used structural equation modeling to examine the relationships between 3 ecological levels (the individual level/level of bicultural identity, the family level/family ethnic socialization, and the social context level/self-concealment) and examine their collective influence on ethnic identity development and mental health help-seeking attitudes of African Americans. The choice of variables for this study was grounded in Stokols' social ecological theory, Lewin's theory of psychological fields, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems that outline human development. Results were measured by responses to surveys from 161 African American males and females residing within the Atlanta, Georgia area. The family and social level were more predictive of ethnic identity development and ethnic identity positively and negatively, respectively, related to bicultural self-efficacy. Having the ability to communicate in both mainstream and ethnic cultures was directly predictive of positive attitudes toward seeking professional help. The social change implications of this study included gaining insight into African Americans' difficulty with developing positive ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking, providing professional clinicians with a model of the process of ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitude development, and improved advancement in training and cultural-based interventions for clinicians specifically working with minority populations.

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Dedication

First, I want to dedicate this to my creator, who has kept me mentally, emotionally, and physically capable during this journey. Second, I dedicate this to my mother who always saw the best in me and pushed me to be better than what I ever thought I could be. Third, I dedicate this to my children, Jabari Thomas, Elijah West, and Jamar Moore, for encouraging and pushing me to be the best and “fighting for every inch.” Last, I dedicate this to my husband, Eric Harmon, for always believing in me, being my support from the beginning to the end, understanding the late nights and weekend neglect, but most of all for providing me with the strength needed to see a light and purpose.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

In this study, I examined three ecological factors that influenced the development of positive ethnic identity and how those factors influenced mental health help-seeking attitudes among African Americans. Ethnic identity is considered a characteristic of personal identity that appears to be significantly prominent for individuals of various ethnic groups (Bisin, Patacchini, Verdier, & Zenou, 2016; Kornienko, Santos, & Updegraff, 2015; Phinney, 1989, 1996; Syed & Mitchell, 2013; Ward, 2013), and much focus has been on psychological regulation (see Burnett-Zeigler, Bohnert, & Ilgen, 2013; Chavia & Phinne, 1991; Hamilton, Samek, Keyes, McGue, & Iacono, 2015; Niwa, Way, & Hughes, 2014; Williams, Aiyer, Durkee, & Tolan, 2014). As the ratio of minority group individuals continues to expand within the United States, significant interest in researching this population to understand them as a whole has grown (Brittian et al., 2013; Burnett-Zeigler et al., 2013; Lee & Ahn, 2013; Phinney, 1989).

Although much of the research within the area of understanding the influences on help seeking behaviors and attitudes has focused on African Americans, much was still unknown. Fewer studies have involved relationships among African American individuals solely despite the fact that African Americans are the second fastest growing and largest ethnic group in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Further, researchers continue to argue the inadequacy of knowledge regarding the process and development of ethnic identity, with theoretical frameworks instead of just empirical research. Extensive empirical research in this area has focused on concluding

psychosocial factors related with ethnic identity; however, there were limited empirical research aimed at concluding the variables that influence positive ethnic identity development.

This study has the potential for positive social change by bettering the understanding of African Americans' ethnic identity development, internal factors dominant for African American individuals, and contextual factors. This knowledge may assist other healthcare providers in using an ecological framework to understand challenges of human function and psychological events, particularly with diverse cultural groups such as African Americans. Additionally, this knowledge may lead to advancement in training and cultural based interventions, which may have the potential for reducing self-concealment and improving attitudes towards seeking mental health services. Furthermore, improved knowledge related to ethnic identity formation and the degree to which it may influence mental health help-seeking attitudes in this population may lead to changes with therapeutic approaches that may result in improved self-efficacy, attitudes, acceptance, and psychosocial adjustment in this population.

In this chapter, an overview related to the study is provided highlighting the background of the study, problem statement, purpose, research question, and hypotheses. A theoretical framework was presented to determine predicted relationships between previously identified ecological factors. Additionally, this chapter provides a brief examination of the theoretical framework supporting the study, the nature of the study, key definitions, as well as identifying assumptions, limitations, delimitations. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the potential significance of the study.

Background

In any given year, an estimated 22.1% of adults living within the United States over the age of 17 are impacted by symptoms associated with a diagnosable mental health disorder (National Institute of Mental Health, 2001; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2014). Among those affected, African Americans are considered less likely than other ethnic minority groups to seek and use psychological assistance (Masuda, Anderson, & Edmonds, 2012). The SAMHSA (2014) surveyed 70,655 African Americans and 43.6% reported experiencing serious personal and mental health problems; however, only 6.7% actually used services, which appeared much lower than non-Hispanic Whites' use rates of 16.6%. Although a variety of past studies have documented that ethnic minority populations are less likely to access and use mental health services, it was only recently that researchers have begun to explore the implication of ecological factors on help-seeking attitudes and behavior development.

This growing body of research associated with exploring implications of ecological factors on help-seeking attitudes and behavior development, for the most part, focused on the ways in which ecological factors are associated with psychological functioning as well as possible moderators (e.g., ethnic identity, cultural identity, and perceived discrimination) of these associations. As the cultural awareness and diversity of African Americans continues to change, a desirable need exists towards understanding ethnic identity, its influences, and its influence on mental health help-seeking attitudes. In this study, I examined the influence of three ecological levels of human development, the individual level (i.e., level of bicultural identity), the family level (i.e., family ethnic

socialization), and the social context level (i.e., self-concealment) have on ethnic identity among African American adults.

Problem Statement

Despite a continuous attempt to understand the meaning and influence of several factors on mental health help-seeking attitudes impacting utilization rates, specifically for African Americans, there remain significant discrepancies in the literature. Extensive research on help-seeking mental health attitudes has been largely correlated with several factors that may lead minority populations to underuse mental health services, including but not limited to lack of services, cost, transportation, insurance, and both cultural and societal stigma (Cheng, Kwan, & Sevig, 2013; Masuda et al., 2012; U. S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 1999). Nonetheless, there has been little understanding of African Americans' help-seeking attitudes being associated with factors such as ethnic identity development, bicultural identity, family ethnic socialization, self-concealment, and bicultural self-efficacy. Although research with African Americans has suggested more detrimental barriers that deter them from utilizing mental health services, including racism, discrimination, unfavorable perceptions, and mistrust and fear of treatment, there appears to be no clear distinction regarding the previously identified barriers possibly contributing to the underutilization of mental health services by this population.

Furthermore, researchers have argued and outlined the necessary need to understand ethnic identity development by implementing theories towards explaining its process. Most of the empirical based research in exploring ethnic identity development

has focused great attention towards psychosocial variables related with ethnic identity. Ethnic identity has been explored with the assistance of several cognitive developmental models, which have conceptualized ethnic identity development results from an internal process of self-exploration. Current models of ethnic identity formation have based their approach on individuals gaining meaning of ethnic identity from an internal exploration process; however, the models fail to consider additional influences, such as external factors. Moreover, African American individuals' sense of self and self-efficacy has been found to be significantly influenced by interpersonal relationships and external factors, such as immediate family, extended family, and members of the community, instead of the idea of the influences coming from internal factors (Lee & Ahn, 2013; Williams, Chapman, Wong, & Turkheimer, 2012).

Although there are current theories that have been generated to support minority populations, there appears to be a gap with those theories effectively identifying the attitudes, behaviors, psychological function, culture, and values of ethnic minorities. Empirical research focusing on exploring the factors that predict the development of positive ethnic identity and its influence on help-seeking attitudes is limited, particularly from an ecological theoretical perspective. To argue current theories avoid including both contextual factors and internal factors that may influence ethnic identity formation, Gonzales (2016) used an ecological theory approach to understand ethnic identity development with Hispanics. The ecological framework was considered a supportive approach as it appeared to provide a detailed overview of the influences of both contextual and external factors on ethnic identity formation.

To further argue the need of using an ecological approach to understand ethnic minorities' ethnic identity development, Xia, Do, and Xie (2013) study supported favorable results of ecological theory as a framework to assist in identifying both contextual and external factors that may influence ethnic identity development. In order to better understand African Americans' ethnic identity formation and its influence on mental health help-seeking attitudes, contextual factors prominent to African Americans, in addition to internal factors, may provide constructive insight and may contribute to improving mental health utilization rates of African Americans. This proposed study attempts to add to the literature by examining ethnic identity through an ecological framework that views human function and psychological events as an interplay between individual and contextual factors.

Because an ecological model of ethnic identity and mental health seeking attitudes was context and community-centric, it was reasonable to expect that individuals in different geographic or metropolitan areas could vary. Therefore, research was best focused on a relatively homogenous group against which further research of different communities could be compared. For that reason, the proposed research exclusively focused on African Americans in the greater Atlanta, GA metropolitan area.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to propose and test a structural equation ecological path model of African American ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes (see Figure 1), using a sample of African American adults in the Atlanta, Georgia metro area. I examined the relationship between three ecological levels

of human development, (a) individual level (level of bicultural identity), (b) family level (familial ethnic socialization), and (c) social context level (self-concealment), and how each are expected to predict ethnic identity. In succession, ethnic identity was expected to influence bicultural self-efficacy, and bicultural self-efficacy was expected to influence mental health help-seeking attitudes. Chapter 3 provides a full description of the proposed ethnic structural path model and proposed analyses.

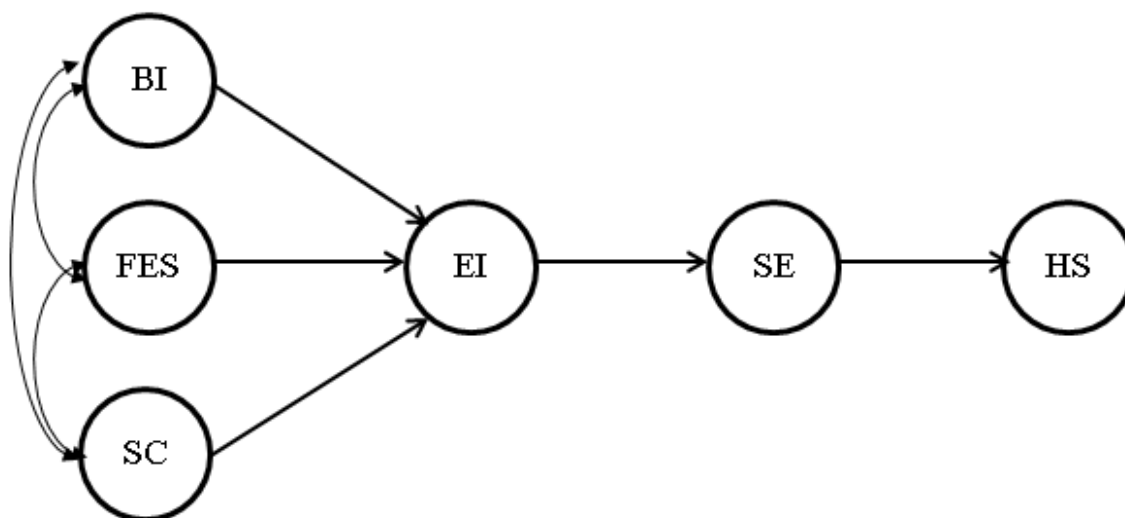


Figure 1. Construct-specific ecological path model of African American ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes. BI = bicultural identity (individual level), FES = familial ethnic socialization (family level), SC = self-concealment (social context level), EI = ethnic identity, SE = bicultural self-efficacy, HS = psychological help seeking.

Nature of the Study

Data was collected from African Americans in the 28 counties within the metro Atlanta area: Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton. The selected data sources support the ability to draw precise conclusions

regarding the effects of bicultural identity, family ethnic socialization, and self-concealment on ethnic identity and then its effect on attitudes towards seeking mental health services among African American adults. The proposed ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitude model and the identified variables of interest have not received previous focus in research studies with African Americans residing in the metro Atlanta, GA area. To conduct and examine this research, a structural equation design was used.

A path analysis is considered a type of structural equation model (SEM) that supports the analysis of interrelationships of one or more independent variables and dependent variables identified as either categorical or continuous (Ullman, 2007). The possibility of exploration of a casual association is permitted with path analysis. The focus of this research was to provide data to establish a causal association. A researcher is permitted to use path analysis as a basic method to assemble inferences regarding the causal construction of data. Path analysis symbolizes a form of a multiple regression model, which examines the paths occurring between variables characterizing regression equations. Each variable observed was noted as either endogenous or exogenous, identifiable within the SEM as rectangles. Exogenous variables are independent of causes; endogenous variables are identified by paths leading to them.

Research Question

From the literature review, the following research question was formulated.

RQ: To what extent does the ecological ethnic identity mental health-seeking structural path model depicted in Figure 1 fit the data in a sample of African Americans in the Atlanta, GA metro area?

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The theoretical framework chosen for this study was the ecological theory. The ecological theory provides a platform for examining the relationships between internal and external factor influences on ethnic identity. According to ecological theory, interactions between the values, beliefs of the majority country practices, societal structures, cultural values from original native country, and individual perceptions and characteristics may affect ethnic identity development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1979). Ecological models identify influences on an individual's attitudes and behavior resulting from friends, family, personal and social environments, and society that impact human development and psychological functioning (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). An individual's interpersonal relationships, family, and environment may affect formulation of one's ethnic identity, and in turn their ethnic identity may affect their self-efficacy. Self-efficacy regarding mental health may contribute to a decrease of access to and use of mental health services and information (Kageyama, 2012).

Bronfenbrenner (1995) placed significant value on the importance of outlining the developmental process of individuals being influenced by the environments they interact with. Bronfenbrenner (1995, 1979) argued the development of an individual's behavior and thinking process can be influenced and shaped by their personal interaction with four distinct systems: the microsystem (one's immediate environment), mesosystem (one's

social system), exosystem (one's formal or informal social structures) and macrosystem (one's cultural values). Renberg, Hjelmeland, and Kuposov (2008) supported that the ecological theory aligns with other empirical applied theories towards understanding the complexity of ethnic identity development and its role on help seeking attitudes towards mental health services. Therefore, aspects of the ecological theory suggest individual, family, and social context may influence ethnic identity development and ethnic identity may influence help seeking attitudes towards mental health services of African Americans. A comprehensive discussion of the ecological theory appears in Chapter 2.

Definitions of Terms

African American: Those individuals who identify as Black and are born in America. The distinction of the term relates to Blacks migrating from several regions, which produced offspring and roots in the United States of America. Blacks are usually grouped under the given name African American. This study describes Black Americans born in the United States.

Bicultural Identity: An individual endorsing both their culture of origin and that of another resulting from continuous interactions with both cultures (Amoah, 2015; Brannon, Markus, & Taylor, 2015; Landrine & Klonoff, 1995; Obasi & Leong, 2010; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Bicultural Self-Efficacy: When an individual welcomes, accepts, and places exceeding expectations on self, even in the presences of two cultures, they are perceived to have self-efficacy and reflections of self-validation, and be at homeostasis (Bandura, 1977; Bem, 1972).

Ecological Theory: The ecological perspective of human development that exists within various non-identical systems and influences from various external factors such as interactions with family and extended family, peers, neighbors, media, and authority (Barker, 1965).

Ethnic identity: The psychological interrelation of members within the same ethnic group, as well as self-recognition of being a member of an ethnic group, self-perception of belonging, and effective attitudes and emotions related to a particular ethnic group (Baldwin, 1979; Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990).

Family Ethnic Socialization: A socialization process involving both primary and external family members making children aware of their ethnic identity and preparing them to cope with challenges they may face associated with their ethnic identity, as a means of protecting against negative encounters (Knight et al., 2011).

Help Seeking Attitudes: An individual's attitudes, beliefs, and intentions towards engaging in professional psychological help (Fischer and Farina, 1995).

Self-Concealment: An act of purposefully concealing personal information from others that an individual anticipates as upsetting or derogatory (Larson & Chastain, 1990).

Structural equation model (SEM): An exhaustive statistical approach that appraises the intensity between a theoretical model and its fit on collected data (Kline, 2011).

Assumptions

The study was guided by several assumptions. First, an assumption was that each of three ecological constructs, (bicultural identity, family ethnic socialization, and self-concealment), would capture and adequately describe the development of ethnic identity. By focusing on the collaborative efforts of internal and external factors on ethnic identity and direct and indirect influences on mental health help-seeking attitudes, hopes are the research may add to the body of literature.

Next, it was assumed that the selected instruments used to examine the constructs of bicultural identity, family ethnic socialization, self-concealment, ethnic identity, bicultural self-disclosure, and mental health help-seeking attitudes are empirically valid and sound approaches for collecting and drawing suitable conclusions related to the presence of variability among and within study participants. Specifically, the African American Acculturation Scale, Familial Ethnic Socialization Scale, Self-Concealment Scale, Disclosure Expectations Scale, Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised Scale, Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale, and Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help-Short Form are assumed to be valid measures for the purpose and sample of this study.

Further, it was assumed that each participant would voluntarily complete all items of the instruments accurately and forthrightly as possible, and data collected would reflect their influence on ethnic identity development and its influence on mental health help-seeking attitudes. A final assumption was that the participants may have encountered a life experience that may have required seeking mental health services. It

was assumed that structural pathway equation modeling as a statistical method along with other statistical methods were appropriate for this study.

Limitations

This study may be limited by several factors. First, with the use of convenience sampling as an approach to collect participants, study participants residing in the metro area of Atlanta, GA may not be generalizable to African Americans in general and their ethnic identity development and mental health attitudes throughout the United States. The study examined ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes of African Americans. Cultural diversity may lack within the sample, limiting the results to be generalized of African Americans in a different geographical area, or among individuals from different cultural and racial backgrounds.

Third, the study relied on adult African Americans' cooperation to fill out self-report measures to collect data. The possibility may arise that participants report answers based on their perceptions of what is socially accepted instead of their true perceptions of ethnic identity development and attitudes toward seeking mental health. Fourth, racially identifying as African American and my personal background with working as a therapist with African Americans within the mental health field may result in a limitation during the interpretation process. Lastly, the proposed question and directional pathways may not foster a collective understanding of each measurable variable. Therefore, the measures may under or overestimate ethnic identity and its impact on mental health help-seeking attitudes.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to the exploration of particular ecological influences on ethnic identity development in relation to mental health help-seeking attitudes of African Americans in the metro Atlanta, GA area. Further, this study focused on one ethnic group and one geographical area. The scope of this study was limited to African American adults.

Significance of the Study

This study contributed an in-depth understanding of the individual level (level of bicultural identity), the family level (family ethnic socialization), and the social context level (self-concealment) interactions and how they may predict ethnic identity and its role in influencing mental health help-seeking attitudes of African American adults. The three ecological variables may provide significant information which had been ignored when studying each variable independently. As ethnically and culturally based models have expanded over the years, it has become evident there are many strengths related to being knowledgeable with the barriers minority populations may face, specifically when the need comes for obtaining mental health services. Identifying variables that may influence ethnic identity and how it may influence help-seeking attitudes in African American individuals may have many implications for practicing clinicians. Considering the growing population of those experiencing mental health concerns and the growing number of minority ethnic groups avoiding services, this study may provide a more comprehensive view of attitudes, behaviors, culture, values, and psychological functions of ethnic minority individuals.

This study has the potential of not only having implications for clinicians working with the African American population, but may also provide insight into African American individuals and their communities as a means of possibly encouraging use of mental health services. This study proposed and tested a path model exploring several ecological factors, and results may provide a foundational pathway for further research and practice to better understand ethnic identity and how it influences help-seeking attitudes, specifically with populations that identify as African American. Further, the findings of this study may in turn lead to effective training for practitioners regarding the specific barriers faced by this population and how to proceed.

Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth overview of the proposed research study, the background of the study, the problem statement, the nature of the study, and the theoretical foundation. The design of the study, research question, as well as study assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and significance of the study were included for advancement of understanding. The ecological variables of bicultural identity, family ethnic socialization, and self-concealment were discussed as related to the proposed study.

Most studies focusing on ethnic minorities' ethnic identity and help-seeking attitudes aim to close the negative gap between perceptions and attitudes. Historically, research has focused on minority individuals' ethnicity development and their perceptions and attitudes towards seeking mental health services; however, much is still unknown about minority groups, specifically African Americans. The purpose of this

study was to investigate three ecological factors and their influence on ethnic identity development and influence on mental health help-seeking attitudes of African American adults. This study will contribute to the betterment of mental healthcare practitioners' practices and how they interact with African Americans. Chapter 2 contains a comprehensive discussion of the theoretical framework and research literature supporting the ecological factors, their influence on bicultural self-efficacy, and mental health help-seeking attitudes of African American adults.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Literature presented in Chapter 1 implied that ethnic identity formation was influenced from an internal exploration process; however, there are other factors that influence ethnic identity formation. In support of this research study related to posing and testing an ecological model of African American ethnic identity and its influence on mental health help-seeking attitudes among African Americans within metro Atlanta, GA, the following literature review provided evidence to support the purpose of this research study. This chapter was arranged into consecutive sections to provide an overview of ecological theory, ethnic identity, and the ecology of African American ethnic identity. These sections were followed by an exploration of the contextual and internal factors that may be predictors of ethnic identity, ethnic identity influence on bicultural self-efficacy and mental health help-seeking attitudes, and bicultural self-efficacy influence on mental health help-seeking attitudes.

Literature Search Strategy

To successfully locate related literature for the proposed study, numerous applicable databases were used. These databases included PubMed, ERIC, Medline, ProQuest, the National Institute of Health research library, and U. S. DHHS reports. Peer-reviewed journals were used related to African American and minority mental health, African American mental health studies, African American and minority studies, and African American and minority mental health and social behavior. Several key words and phrases were used in the literature searches, including: *access to mental health care and*

services, acculturation, barriers, cultural beliefs, ethnicity, self-concealment, mental health care perceptions, African Americans, ecological systems theory, ecological theory of human development, ethnic/racial models, African American ethnic/racial models, access and utilization of mental health care, African American access and utilization of mental health care, self-efficacy, bicultural self-efficacy, Atlanta, GA, and metro Atlanta, GA. Boolean operators such as AND, OR, and NOT were also implemented in the search.

Ecological Theory: Foundation in the Literature

Ecological psychology has become known for its broad all-inclusive approach towards studying human behavior and functioning (Willems, 1965). Using a conceptual approach supports going beyond the psycho-interpersonal influences on human development and allows for inclusion of environmental factors as influences on human development. The ecological perspective of human development is that human development exists within various non-identical systems and influences from various external factors, such as interaction with family, extended family, peers, neighbors, media, and authority (Barker, 1965). In addition, recognition of the roles of interactions between several social contexts and settings as well as the continuous evolution of the natural environment in which the individual encompasses has been a focus of ecological psychology (Barker, 1965).

The ecological perspective suggests behavioral dysfunction and psychological affliction result from a true interrelationship or disconnection between the individual and their environment (Wicker, 1979). Further, with the transition of environment settings from one to the next, individuals find themselves with the need to adapt and adjust to the

unfamiliar experience as a means of regaining stability within their environment (Willems, 1965). However, when difficulties arise during the adjustment and adapting process to the new environmental setting, behavioral dysfunction may become a result (Willems, 1965).

The idea that the process and functioning of human development are influenced by various comprehensive interrelationship processes and environmental factors has been a topic explored within psychological literature. To help support that argument, Kantor in 1924 referenced human behavior is not only influenced by interrelationship processing but also is influenced by interaction of both individual and environment (Willems, 1965). Several theories were considered as a means of explaining the individual and the complexity of various environments in which the individual interacted Swartz & Martin, (1997). Ecological theorists were considered to be individuals who sought to describe and provide understanding of human development by addressing the continuous evolution of internal and environmental factors, as well as their ability to impact psychological and behavior operation. The ecological theory may focus on either objective or psychological characteristics of the environment or focus on the person or group to explain human development (Willems, 1965).

Some other theorists indicated the role of the equitable concepts of the environment and argued the entity of exploration should be the setting itself including its physical aspects and social essentials of the setting (Barker, 1968). Stokols (1992) proposed that in order to fully understand human behavior, outlining the influence of

group phenomenological experience of the setting, instead of personal phenomenological experience, should be the entity of exploration.

As the exploration of human development gained ground, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development became another avenue to explain human functioning. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human behavior focused on the influence of personal and environmental concepts impacting human behavior, also addressing the interactions between individuals, and the extended organizations in which they are affiliated To support Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development, Cicchetti and Valention (2006) propositioned a transactional model focusing on child development suggesting the individual and environment are dependent on each other and find common ground.

There are a variety of theories within the ecological model; all living substances are impacted by both internal and external expeditions, and adaption of individuals occur as a continuous process as their interpersonal shape and the environment characteristics shape them as a means of achieving and maintaining stability (Swartz & Martine, 1997). Toro, Trickett, Wall, and Salem (1991) suggested:

Emphasis on addressing the concepts in which individuals are planted and occurrence of behaviors; exploring and understanding the systems within the ecological environment through various levels of investigations; paying tribute towards the possibility of intradependence between environments that present with similar characteristics; acknowledging and accepting human behavior is transferable, and true understanding cannot be achieved when exploring it

separate from other contexts in which it occurs; and the assumption that interventions must be developed related to particular ecologies in which they were implemented. (p. 1209)

Ecological models have gained profound awareness within recent years as many have sought to conceptualize and research the influences related to multiple psychosocial phenomenon (Hobfoll, 1998; Kazak, 1989). However, there has been great emphasis related to empirical based research and theoretical writings within the field of psychology focusing on individual properties and neglecting exploration of the environment (Swartz & Martin, 1997; Willems, 1965). However, with notation there are many influences on human development and behavior, focusing on a multitude of factors should be a means of exploration in research studies.

Ethnic Identity

An individual's ethnicity falls within a fixed categorical description suggesting ethnic group association is determined by the country in which the individual originated from; however, ethnic identity has been defined as a psychological construct that supports differences among members within the same ethnic group and across non-identical situations and settings (Phinney, 1996). Supported by exhausted review of literature, Phinney (1990) declared that many have defined ethnic identity as a psychological interrelation of members within the same ethnic group, as well as self-recognition as being a member of an ethnic group, self-perception of belonging, and effective attitudes and emotions related to a particular ethnic group.

Ethnic identity is considered to be a constructive construct of individual identity within ethnic group membership (Baldwin, 1979; Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990) and preceding research concluded it is an important pertinent composite of individual identity for ethnic group members presenting with strong racial characteristics; including Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and African Americans (Aries & Moorehead, 1989; Baldwin, 1984; Bernal & Knight, 1993; Phinney, 1996; Phinney & Alipiuria, 1990). Erikson (1996) stated ethnic identity may be most pertinent to ethnic group members as early as during the adolescent stage of development and continue into early adulthood, particularly when presented with greater developmental concerns of identity development. Despite the fact that children appear to gain awareness of their ethnic identity and ethnic group membership quite early (Quintana, 1999), individuals during the adolescent phase of development appear to have higher cognitive abilities, which allows them to effectively examine and gain meaning of their ethnicity (Baker, 1965). In addition, with having higher cognitive abilities, adolescents and young adults' ethnic challenges may become increasingly pertinent because they are being exposed to discrimination and prejudice through engaging in various social engagements and activities (Phinney & Chavira, 1995).

As previously stated above, ethnic identity development theories assume minority identified groups subject themselves in an ethnic identity development process that occurs over time, as exploration and resolution of ethnic concerns take place, resulting to achieving ethnic identity (Phinney, 1991). Past research identifies this assumption (Phinney, 1989, 1992; Phinney & Chavira, 1992; & Phinney & Tarver, 1988). In a

longitudinal study examining the relationship between ethnic identity and self-esteem conducted by Phinney and Tarver (1988), the authors concluded ethnically diverse adolescents and young adults between the ages of 16 and 19 had a favorable progression towards ethnic identity development. In addition, the authors found relatively one-third of African American and Caucasian young adolescents, compared to one-half of Hispanic, African American, and Asian older adolescents and young adults (Phinney, 1989) demonstrated patterns of ethnic identity search (Phinney & Tarver, 1988). Phinney (1992) further supported Phinney and Tarver's (1988) study by concluding ethnic identity search was higher among minority young adult individuals when compared to minority older adolescents, suggesting an identified pattern. However, each study does not provide acknowledgement related to factors influencing the developmental and progression processes; however, there was acknowledgment that while ethnic identity is of significance to minority individuals in the adolescent stage of development, it was suggested actual achievement occurs by adulthood years. This present study focused on adults as the population and thus participants were African Americans.

Ecology of African American Identity

As previously conceptualized within frameworks that explored ethnic identity development, it was thought ethnic identity resulted from an interrelationship exploration process of ethnic concerns as one's attitudes towards one's ethnic and dominate group develops. However, because individuals are not subjected to human development occurring in an isolation process, away from family, peers, communities, and various social contexts, supports individuals are subjected to be influenced on a continuous basis

by external factors as well. Hence, one could argue identity, particularly ethnic identity, is within belief to be influenced by various external contextual factors. Therefore, using a model that explores and considers both various internal and external contextual factors that may play role on development, particularly ethnic identity development, and an ecological model may be most appropriate.

In conjunction with, as explained previously, African American individuals' perception of self has been concluded to be significantly influenced by interpersonal relationships and other external relationships, such as those with immediate and distant family members and members of the community, rather than by internal factors alone (Elion, Wang, Slaney, & French, 2012; Yildirim & Roopnarine, 2015). African American individuals, including other ethnic minority individuals, are more likely to place significant emphasis on family interdependence, family cohesion, and the importance and value of the family to every aspect of their lives at a much heightened rate than non-ethnic minority populations (McWayne, Melzi, Schick, Kennedy, & Mundt, 2013; Peck, Brodish, Malanchuk, Banerjee, & Eccles, 2014; Yildirim & Roopnarine, 2015). When compared to non-ethnic parents' promotion of independence and self-reliance, African American parents find the need to intensively dictate to their children respect for parental authority, conformity to parental standards, and interpersonal association, considering, (Pearl, French, Dumas, Moreland, & Prinz, 2014; Yildirim & Roopnarine, 2015). In addition, African American adolescents' perception of self pride appears to be influenced by family interaction instead of individual forces, in relation to non-ethnic adolescents (McWayne et al., 2014). The word *family* presents with significant meaning within many

ethnic minority groups, as the word describes feelings of unity, loyalty, closeness, and relationships constructed among African American individuals and their family members (Hood, Brevard, Nguyen, & Belgrave, 2013; Sheely & Bratton, 2010). The word *family* presents itself as a factor that addresses feeling of interdependence among African American families. Highlighting African American individuals may tend to place superior value on family, relationships with others, and alternative contextual forces; instead of internal forces, in relationship to self and self-efficacy. African American ethnic identity may have the potential to be influenced by external forces as well. Therefore, one could argue the current models related to ethnic identity development reject the notation of providing a true explanation of this populations' ethnic identity development.

Within the idea of an ecological perspective, ethnic identity development would result from the various interrelationships between the individual, their immediate and extended environments, pronounced social contexts, and the superior culture's attitudes, beliefs, and values. These interrelationships correspond to paths A, B, and C in Figure 2. In addition, these ecological levels (see paths D, E, and F within Figure 2) may have direct influence on ethnic identity development. Over many years of research, few studies have explored the direct influences of external factors on ethnic identity development (Gonzales, 2016; Phinney, 1990; Xia, Do, & Xie, 2013; Yeh & Huang, 1996). Consequently, there is minimum existing research that provides concrete evidence on which ecological levels have the most influence on ethnic identity development and which factors interlocked between the levels may mostly be applicable to African

American ethnic identity. In this present study, identification of three ecological levels, individual level, family level, and social context level, were examined. Selection of these three levels occurred because it was believed each has a significant impact on human development as it appears the individual has an immediate interaction with each level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

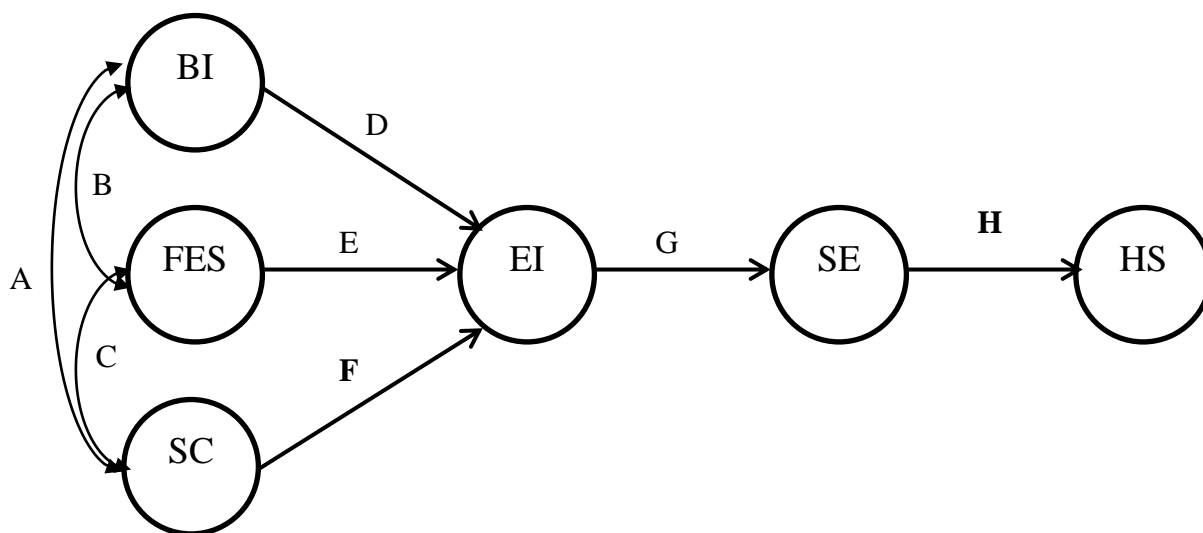


Figure 2. Relationships among construct-specific ecological paths of African American ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes. BI = bicultural identity (individual level), FES = familial ethnic socialization (family level), SC = self-concealment (social context level), EI = ethnic identity, SE = bicultural self-efficacy, HS = psychological help seeking.

As depicted in Figure 2, ethnic identity directly affects bicultural self-efficacy (Path G) and mediates the effects of each ecological domain on bicultural self-efficacy. Similarly, bicultural self-efficacy directly affects psychological help seeking and mediates the effects of ethnic identity and each ecological domain on psychological help seeking.

This proposed model may be a more updated, accurate, and an acceptable explanation of ethnic identity development and its influence on mental health help seeking attitudes. Rationale for the included pathways was discussed in subsequent sections

Bicultural Identity: Individual Level

Within the individual level, the impact of bicultural identity on ethnic identity was explored. The bicultural identity integration (BII) is significant to the African American experience (Seaton, Neblett, Cole, & Prinstein, 2013) that has supported the need for researchers measuring the level of bicultural identity within empirical studies with African American individuals (Amoah, 2015). Existing research argues that the level of bicultural identity directly impacts mental health help-seeking attitudes. However, proposed in this study, the level of bicultural identity was hypothesized to impact mental health help-seeking attitudes because of its effects on ethnic identity development. Within this current section, the principle of bicultural identity was addressed first. Following this subsection was a description of pathway D, the mediating effects of ethnic identity on the correlation between bicultural identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes.

Bicultural identity, also known as biculturalism, refers to an individual endorsing both their culture of origin and that of another resulting from continuous interactions with both cultures (Amoah, 2015; Brannon, Markus, & Taylor, 2015; Landrine & Klonoff, 1995; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Obasi & Leong, 2010; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). However, bicultural identity is more often thought to be more affiliated with describing human behavioral changes, particularly with minority population, as the individual seeks

to hold on to practices of their culture of origin and encompasses practices of a majority population's culture, to the extent the individual unifies both cultures (Schwartz et al., 2015; Schwartz & Unger, 2010).

Bicultural identity is highly considered to be a multidimensional variable defined by the degree and proficiency to which individuals, subjectively ethnic minority individuals, internalize concepts of two cultures representing their identity, interpersonal relations, practices, expected behavior, beliefs, values, worldviews, and attitudes (Nguyen, Huynh, & Benet-Martinez, 2009; Padilla, 2006; Schwartz et al., 2015). However, when referring to ethnic identity, it is defined as a psychological variable describing how ethnic individuals identify and express their acceptance or belonging to their ethnic group in relation to the majority ethnic group (Phinney, 1990). While these two variables are used within research interchangeable, the levels of bicultural identity and ethnic identity are most definitely separate, nevertheless are a related process (Ferrari, Rosnati, Manzi, & Benet- Martínez, 2015).

Over many years of research, researchers have sought to conceptualize the bicultural identity process as being unidimensional based on the idea that bicultural individuals only deal with two concerns, to what extent are they motivated or granted to keep identification and engagement with their culture of origin, now considered to be the ethnic minority culture and to what extent they are motivated or granted to identify and engage in the host dominate culture (Berry, 1990; Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006; Del Pilar & Udasco, 2004, Nguyen & Benet- Martínez, 2007; Trimble, 2003). In addition, most measures of bicultural identity are unidimensional in essence (Benet-

Martinez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002; Berry et al., 2006, Nguyen, 2013; Nguyen & Benet- Martínez, 2007). Nonetheless, accepting the behaviors and values of the majority culture does not warrant the rejection of the behaviors and values of the minority ethnic cultural, as once thought, and research has concluded elevated rates of emotional and psychological distress among minority ethnic populations, especially immigrants, encountering strain to integrate unidimensionally (Nguyen & Benet- Martínez, 2010).

As researchers began to explore and conceptualize bicultural identity (Berry, 1990; Berry et al., 2006; Murdock, 2016; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010) it was concluded its process is more bidirectional than unidimensional. Berry (1990) defined a bi-dimensional model considering the degree in which an individual has integrated their culture of origin and the host-culture. Within this model five concepts were identified in which ethnic individuals may engage in while living in a society that is culturally diverse: *Acculturation*, includes individuals adapting to the majority culture and maintaining their culture of origin; *Bicultural Identity*, also referred to as *Biculturalism* and *Integration*, the process in which the individual maintains values and behaviors of their culture of origin while adapting the majority culture values and behaviors; *Assimilation*, the process in which the individual completely engages in the majority culture and revokes engagement in their culture of origin; *Separation*, the process in which the individual revokes the majority culture and exclusively engages in their culture of origin; and *Marginality*, the process in which the individual revokes engagement and belonging to both their culture of origin and majority culture.

Influence of Bicultural Identity on Ethnic Identity: Path D

Of the five cultural aspects presented previously, individuals that maintain their behaviors and values of the culture of origin while adapting the values and behaviors of the majority culture are more likely to engage in dual cultural contexts, which is defined as the behavior of bicultural individuals (Chu, White, Verrelli, 2017). For that reason, individuals that are able to integrate both cultural contexts are more likely to feel and have a better belonging and adherence to their ethnic group and have a great sense of clarity related to their ethnic identity (ethnic identity high). Previously conducted research related to understanding the assimilation process has suggested those individuals that are over-aculturated because the rejection of their African cultural roots or lack of exposure to their African cultural roots are subjected to intrapersonal identity challenges (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013; Szapocznik, Scopetta, Jurtines, & Arandalde, 1979). Consequently, it can be argued that low level bicultural identity individuals, particularly those who are over-aculturated, may lack a feeling of belonging and connection to their ethnic group and have a poor sense of clarity related to their ethnic identity (ethnic identity low).

Chue et al. (2017) constructively argued, when examining African American individuals, most are less likely to identify as culturally separated (i.e., retain their African culture and lack to acquire and adapt knowledge related to Americanized cultural aspects) and an even fewer are considered to identify as culturally marginal (revokes engagement and belonging to both their culture of origin and majority culture; Chu et al., 2017). Within this current study, exploration of separated or marginal cultural processes

are not of focus because of the prior probabilities of these two options being low among racial ethnic minorities (Hanasono, Chen, & Wilson, 2014). For example, among 345 ethnic minorities living within the United States, none of the ethnic individuals represented a separated or marginal cultural process; the ethnic individuals represented either a bicultural or assimilated cultural process (Hanasono et al., 2014). Therefore, within this current study, of the five cultural processes, only bicultural identity (high and low biculturalism) were examined, and it was hypothesized that low bicultural identity individuals would have a lower ethnic identity than high bicultural identity individuals.

Support for this hypothesis was relevant in literature. Ferrari, Rosnati, Mansi, and Benet-Martínez (2015) explored the association between ethnic identity, measured by the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure ([MEIM], Phinnee, 1992), and the level of bicultural identity, measured by the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 1 ([BII-1] Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005) among transracial adoptees (i.e., from Latin, Eastern European, Africa, or Asian and reside now in the United States). Results of the study identified the individual's levels of ethnic identity awareness predicted higher levels of BII, which suggests bicultural individuals with the ability to define, have a higher awareness of, and achieve their ethnic identity, in turn, bicultural identity integration is defined, made aware, and achieved as well (Ferrari et al., 2015). In addition, the results also indicated bicultural individuals with the inability to define, have a higher awareness of, and achieve their ethnic identity, resulted in a lack of bicultural identity integration being defined, awareness, and achievement occurring, which suggest ethnic identity decreases as one immerses into the majority culture (Ferrari et al., 2015).

Within another study, Johnson et al. (2012) examined the relationship between intercultural (bicultural) attitudes, measured by the Diversity Attitudes Scale of the Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire ([DA Scale of CASQ], Moely, Mercer, Ilustre, Miron &, McFarland, 2002), ethnic identity, measured by the MEIM (Phinney, 1992), and self-efficacy, measured by the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES], Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) among 554 African (N=473) and United States (N=81) individuals ranging in age from 11-27. Results indicated those individuals who were able to integrate both cultures had higher ethnic identity awareness compared to those who were immersed in assimilation as their ethnic identity awareness was low. Further, integration of both cultures was positively correlated with self-efficacy and immersing in assimilation negatively correlated with self-efficacy (Johnson et al., 2012). Therefore, the authors suggest bicultural identity positively impacts both ethnic identity and self-efficacy as to where assimilation identity may negatively impact both ethnic identity and self-efficacy.

Ethnic Identity as a Mediator Between Biculturalism and Help-Seeking Attitudes

Previous research has indicated there are relationships between biculturalism and help-seeking attitudes, such as self-efficacy, stigma, shame, discrimination, emotional distress, and cultural mistrust (Corrigan, 2012; Hampton & Sharp, 2014; Neighbors et al., 2007; Neighbors & Jackson, 1996; Obasi, E. M., & Leong, 2009; Sun, Hoyt, Broockberg, Lam, & Tiwari, 2016). Review of literature on biculturalism and mental health help-seeking attitudes among African Americans outlined that most research studies demonstrate a relationship between biculturalism and mental health help-seeking attitudes (Rust, Jackson, Ponterotto, & Blumberg, 2011); however, the true direction of

the relationship remains unclear; because some of the literature reported an converse relationship between biculturalism and mental health help-seeking attitudes (Corrigan, 2012; Hampton & Sharp, 2014), while others reported a positive relationship (Devos & Mohamed, 2014; Huynh, Devos, & Altman, 2015).

Inconsistencies within the literature may play a role in the inability to measure biculturalism, because previous research focused on biculturalism being measured unidimensionally (Devos & Mohamed, 2014). The results from of these reported higher scores represented on a unidimensional measurement of biculturalism suggests assimilation cultural process (i.e., rejections of African culture and captivation in American culture) and lower scores of biculturalism indicate separation cultural process (i.e., captivation in African culture and detachment from the American culture). Nonetheless, either of the biculturalism outcomes are inclined to direct towards poor mental health help-seeking attitudes.

Separation as a cultural process has been shown to influence mental health help-seeking attitudes because as individuals adjust and conform to the mainstream American culture, they are confronted by many acculturative barriers (Han & Pong, 2015; Roh et al., 2017; Watson & Hunter, 2015). Furthermore, assimilation (i.e., low bicultural identity) as a cultural process, has also shown to have influence on mental help-seeking attitudes because during this process individuals reject their native culture and detachment of cultural practices, which are concepts that are important to generational continuity and awareness of belonging (Linos, Slopen, Berkman, Subramanian, & Kawachi, 2014; Phinney et al., 1992; Ting-Toomey, 2015; Yoon et al., 2013).

Existing studies that have explored biculturalism bidimensionally, demonstrated cultural processes separation and assimilation are ideally related with negative mental health help-seeking attitudes, and biculturalism is the uttermost adaptive cultural process; while marginality is considered an alternative cultural process to biculturalism selection is limited among ethnic minority groups (Hanasono et al., 2014; Thoits, 2013; Tynes, Umaña-Taylor, Rose, Lin, & Anderson, 2012; Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Although previous research suggests a direct link may exist between levels of biculturalism and mental health help-seeking attitudes, ethnic identity may mediate the relationship for bicultural and assimilated individuals. While the mediating effect of ethnic identity is thought to occur because of an individual giving up their culture or detachment for their cultural practices this may have an impact on their psychological connection with their ethnic group (i.e., ethnic identity low) previously discussed in sections above, and ethnic identity being low may have an impact on mental health help-seeking attitudes (debated within a later section). Nonetheless, previous literature has ignored the possible influence of ethnic identity while examining the relationship between biculturalism and mental health help-seeking attitudes.

A current argument would be ethnic identity is not suggested to mediate the relationship between biculturalism and mental health help-seeking for separated individuals. Separated individuals revoke the majority culture and exclusively engage in their culture of origin. It is thought separated individual's psychological adjustment may be poor because of the cultural adaptive barriers and distress that they may confront, as previous stated. Another argument is marginal individual's psychological adjustment may

be poor because of the potential impacts on two identities, ethnic and American (Phinney et al., 1992). Nonetheless, as previously stated above, these two cultural processes, separation and assimilation, were not be explored within this study.

To summarize, having an environment that is dominantly Euro-American and rejection of one's traditional culture occurs, the individual is most likely to assimilate to the presenting mainstream cultural practices and belonging (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). And, as African American individuals, even if born in the United States, engage in more Americanized cultural practices they are more likely to detach from their ancestral cultural practices (Obasi & Leong, 2010). However, those individuals that reject their ancestral culture may experience psychological stress because of the impacts on ethnic identity and then those impacts may influence mental health help-seeking attitudes.

Family Ethnic Socialization-The Family Level

Addressing the family level, several variables are identified to likely influence ethnic identity. A few research studies have explored family factors influencing ethnic identity; however, exploratory documentation proposes family ethnic socialization may be critical towards its formation (Demo & Hughes, 1990; Hughes, et al., 2006; Knight et al., 2011; Marshall, 1995; Umaña- Taylor, Alfaro, Bámaca, & Guimond, 2009; Umaña-Taylor, Zeiders, & Updegraff, 2013).

Socialization defined by Marshall (1995) is the process of preparing novice individuals for activities in their cultural, physical, and social atmospheres. It additionally refers to the course of adjustment by cause of learning acceptable roles of social performance and emerging in social interchange, by either direct direction or experience,

with notation of the family being the dominant socializing factor with the significant influence on developing individual's personality, self-identity, capabilities, and future development and functioning (Marshall, 1995).

An ideal condition of socialization, particularly ethnic socialization, encompasses educating children about their dominate culture and its cultural practices and principles. Ethnic minority families' ethnic socialization practices additionally involve making their children aware of their ethnic identity and preparing their children to cope with challenges they may face associated with their ethnic identity, as a means of protecting the negative encounters of the child's minority ethnic status (Knight et al., 2011). Hence, ethnic minority families' identification of ethnic socialization encompasses the intergenerational conveyance of particular concepts and impressions that pertain to group and personal identity, affiliations within and among ethnic groups, and the ethnic group's arrangement within society (Marshall, 1995). As ethnic minority families are faced with preparing their children to transition into adulthood, they are also faced with preparing their children to cope with being labeled as being part of an ethnic minority group in a race-conscious culture (Sweeney, 2013). When examining ethnic socialization, two-parents and expanded family members may be involved. African American families, in particular, are known to allow both their immediate and expanded family members to play a significant role in providing education and awareness to their children, related to personal beliefs of identification within their ethnic group and culturally appropriate concepts and behaviors (Peck, Brodish, Malanchuk, Banerjee, & Eccles, 2014).

Relying on research targeting primarily African American families, literature proposes there are identified controversies commonly affirmed within ethnic socialization processes: a) instructions regarding one's culture (i.e., cultural history and practice), b) instructions regarding racial and ethnic pride, and c) instructions regarding effect engagement within the identified mainstream culture by ensuring their children receive preparation to cope with experiences of discrimination, prejudice, and racism (Bentley-Edwards & Stevenson, 2016; Dunbar, Leerkes, Coard, Supple, & Calkins, 2016; Marshall, 1995; Peck et al., 2014; Priest et al., 2014; Smith- Bynum, Anderson, Davis, Franco, & English, 2016; Tang, McLoyd, & Hallman, 2016). Existing research studies have concluded that 72 % of parents incorporate ethnic socialization principles (Brega & Coleman, 1999; Lesane-Brown, Brown, Caldwell, & Seller, 2005) and 61% of adolescents reported inquiring about messages related to ethnic socialization principles (Winkler, 2010). Although the majority of existing research on ethnic socialization focused on African American families, exploratory evidence proposes more consideration should be given to this concern, particularly how does family ethnic socialization practices impact ethnic identity (Neblett Jr, Banks, Cooper, & Smalls-Glover, 2013; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009; Umaña-Taylor et al 2013).

Influence of Family Ethnic Socialization on Ethnic Identity: Path E

As children develop a sense of personal self and identity, family socialization traditions are known to be a significant influence on that process (Marshall, 1995). Comparatively, children's sense of ethnic identity is thought to be impacted by ethnic socialization traditions. With those two notations identified, there still appears to be

limited empirical research that explores the ideal relationship between family ethnic socialization and ethnic identity; nonetheless, exploratory empirical documentation reinforces this assumption.

Peck et al. (2013) examined the relationship between parents' racial/ethnic socialization and ethnic identity among African American (Black) families with adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17. Results identified that parents who acknowledged employing ethnic socialization traditions while completing both an open-ended and closed ethnic socialization interview appeared to have children presenting with a higher self-ethnic identity. From the study 71% of the families that had at least one son and 73% of the families that had at least one daughter defined to their children what it meant to be Black and used racial/ethnic socialization traditions. However, when comparing those families that had a higher socio-economic status (SES) with those families with a lower SES, the families with a higher SES were more likely to use ethnic socialization traditions than those families from a lower SES. In addition, those families that reported employing racial/ethnic socialization tradition bias and cultural socialization messages that had at least one son 57% reported they sent bias messages and 76% reported cultural socialization messages when compared to those who had at least one daughter, as 38% reported they sent bias messages and 84% reported cultural socialization messages. In this study, the families differed in SES, which outlined when ethnicity was controlled there is a relationship to parental socialization. Further, there was a significant difference in terms of parents' ethnic socialization traditions employed on gender of the

adolescent and difference of gender of the parents, as mothers reported more cultural socialization messages to their daughters and more bias messages to their sons.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between parental ethnic socialization and ethnic identity among school-age children. Two studies of African American adolescents ranging in ages between 9 and 17 and either both their parents, just their mother, or family member indicated that either immediate or extended family member who educated the adolescent about African American (Black) culture, ethnic and racial pride, and discrimination and staffed Black artifacts within the home tended to have adolescents with a higher self-ethnic identity and sense of belonging than those adolescents whose immediate or extended family member who did not employ ethnic socialization traditions (Derlan & Umaña-Taylor, A. J, 2015; McNeil Smith, Reynolds,, Fincham, & Beach, 2016). Comparatively, in another study of 11th and 12th grades African American high school students and their mothers, the mothers who employed higher levels of parental ethnic socialization traditions, including racial and ethnic pride, racial and ethnic equality, self-development, self-awareness, bias, and discrimination tending to have adolescents with a higher self-ethnic identity (Paasch-Anderson & Lamborn, 2014).

Furthermore, one study explored the relationship between perceived Black media racial/ethnic socialization messages and ethnic identity (Adams-Bass, Stevenson, & Kotzin, 2014). Within this study, African American youth who had a higher perception of the significance of communicating positive African American racial/ethnic socialization messages tended to have a higher self-ethnic identity. The primary assumption related to

this study was that African American youths who have collected positive ethnic socialization messages would more likely have an acceptance toward understanding the value of family ethnic socialization.

With limited research within this area; however, exploratory findings propose that those individuals who received ethnic socialization traditions and messages tend to have a higher self-ethnic identity (Adams-Bass, Stevenson, & Kotzin, 2014; Paasch-Anderson & Lamborn, 2014). Despite the fact families may employ ethnic socialization traditions and messages a means of protecting their children from psychological distress related to their minority status, there is no concrete evidence family ethnic socialization may have a direct impact on the development of mental health help-seeking attitudes. The extent to that ethnic socialization is able to conclude mental health help-seeking attitudes among African American individuals may differ as an operation of their ethnic identity.

Self-Concealment-The Social Context Level

Although within the past years multicultural awareness among residents within the U.S. has significantly increased (Devos & Mohamed, 2014), racial discrimination continues to be a barricade for African Americans and other minority ethnic groups (Brown, Marshall, Bower, Woodham, & Waheed, 2014). Ethnic minority individuals frequently experience adverse situations associated with their minority stature including direct or indirect involvement of adverse stereotyping and prejudice, inadequacy of multicultural awareness, and discrimination. For example, in a study by Zeiders, Hoyt, and Adams (2014), when compared to majority members (those who identified as White/Caucasian) African- American young adults reported personal experience with

discrimination 24% (n = 12) and had personal beliefs society has adverse stereotypes of African Americans 31% (n =16). In a study by Sanchez and Awad (2016), which explored the racial identity attitudes and perceived racial discrimination of African American, Black Caribbean, and Latino Caribbean urban college students, found that 56% African American individuals reported encounters of discrimination related to their racial identity. Furthermore, research has also established that African American individuals feel as they are discriminated against within several diverse situations; for example, in comparison to White Americans, African Americans often feel discriminated against, in social public settings, such as employment, school, shopping centers, and media sources (Burt & Simons, 2015).

Previous theoretical manuscripts related to this topic has indicated that identifying as a minority exerts significant emotional, psychological, and behavior challenge because racial discrimination, known as racism, is ingrained in cultural, social, and institutional construction of American civilization, which makes it frequent experience relatively impossible to avoid (Love, 2014). Experiencing racism can impact psychological and interpersonal adjustment because the acts of racism are degrading, intrinsically demeaning, and extremely personal; resulting in attacks and negative responses on self that impact the ability to change to occur (Mitchell, Watkins, Shires, Chapman, & Burnett, 2015). The personal experiences of racism may motivate one to self-conceal because of the extent to which an individual perceives racism as being discriminated against or stigmatized if they were to choose to disclose intrapersonal information (Goffman, 1963). Self-concealment is defined as an act of purposefully concealing

personal information from others that one anticipates as upsetting or derogatory (Larson & Chastain, 1990). Goffman (1963) argued those individuals who occupy a noticeable stigma, such as minority ethnicity and race, elect to self-conceal as a means of covering the identified differences among themselves and others. For example, in a study by Mesidor and Sly (2014) the large majority of African American college students reported they had psychological distress (71.2%) and hid their psychological distress, at least in segments, as an act to protect themselves. Within another study, self-stigma was concluded to be negatively related with self-concealment of psychological distress among college students (Wade et al., 2011). The concluded 82% of the college students reported self-stigma truly predicted their intentions to seek help and self-disclose, as the thoughts of losing self-esteem or self-respect was the greatest fear. In a study by Wheaton, Sternberg, McFarlane, and Sarda (2016), which investigated the acts of self-concealment with the self-concealment scale (SCS) among individuals diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) (n = 115) and a community controlled group (n = 513), found that 75.7% of those individuals within the OCD group had significant higher scores on the SCS than the controlled community group individuals. The study identified those individuals within the OCD group were less likely to engage in self-concealment practices because of negative thoughts related to seeking professional help and treatment outcomes when compared to those in the controlled group.

Individuals who appear to self-conceal are significantly prone to psychological distress, such as stress, anxiety and depression (Larson & Chastian, 1990) and African Americans who self-conceal are more subjected to higher levels of stress (Leleux-

Labarge, Hatton, Goodnight, & Masuda, 2015). In a sample of African American participants, self-concealment appeared to hinder the formation of a complete and permanent perception of self (Edmonds, Masuda, & Tully, 2014). Contrarily, seeking to disclose psychological distress to others has been related with positive mental health outcomes, and elevated acceptances of authenticity (Doğan & Çolak, 2016). Perhaps, as a result, African Americans who self-disclose are more likely to format a complete and permanent perception of self-identity than those who do not (Larson, Chastain, Hoyt, & Ayzenberg, 2015). Although studies have sampled African Americans along with other racial participants, reflecting the impact of self-disclosure and self-concealment, there are limitations of those preceding studies, such as a clear process of understanding thought suppression and secrecy, as each are considered to play a significant role in cultural diverse psychopathological conditions. Despite the fact self-concealment may be utilized by racial and ethnic minorities, there remains a need for clarity on how self-concealment operates for in-group minority populations, such as African Americans and its influence on ethnic identity and help-seeking attitudes.

Influence of Self-Concealment on Ethnic Identity: Path F

Few studies have explored social context factors role on ethnic identity formation (Phinney, 1990; Umaña-Taylor, 2004); however, some existing empirical evidence proposes ethnic identity varies based upon subjective characteristics related to the social context (Bisin, Patacchini, Verdier, & Zenou, 2016; Kang & Bodenhausen, 2015; Umaña- Taylor et al., 2014; Way, Hernández, Rogers, & Hughes, 2013). For example, in Bisin et al. (2016) study, it was concluded ethnic identity was improved in relation to the

cultural distinction of integration of the neighborhood and ethnic identity was reduced in relation to the cultural conformity of integration of the neighborhood. In addition, Umaña- Taylor et al. (2014) found that adolescents of color (i.e., African Americans and Hispanics) reported their sense of ethnic identity differed according to their acts of socializing with individuals identifying with the same ethnicity or interacted in environments where their ethnicity was dominant. Way, Hernández, Rogers, and Hughes (2013) examined constructs related with ethnic identity formation among U.S. born African Americans, Euro Americans, Asians, and Latinos adolescent using an interview approach. In their study, all the respondents indicated both positive and negative stereotypes of their ethnicity, race, social class, sexuality, and gender, shaped their ethnic identities. Further, the study concluded these adolescents used stereotypes of the dominating Euro American measurements of ethnic identity as construction of their ethnic identity.

Examination of the social context level, proposes that self-concealment as one construct that may be significantly pertinent to the conservation of African Americans' ethnic identity in an essentially Euro American environment, which may be influenced by either direct or indirect exposure to ethnic and/or racial discrimination in the society. African American individuals represent a large portion of the total number of minority individuals in United States and are considered to have presenting numbers (76%) related to their share of perceived and salient group discrimination associated with ethnic identity when compared to Asians (26%), Latinos (43%), and Euro Americans (16%) (Molina et al., 2015). Because most of the U.S. environment is predominantly Euro American,

African American individuals are likely to have some acts of self-concealment, and it was assumed that the perception of self-concealment would be inversely associated to ethnic identity.

Examining the Individual, Family, and Social Context Levels Relationships

The proposed structural path model indicates that there are presences of associations among the ecological levels and ethnic identity (view Figure 2). This proposed study, hypothesized several associations among the individual, family, and social context constructs (i.e., level of bicultural identity, family ethnic socialization, and self-concealment), further their direct impacts on ethnic identity. Each proposed association was examined below.

Level of Bicultural Identity on the Acts of Self-Concealment: Path A

An individual's level of bicultural identity, also known as biculturalism, may influence the acts of self-concealment. Previously discussed, low bicultural identity is emblematic of a cultural adaption in which the conventional and dominate customs, beliefs, attitudes, dialectic, and values are adopted congruently but more of the conventional cultural is dominate; and high bicultural identity reflects immersion in the conventional culture and the dominate culture. African American bicultural individuals who are over-acculturated in their dominate culture (i.e., less conventional) may experience more acts of self-concealment than bicultural African American individuals (i.e., immersed in conventional and dominate culture) because low bicultural identity individuals may seem more culturally conventional and less culturally Euro American

and high bicultural individuals may seem equally culturally conventional and Euro American to self and others they engage with.

There is empirical based evidence within literature supporting the hypothesis that low levels of bicultural identity appear to have higher levels of self-concealment acts when compared to high levels of bicultural identity. Among 96 self-identified East Asian Americans, participants who had low levels of bicultural identity (i.e., cannot feel affiliated with both cultures at once) perceived more psychological distress and sought to employ defense strategies than those who had high levels of bicultural identity (i.e., feel affiliated with both cultures at once; Mok & Morris, 2013). In a study of 416 Westernized Chinese college students residing in Hong Kong, those with high levels of bicultural identity (i.e., high levels of Chinese self and Westernize self) had higher levels of self-esteem and did not have contrast effects of defense of self than participants with low levels of bicultural identity (Ng, Ng, & Ye, 2016). In addition, in their affirmation study of the BII among Chinese American college students, Benet-Martínez and Haritatos (2005) examined the relationship between bicultural individuals' perception of their dual cultural identities as either in alignment or against using the BII (Benet-Martínez, 2003) and the level of acculturation attitudes using the Acculturation Attitudes scale (Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989). Conclusion from the study identified that those individuals with perceptions of overlap between dual cultural identities experienced low openness, conflict in acculturation attitudes, and behaviors than those individuals with perceptions of harmony between dual cultural identities.

Hence, level of bicultural identity emerges as a construct to influence the degree to which African American individuals experience acts of self-concealment. In this present proposed study, use of a bidimensional approach as a fashion to the measurement of self-concealment was used, dissimilar to the above previously discussed studies. However, with the support of the results of the previous studies, bicultural individuals who are not immersed in African American culture are expected to less likely experience discrimination and acts of self-concealment than bicultural individuals whom are immersed in the African American culture. Therefore, bicultural individuals with low levels of immersion in the dominate culture are predicted to report higher levels of acts of self-concealment.

Influence of Self-Concealment on Family Ethnic Socialization: Path C

The social context emerges as to influence ethnic socialization customs. For example, among 222 African American women at risk for suicidal ideation, perceptions of culturally salient identities in their immediate habitat was positively related with parental, spiritual, and ethnic socialization (Vinson & Oser, 2016). Furthermore, in another study involving European American and African American parents, Yasui, Hipwell, Stepp, and Keenan (2015) concluded that acts of self-concealment and mental health help-seeking was positively associated with parental ethnic socialization. Research related to the impacts of the social context of family ethnic socialization propose that parental experience of acts of self-concealment make this parental style more prominent (Saleem et al., 2016).

However, ethnic minority individuals' social context may additionally influence whether or not preceding family members immerse in ethnic socialization. The involvement in acts of self-concealment may amplify ethnic socialization customs by preceding family members as a means of seeking to assist their next generation of family members cultivate their ethnic identity and avoid the experience of cognitive and emotional distress. There has been no study to date exploring this assumption. Nonetheless, Barr and Neville (2014) found that African American young adults were more likely to be ethnically socialized with protective and positive aspects by their African American parents and peers related to racial beliefs and psychological practices. In another study, Yasui, Dishion, Stormshak, and Ball (2015) identified among 92 American Indian adolescents' parents who experienced discrimination, they were more likely to ethnically socialize their children to cope with racial and ethnic discrimination, cultural pride, ethnic identity resilience, and cultural mistrust. The results of these studies propose there was evidence parents escalate ethnic socialization customs during engagement with their children in a social context in which discrimination is inclined to be experienced.

Previously discussed, literature proposes a relationship between perception of discrimination and attitudes towards seeking mental health services (e.g., Larson et al., 2015; Mitchell et al., 2015), and this relationship was assumed that ethnic identity to be a mediator. That is, individuals experiencing discrimination may have poorer attitudes towards seeking mental health services incidental to their ethnic identity. Experience of acts of self-concealment may impact family ethnic socialization, as previously stated.

Elevated family ethnic socialization is proposed to escalate ethnic identity (addressed previously). Elevated ethnic identity may impact psychological regulation (addressed in a future section). Hence, the experience of the acts of self-concealment may be intensified by family ethnic socialization customs, which then may play a role to elevate ethnic identity and attitudes to seek mental health services; or the experience of the acts of self-concealment may directly lower ethnic identity. Lower ethnic identity may in turn lower attitudes towards seeking mental health services (addressed later). There is prior exploratory literature supporting the family ethnic socialization as playing a mediating role. In a study of 314 African American adolescents, it was concluded that racial socialization customs, particularly messages, intensified the relationship between reports of using avoiding coping strategies (i.e., acts of self-concealment) and attitudes towards seeking mental health services. Results revealed neither racial socialization practices nor societal participants played moderating roles in the relationship (Seaton, Upton, Gilbert, & Volpe, 2014).

Further, it has been identified the effects of family ethnic socialization may be a result of internalization occurring in early ethnic socialization messages (i.e., communicated messages preceding to the experience of the acts of self-concealment), or the experience of the acts of self-concealment may inflate ethnic socialization customs by parents. Identifying the support of previous research suggests a longitudinal study may successfully conclude the ideal role ethnic socialization may play; however, for the purpose of this study, experiences of the acts of self-concealment was expected to covary with family ethnic socialization customs.

Influence of Family Ethnic Socialization on Bicultural Identity: Path B

As children and adolescents began to develop their self-worth, personal identity, self-concepts, ethnic identity, and cultural identity family socialization plays a significant role in that developmental process (Gutierrez, Goodwin, Kirkinis, and Mattis, 2014). Family socialization also plays a role in the preparation of children and adolescents to welcome roles and responsibilities of being an adult, educates appropriate competencies warranted for ideal societal functioning, and provides a platform for transmission of values, practices, beliefs, and concepts associated with ways of living and styles of behaviors (Barni, Ranieri, Donato, Tagliabue, & Scabin, 2017; Meyer, Raikes, Virmani, Waters, & Thompson, 2014).

A variety of research literatures have indicated that family socialization customs subsidize children's and adolescent's intimate implications for behaviors such as smoking (Stanton, Highland, Tercyak, Luta, & Niaura, 2014), alcohol use (Jacobs, Barry, Xu, & Valente, 2016), peer and societal acceptance (Aldana & Byrd, 2015) antisocial behavior (Smith, Knoble, Zerr, Dishion, & Stormshak, 2014) and prosocial behavior (Streit, Carlo, Killoren, & Alfaro, 2017). For example, in a study exploring the influence alcohol socialization on drinking and alcohol consumption by young adult students, 1523 high school student's perceptions of alcohol socialization by family members, parents, peers, and friends' attitudes increased the likelihood of alcohol drinking and use (Jacobs et al., 2017).

It was further argued, perceptions of ethnic socialization customs by children and adolescents were thought to predict preservation of culturally defined attitudes and

behaviors such as communication, participation in practices, and specific beliefs and values. Specifically, family ethnic socialization is thought to be a predictor of level of bicultural identity. Therefore, adapting a bidimensional pathway to measure bicultural identity, family ethnic socialization was thought to be a predictor of high bicultural identity rather than low bicultural identity. However, currently there are no studies that have explored this relationship, particularly with African Americans solely. Considering the evidence that high levels of bicultural identity emerges as a construct related to improved attitudes towards seeking mental health services (Berry et al., 1989; Devos & Mohamed, 2014; Han & Pong, 2015; Huynh et al., 2015; Roh et al., 2017; Rust et al., 2011; Watson & Hunter, 2015), concluding other existing constructs that may influence evolution of bicultural identity was warranted.

In summary, socialization as a practice emerges as an enhancer to children's intimate behavior and identity. Family ethnic socialization customs may also emerge to influence ethnic identity, likewise to influence preservation of culturally defined attitudes and behaviors, communication, and practices. Therefore, in this proposed study, family ethnic socialization was hypothesized to be positively associated to bicultural identity.

Influence of Ethnic Identity on Bicultural Self-Efficacy: Path G

The path analysis model proposed within this study also integrates the influence that ethnic identity has on bi-cultural self-efficacy and on the development of mental health help-seeking attitudes (Figure 2). Ethnic identity is deemed as being a component of an individual's perception of self and personal identity keeping in mind the ideal meaning of who they are (Aries & Moorehead, 1989) and is a key part of ethnic minority

individual's universal self-perception (Phinney, 1989; Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Phinney & Chavira, 1995). Self-perception may be defined as cognitive and conscious process of evaluations and perceptions by one self and reflections and attitudes about one self (Bandura, 1977). Hence, ethnic identity may be characterized as ones' reflections and attitudes about their ethnic being, as one form of the whole-self. Additional forms of self encompass social, physical, other-selves, and sexual contingent upon variations of roles occurring with the individual (Bem, 1972). If individuals welcome, accept, and place exceeding expectations on self, they are perceived to have self-efficacy and reflections of self-validation, and to be at homeostasis (Bandura, 1977; Bem, 1972). Hence, having a positive consciousness for ones' ethnic self (i.e., ethnic identity high) would likely subsidize attitudes of self-efficacy, whereas negative consciousness about ones' ethnic self of group (ethnic identity low) would likely have an adverse effect on self-efficacy.

Existing literature has focused greatly on exploring the relationship between ethnic identity and self-efficacy (Smith, Walker, Fields, Brookins, & Seay, 1999). the existing literature Reports of positive association between ethnic identity and self-efficacy has been supported by several studies (e.g., Arbona, 2016; Gummadam, Pittman, & Ioffe, 2016; Reid, 2013; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014), and this association has been continuously linked to ethnic minority groups, such as Hispanic/Latino Americans (e.g., Navarro, Alvarez, Contreras, & Jason, 2016), Asian Americans (e.g., Maffini & Kim-Ju, 2016), and African Americans (e.g., D'Lima, Winsler, & Kitsantas, 2014).

Outlining, individual's perceptions of their ethnic identity should predict individual's maintenance of ethical specific behaviors, such as self-regulations of ability, psychological well-being, one's affect status, and developing satisfactory interpersonal interactions skills, exploring. That is, ethnic identity should be a predictor of the level of self-efficacy. However, studies began to examine this relationship by including individuals that identify as being bicultural. For example, David, Okazaki, and Saw (2009) examined ethnic identity and bicultural self-efficacy among 268 ethnic minority college students, such as African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, and Asian Americans using the Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale-Initial (David et al., 2009), the Bicultural Identity Scale (Benet- Benet-Martínez, 2003), the Multidimensional Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992), the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffen, 1985), and the Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlow, 1960). Implementing a factor analysis, results identified ethnic identity was a predictor of bicultural self-efficacy across all ethnic minority groups. Further, within another study, an individual's perception of how others assess their group had not association to intimate bicultural self-efficacy or to other constructs related to psychological regulations among Asian Canadians (Zhang, Noels, Lalonde, & Salas, 2017). Addressing these results, one could argue that ethnic minority groups accept perceptions, feelings, and attitudes about their own ethnic group (i.e., own ethnic identity), rather than the negative assessments by others, impact bicultural self-efficacy (David et al., 2009). Negative assessments related to an individual's ethnic membership

by others may conclude to low bicultural self-efficacy because ethnic identity is decreased as a response to negative assessments.

This current study proposed that ethnic identity plays a significant role in the development of low levels of bicultural self-efficacy in response to experiences of discrimination, cultural identity, and inadequate family ethnic socialization. Existing literature has not explored or debated ethnic identity as playing a mediating role. Within this proposed study, the association between ethnic identity and bicultural self-efficacy was explored to expand evidence for this association among African Americans. Bicultural self-efficacy was explored within this study to expose ethnic identity as being a mediating role in the association between discrimination, cultural identity, and family ethnic socialization, and bicultural self-efficacy. Further, bicultural self-efficacy was explored to expose the significant role that bicultural self-efficacy plays in mediating the association between ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes, considered below in the following paragraph.

Influence of Bicultural Self-Efficacy on Mental Health Help-Seeking Attitudes: Path H:

A number of studies have demonstrated that low self-efficacy plays a significant role in bicultural individuals help seeking attitudes (e.g., Alamilla, Kim, Walker, & Sisson, 2017; Han & Pong, 2015; Kim & Hogge, 2015; Mejia-Smith & Gushue, 2017; Yun et al., 2016). In addition, existing studies have also provided evidence that bicultural individuals with low self-efficacy encompass a variety of other psychological challenges such as depression (Ojeda, Piña-Watson, & Gonzalez, 2016), eating disorders (Shea,

Cachelin, Gutierrez, Wang, & Phimphasone, 2016), suicidal ideations (Teo et al., 2016), substance abuse (Field et al., 2015), and stress and anxiety (Webb, McNutt, & Baker, 2015).

David et al. (2009) examined the relationship between bicultural self-efficacy and mental health help-seeking attitudes among 164 bicultural Asian Americans (106), Latinos (28), African Americans (27), and multiracial (3) undergraduate college students. Bicultural self-efficacy was assessed by the Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale (David et al., 2009). This scale purpose was to measure bicultural individuals perceived self ability to be bicultural competent to complete task and function and mediate as bicultural individuals as described by LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993). Results demonstrated that high levels of perceived bicultural self-efficacy were correlated to higher levels of attitudes towards seeking professional mental health services, measured by the Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale-Short Form (Fischer & Farina, 1995), and that lower levels of perceived bicultural self-efficacy were correlated to lower levels of attitudes towards seeking professional mental health services. Analysis of the David et al. study suggests that bicultural self-efficacy was a predictor of attitudes towards seeking mental health services.

Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth comprehensive discussion of the theoretical framework and research literature supporting ethnic identity development, ethnic identity development for African Americans, and the three ecological levels: bicultural identity, family ethnic socialization, and self-concealment influence direct or indirect influence on

ethnic identity, bicultural self-efficacy, and mental health help-seeking attitudes. Each level was outlined to identify its path of influence on each variable within the model depicted in Figure 2.

Because bicultural self-efficacy may be a predictor of self-concealment behaviors for bicultural members, as previously discussed, low bicultural self-efficacy may encourage the development of negative help-seeking attitudes. Thus, this study hypothesizes that low bicultural self-efficacy led to negative attitudes towards help-seeking mental health services. In addition, discussed within previous sections, research proposes relationships between bicultural identity and self-concealment and experiences of discrimination and self-concealment, this study argued direct relationships are present. Bicultural identity and self-concealment, just as family ethnic socialization, may only be associated to bicultural self-efficacy as a result of their impacts on ethnic identity and may only be associated with attitudes towards seeking mental health services as a result of their impacts on ethnic identity and the impacts of ethnic identity on bicultural self-efficacy.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe the research design and approach of this study. In addition, an overview of the rationale, description of the population being examined, and sampling procedure will be provided. The instruments that were used for data collection pertinent to the study are described, including their reliability and validity. Descriptions of data collection methods and analysis of the research question and each of the hypothesized relationships are provided, as well as ethical approaches to protect the rights of each participant.

Research Design and Approach

This proposed study was designed to use and test pertinent information on an ecological pathway model of African American ethnic identity. Every hypothesized relationship outlined in the scale-specific model was analyzed using SEM. A quantitative SEM analysis was most appropriate for this study because it is an exhaustive statistical approach that justly appraises the intensity between a theoretical model and its fit on collected data. Advantages of using SEM include that it supports defining hypothetical exogenous and endogenous constructs in terms of measured variables, followed by placing a structural model to describe the potential strength of the direct and indirect relationships among these exogenous and endogenous variables concurrently (Kline, 2011).

SEM is considered a multivariate and correlational design approach, allowing me to examine a specific model of relationships among exogenous and endogenous variables.

There are eight exogenous variables (left-hand column of model), and three serial orders of endogenous variables. The first-order endogenous mediators are the two multigroup ethnic identity subscale scores. The second-order endogenous mediators are the six bicultural self-efficacy subscale scores. The final endogenous variable (the dependent variable) was the attitude toward seeking professional psychological help score.

The paths of the structural serial mediation model depict the expectation that attitudes toward seeking professional help was directly affected by bicultural self-efficacy, which mediates the indirect effect of multigroup ethnic identity, which itself mediates the indirect effect of the eight exogeneous variables (bicultural identity integration, African American acculturation, familial ethnic socialization, disclosure expectations, and self-concealment) on attitudes toward seeking professional help.

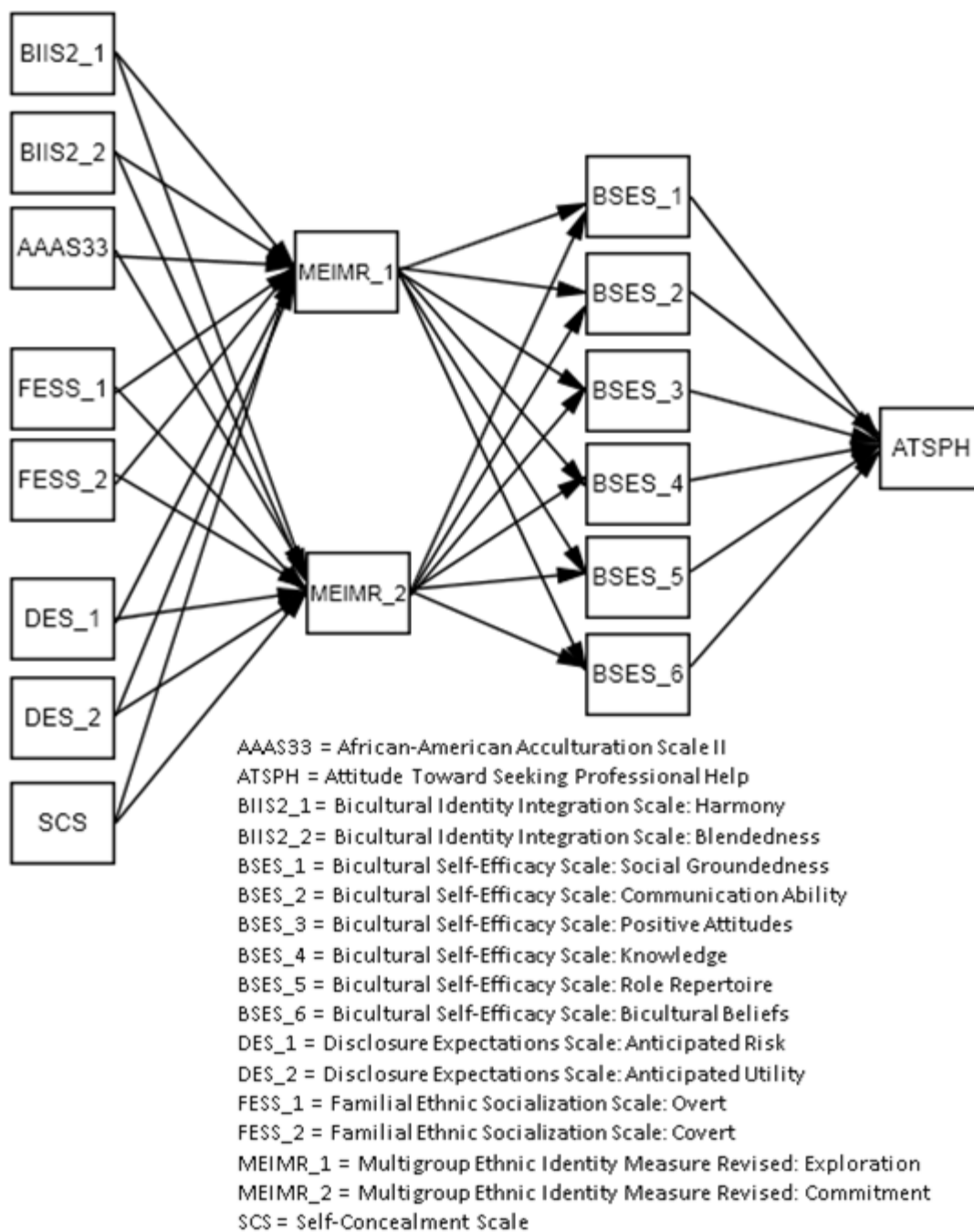


Figure 3. Scale-specific ecological path model of direct and indirect effects of bicultural identity (BIIS2_1, BIIS2_2, AAAS33), familial ethnic socialization (FESSM_1, FESSM_2), self-concealment (DES_1, DES_2, SCS), ethnic identity (MEIMR_1, MEIMR_2), and bicultural self-efficacy (BSES_1 through BSES_6), on psychological health seeking attitudes (ATSPH). Not shown, though part of the tested model, are the covariance paths among the exogenous variables

A qualitative research design would not furnish the desired answers because it cannot measure path-specific relationships among variables, mainly because qualitative data is obtained through interviews addressing participants' experiences (Bailey, 2014). A mixed methods design was not chosen because it would not be beneficial since the research question is able to be analyzed using a pathway analysis, which is the quantitative research method. The mixed method approach is designed to incorporate both the quantitative and qualitative methodology into one study (Kipo, 2013). The mixed method approach was ruled out of my study because of it requiring both the qualitative and quantitative method to collect information which was not the purpose or need for my study. Therefore, the qualitative and the mixed-method approach are not appropriate for this study.

Setting and Sample Procedures

Population

The targeted population for this proposed study was adult African American males and females who reside in the metro Atlanta, GA area. African Americans have received considerable focus because of their high reported percentage of failure to use mental health services. African Americans in the Atlanta, GA metro area have increased from 32.4% of the population in 2010 to 43.6% in 2015 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Currently, the number of adult African American residents settled within metro Atlanta, GA is approximately 1,707,913 (32.4%), representing the second largest race and largest minority race within the area (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Sampling Setting and Characteristics

The sample consisted of African American residents in the metro Atlanta, GA area. Selection of this sample was related to the purpose of this study, which was to propose and test an ecological path model of African American ethnic identity and investigate to what extent the three ecological levels of human development predict ethnic identity and its effect on bicultural self-efficacy role in influencing help-seeking attitudes for mental health use of African Americans in the metro Atlanta, GA area. The metro Atlanta, GA area was chosen because it is a significant terminal for African Americans. This area is one of the most accelerated expansion areas for African Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Sampling Method

The sampling method that was used for this study was a convenience purposive sample. Though this method limits generalizability of results, it is considered the most cost-effective and competent approach convenient at this time. With this approach, residents were targeted from 28 counties (Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton). The use of a multistep sampling process to establish prime sampling entities was favorable, as this approach is considered convenience-based.

The selection of participants was based on particular criteria. Participants must racially identify as African American. During the period of collecting data, each participant must be at least 18 years of age or older, and must be a current resident in one of the 28 counties encompassing the metro Atlanta, GA area. Participants were recruited

from distributed flyers (see Appendix A) by hand and placed on tables while attending several town hall gatherings, conferences, round table meetings, and social gatherings. The venues were events for the public, requiring no pre-authorizations or approvals warranted to openly engage with guests attending the gatherings or meetings. At the same time, announcements were posted on various social media websites, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. In addition, having family and friends distribute flyers at public venues to extend potential participants were utilized as well. Participants were encouraged to solicit qualified friends and family members to participate in the study. Utilization of Survey Monkey participant panel was also an option to further gain necessary participants.

As potential volunteers obtain a flyer from the previous noted locations, the flyer as well as the social media ads had detailed information related to the purpose of the study and the eligibility of participation. Upon the individual agreeing to participate they followed the information on the flyer, which led them to access a web link to fill out the questionnaire online with an online survey service, such as www.surveymonkey.com. Upon clicking on the web link to the survey website, the introduction of the study, discussion of the informed consent (see Appendix B), and survey followed the informed consent. Further those individuals that are part of SurveyMonkeys' participant panel were able to view the flyer and obtain the web link from the survey service provider website.

Pilot Study of Procedures

A pilot study of 20-30 participants were conducted to assess the feasibility of recruitment procedures. Of particular interest, the response rate (number of individuals

that access SurveyMonkey per distributed flyer), completion rate (number of individuals that access SurveyMonkey and substantially complete the survey, and the time it takes to complete the survey (automatically tracked by SurveyMonkey). Permission to undertake the pilot study was submitted to the Walden IRB for approval. Any changes in procedures for the full study deemed warranted from the results of the pilot study were submitted to the Walden IRB for approval. Because the pilot study is not a cognitive interview (Willis, 2005) with potential to alter survey items, but solely for procedural and response assessments, pilot study data was valid for the purposes of the research and was included in subsequent full-sample analyses.

Sample Size Analysis

To determine the required sample size for the proposed study presents somewhat of a challenge as determining an effective sample size for SEM is controversial and complicated (Jackson, 2002). MacCallum, Browne, and Sugawara (1996) developed a SEM power analysis framework for hypothesis testing as a function of sample size, degrees of freedom, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) under circumstances of the alternative and null hypothesis, and alpha (α). MacCallum et al.'s equations can be reordered to solve for sample size, but the calculations are time consuming. Fortunately, MacCallum et al. provide sample size tables for an SEM test of close fit for various degrees of freedom.

The degrees of freedom for the proposed model (see Figure 3) is calculated as the number of observations minus the number of parameters to be estimated. The number of

observations is calculated as $v(v+1)/2$, where v = the number of measured variables. The proposed model contains 17 measured variables, so the number of observations is 153.

The number of parameters to be estimated includes the 34 path coefficients, the variances of the 8 exogenous variables, the 21 pairwise correlations among the exogenous variables, and the 9 disturbances for the endogenous variables, for a total of 72 parameters. Thus, the model degrees of freedom are $153 - 72 = 81$. Interpolating MacCallum et al.'s (1996) sample size table for power = .80 and alpha = .05, sample size for a test of close fit is 153.

Instruments

In this section, I discussed the psychometric measures that were administered. Participants were provided with a web based link that contained a consent form (Appendix B), a demographic form (Appendix C), the African American Acculturation Scale II (AAAS-33; Appendix E), the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale (BIIS-2; Appendix G), the Familial Ethnic Socialization Scale (FESS; Appendix I), the Self-Concealment Scale (SCS; Appendix K), the Disclosure Expectations Scale (DES; Appendix M), the Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R; Appendix O), the Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale (Appendix Q), and the Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help (ATSPPH-SF; Appendix S).

Level of Acculturation-Individual Level

Acculturation is considered to be a multidimensional construct including learning or developing in the dominate society's behavioral outcomes, as well as reconstruction to the dominate society's language, cultural traditions, attitudes, values, interpersonal

relations, food inclinations, and other cultural norms (Helm's 1990; Landrine & Klonoff, 1995; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997; Snowden & Hines, 1999; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999). Researchers have disputed the adequacy and content validity of using a single measure of acculturation (Demes & Geeraert, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2014). Some measures emphasize media preferences, religion, social interaction, and personal beliefs and practices. The African American Acculturation Scale II is an example of such a measure of acculturation. Other measures appear to target solely on behavioral acculturation outcomes or at least a significant portion of the scale's items refer to behavioral outcomes (e.g., Helm's 1990; Landrine & Klonoff, 1994; Landrine & Klonoff, 1995; Snowden & Hines, 1999). The Bicultural Identity Integration Scale is such a measure. Although some assessments of acculturation scales have found behavioral outcomes to be a truer indicator for acculturation alignment that provides an explanation for significant measures of variance in correlation to other indicators of acculturation (Helm's 1990; Landrine & Klonoff, 1995; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997; Snowden & Hines, 1999), the proposed research used both the African American Acculturation Scale II and the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale to ensure fuller capture of the content domain associated with acculturation.

AAAS-33. The African American Acculturation Scale II (AAAS-33; Landrine & Klonoff, 1995) is a shortened form of the original AAAS, which was designed to measure acculturation levels among African American individuals using three cultural constructs (African, non-African, and Bi-African). The AAAS-33 is a 33-item scale consisting of 10 dimensions of African culture that yields a valid single overall scale score.

Items are rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). Examples of items include, “I like Black music more than White music,” “I am currently a member of a Black church,” and “Deep in their hearts, most White people are racists.” For purposes of this research, a mean composite score was calculated as to be interpretable on the 7-point item response scale. Higher scores (more agreement with the asked statement) reflect the presence of more traditional cultural alignment, and lower scores (less agreement with the asked statement) indicate a more acculturated cultural alignment. A copy of the letter to extending permission for the use of the AAAS-33 is available in Appendix E.

AAAS-33 Reliability. Validity indicators were proportionate or significantly elevated compared to results from other acculturation scales using the ideal profound entities for estimating validity principles of acculturation scales (i.e., age, years of education, years lived in the U.S., generational statues, and correlation of .94 with the acculturation score retrieved through the original version of the African American Acculturation Scale (AAAS; Landrine & Klonoff, 1994). AAAS-33 internal consistency reliability was reported as .88 (Landrine & Klonoff, 1994).

BIIS-2. The Bicultural Identity Integration Scale (BIIS-2) was created to assess integration of both cultures (i.e., American and African) and determine if homogenous groups exist and no variation is noted among the groups (Huynh, 2009; Huynh & Benet-Martínez, 2010). The BIIS-2 has 19 items and two subscales that focus on 9-item cultural blendedness (e.g., cultural compartmentalization, use of English Language and less use of other language, and Euro American cultural identification) and 10-item cultural harmony

(e.g., cultural compatibility, ethnic identity affirmation, and intercultural relations). The 19 items are parallel, altering from one another only with appreciation to the culture of what they represent.

Items are rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating greater cultural involvement in that particular domain. Examples of items include, “I feel African and American at the same time,” “I do not blend my African and American cultures,” “I find it easy to harmonize African and American cultures,” and “I feel that my African and American cultures are incompatible.” For purposes of this research, mean composite subscale scores were calculated as to be interpretable on the 5-point item response scale. Higher scores (more agreement with the asked statement) indicate the presence of more cultural alignment, and lower scores (less agreement with the asked statement) indicate the presence of more acculturated cultural alignment. A copy of the letter to extending permission for the use of the BIIS-2 is available in Appendix F.

BIIS-2 reliability. Adequate internal consistency reliability of the items measuring cultural blendedness was .86 for 9 items and for items measuring cultural harmony was .81 for 10 items (Huynh, 2009; Benet-Martínez, 2010). Measures of invariance occurred between two generational and ethnic groups, supporting validity. The cultural dissociation and cultural compartmentalization items were moderately correlated; however, they were distinguishable.

The Familial Ethnic Socialization Measure (FESM; Umana-Taylor, 2001) was developed to assess an individual’s perceived family ethnic socialization practices with

respect to their ethnicity. The FESM is a 12-item scale consisting of 6 items for each familial socialization domain: covert and overt.

Items are rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 5 (*very much true*), and with end points of 1 (*not at all*) and 5 (*very often*) with higher scores indicating greater family ethnic socialization. Examples of covert familial socialization items include, “My family participates in activities that are specific to my ethnic group” and “Our home is decorated with things that reflect my ethnic/cultural background”. Overt items include, “My family teaches me about my ethnic/cultural background” and “My family talks about how important it is to know about my ethnic/cultural background.” For purposes of this research, mean composite subscale scores were calculated as to be interpretable on the 5-point item response scale Higher scores (family ethnic socialization levels high) indicate the presence of more purposeful and intentional attempts to teach family members their ethnicity. A copy of the letter to extending permission for the use of the FESM is available in Appendix H.

FESM reliability. Internal consistency reliability of the familial socializing factors measuring overt familial socialization behaviors (purposeful and intentional attempts to teach family members their ethnicity) and covert socialization behaviors (non-purposeful or intentional attempts to teach family members about ethnicity but unconsciously doing so with everyday behaviors) were .82 (Umaña-Taylor, 2001). Criterion validity has been established with its use with other ethnically diverse adolescents, including White youth, resulting in further reliability and validity (Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez 2004; Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot, & Shin, 2006).

Self-Concealment and Disclosure Expectations-The Social Context Level

Two instruments were used to assess the social context level: the Self-Concealment Scale and the Disclosure Expectations Scale. The Self-Concealment Scale (SCS; Larson & Chastain, 1990) was created to measure an individual's willingness to keep things to themselves. This scale was based on the process of individuals respecting the boundary to keep private information to oneself (Derlega & Chaikin, 1977). The self-concealment process consists of the maintenance of private information by consciously keeping information from others, such as feelings, actions, emotions, and thoughts (Schlenker, 1980).

The Disclosure Expectations Scale (DES; Vogel & Wester, 2003) was developed to assess attitudes towards self-disclosing personal information to a counselor. The DES was conceptualized around the roles of avoidance components in predicting one's attitudes towards seeking mental health services and the anticipated risks and utilities of self-disclosing emotionally driven information to a counselor.

SCS. The SCS is a 10-item scale rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating greater self-concealment process. Examples of items include, "There are lots of things about me I keep to myself," "I have negative thoughts about myself that I never share with anyone," and "When something bad happens to me, I tend to keep it to myself." For purposes of this research, a mean composite score was calculated as to be interpretable on the 5-point item response scale. Higher scores (more agreement with the asked statement) reflect more self-concealment process, and lower scores (less agreement with the asked

statement) reflect less self-concealment process. Scores for the 10-items for the SCS was examined in the ethnic path model to assess the impacts of self-concealment on ethnic identity. A copy of the letter to extending permission for the use of the SCS is available in Appendix J.

SCS reliability. Internal consistency reliability of the items measuring self-concealment process was .83 (Larson & Chastain, 1990). Test-retest reliability was performed resulting in $r = .8$ (Larson & Chastain, 1990).

DES. The DES consists of 8-items on a 5-point scale 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very*) that yields two subscale scores: anticipated utility and anticipated risk. Examples of anticipated utility items include, “If dealing with an emotional problem, how beneficial for yourself would it be to self-disclose personal information about the problem to a counselor?” and “Would you feel better if you disclosed feelings of sadness or anxiety to a counselor?” Anticipated risk items include, “How risky would it feel to disclose your hidden feelings to a counselor?” and “How difficult would it be for you to disclose personal information to a counselor?” For purposes of this research, mean composite subscale scores were calculated as to be interpretable on the 5-point item response scale. Higher scores indicate the presence of more self-disclosure practices while lower scores indicate the presence of less self-disclosure practices. Scores from each subscale for the DES was examined in the pathway model to assess the impacts of self-disclosure on ethnic identity. A copy of the letter to extending permission for the use of the DES is available in Appendix L.

DES reliability. The two subscales represent two separate but related dimensions of disclosure expectations. Internal consistency reliability was reported as .74 for anticipated risk and .83 for anticipated utility (Vogel & Wester, 2003). Evidence for the construct validity of the DES was demonstrated via correlating its two subscales with measures of self-concealment and self-disclosure. As expected, anticipated risk was negatively related to self-disclosure ($r = -.19$) and positively related to self-concealment ($r = .23$). Also, as expected, anticipated utility was positively related to self-disclosure ($r = .24$) and negatively related to self-concealment ($r = -.15$).

Ethnic Identity

The MEIM-R was developed to assess ethnic identity among diverse ethnic groups. The original MEIM was created to assess ethnic identity as it related to one's ethnicity, having a secure sense of self-acceptance and awareness of one's ethnicity, sense of belonging to one's ethnic group, and contributable feelings and attitudes towards one's ethnic group (Phinney, 1992). Hence, specific cultural values and beliefs were not included in the original version, revisit of the measure led to including underlying factors to the scale.

The MEIM-R consists of 6 items that assess two ethnic identity aspects: exploration (items 1, 4, 5) to participation in ethnic cultural practices and commitment (items 2, 3, and 6) to contributable feelings and attitudes towards one's ethnic group (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Examples of items on the MEIM-R are, "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group," and "I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group." Subjects rated items on a 5-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5

(*strongly agree*). For purposes of this research, mean composite subscale scores were calculated as to be interpretable on the 5-point item response scale. Higher scores represent the presence of higher ethnic identity alignment with own ethnic group, and lower scores represent the presence of decreased ethnic identity alignment with own ethnic group. Both subscale scores for the MEIM-R were examined in the ethnic path model to assess the level of ethnic identity. A copy of the letter to extending permission for the use of the MEIM-R is available in Appendix N.

MEIM-R Reliability. Results of using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis with a diverse sample of adults indicated a correlated two-factor model as the best fit, with exploration and commitment correlated at .73. Alpha reliability coefficients were good, identifying an internal consistency for commitment ranging from .76 (African American) to .81 (European American) and for exploration ranging from .70 (African American) to .82 (European American; Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Bicultural Self-Efficacy

The Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale (BSES; David, Okazaki, & Saw, 2009) is a 26-item scale developed to assess six subscales of bicultural competence: (a) 7-item social groundedness, (b) 4-item communication ability, (c) 4-item positive cultural attitudes to both cultural groups, (d) 4-item knowledge of cultural history and values, (e) 3-item role repertoire competency to complete or engage in either cultural type behavior, and (f) 4-item bicultural beliefs. .

Respondents rate each item on a partially anchored 9-point response format ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*), 3 (*disagree*), 5 (*neutral*), 7 (*agree*), and 9 (*strongly*

agree). Examples of the social groundedness abilities items include “I have strong ties with mainstream Americans as well as people from the same heritage cultural as myself.”, Communication abilities includes: “I can switch easily between standard English and the language of my heritage culture (e.g., urban street talk, Spanish, etc.)” Positive attitudes include: “I have respect for both mainstream American cultural and my heritage culture.” Knowledge includes: “I am knowledgeable about the history of both mainstream America and my cultural group.” Role repertoire competency includes: “I am confident that I can learn new aspects of both the mainstream American culture and my heritage culture.” Bicultural beliefs include: “It is acceptable for an individual from my heritage culture to participate in two different cultures.” For purposes of this research, mean composite subscale scores were calculated as to be interpretable on the 9-point item response scale, with higher scores indicating agreement (higher bicultural self-efficacy) and lower scores disagreement (lower bicultural self-efficacy).

BSES Reliability. Internal consistency coefficient alphas for the BSES range from .69 to .91. The BSES has a test-test reliability of .87 (heritage) and .86 (mainstream; Ryder et al., 2000) and it was found to correlate ($r = .91$) with Multidimensional Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992). Further, the BSES has been used with African Americans (David et al., 2009). A copy of the letter to extending permission for the use of the BSES is available in Appendix P.

Help Seeking Attitudes

The Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help (ATSPPH-SF) (Fischer & Farina, 1995) is a 10-item self-report questionnaire developed to assess the

relation of help seeking attitudes, beliefs, and intentions towards engaging in professional psychological help. Each of the 10 items are scored according to a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*disagree*) to 3 (*agree*), with higher scores indicating positive attitudes towards seeking mental health treatment. Examples of the items included “Talking about problems with a psychologist seems to me as a poor way to get rid of emotional problems”, “I admire people who are willing to cope with their problems and fears without seeking professional help,” and “I might want to have psychological counseling in the future.” The ATSPPH-S is one of the most commonly used scales for measuring attitudes and beliefs towards seeking mental health services for a variety of populations including African American individuals.

ATSPPH-S Reliability. The ATSPPH-S has demonstrated internal consistency ranging from .78 to .84, *t*-test reliability of .80 over a 4-week period, and correlation ($r = .87$) with the original 29-item ATSPPH scale (Fischer & Farina, 1995). A copy of the letter to extending permission for the use of the ATSPPH-S is available in Appendix R.

Summary of Instruments

The eight instruments that were used in this study yield 16 composite variables. For ease of reference, Table 1 delineates the instruments, subscales, number of items per subscale, and item response options. The table organizes the variables with respect to their role in the structural model (i.e., exogenous, first-order mediator, second-order mediator, dependent).

Table 1

Summary of Instruments and Composite Scales

Abbrev.	Name	# item s	Response options
<i>Exogenous variables</i>			
BIIS-2	Bicultural Identity Integration Scale	19	1 – 5
	Harmony	10	1 = Strongly disagree
	Blendedness	9	2 = Disagree a little
			3 = Neither agree or disagree
			4 = Agree a little
			5 = Strongly agree
AAAS-33	African American Acculturation Scale II	33	1 – 7
			1 = Totally disagree/ not true at all
			4 = Sort of disagree/ sort of true
			7 = Strongly agree/ absolutely true
FESM	Familial Ethnic Socialization Measure	12	1 – 5
	Overt	6	1 = Not at all true
	Covert	6	3 = Somewhat true
			5 = Very much true
DES	Disclosure Expectations Scale	8	1 – 5
	Anticipated Risk	4	1 = Not at all
	Anticipated Utility	4	2 = Slightly
			3 = Somewhat
			4 = Moderately
			5 = Very
SCS	Self-Concealment	10	1 – 5
			1 = Strongly disagree
			2 = Moderately disagree
			3 = Don't disagree or agree
			4 = Moderately agree
			5 = Strongly agree
<i>1st-Order mediators</i>			
MEIM-R	Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure Revised	6	1 - 5
	Exploration	3	1 = Strongly disagree
	Commitment	3	2 = disagree
			3 = neutral
			4 = agree

			5 = strongly agree
<i>2nd-Order mediators</i>			
BSES	Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale	26	1 – 9
	Social Groundedness	7	1 = strongly disagree
	Communication Ability	4	3 = disagree
	Positive Attitudes	4	5 = neutral
	Knowledge	4	7 = agree
	Role Repertoire	3	9 = strongly agree
	Bicultural Beliefs	4	
<i>Dependent variable</i>			
ATSP	Attitude Toward Seeking	10	0-3
H-SF	Professional Psychological Help— Short Form		0 = Disagree 1 = Partly disagree 2 = Partly agree 3 = Agree

Demographic Variables

A demographic questionnaire was administered consisting of short-questions requiring short-answers concerning the participants demographic profile. The items include questions related to the participants' age, gender, education, marital status, parents' place of birth, and parents' ethnicity. Participants were asked to indicate their perception of having physical similarities to members of their identified ethnic group, the length of residence in United States, and length of residence metro Atlanta. The presented demographic questionnaire may be appropriate for this proposed study because its constructs sought to measure the demographic characteristics of each participant.

Research Question and Pathway Testing

As researchers increasingly seek to use model building and testing as an approach for research, specific hypothesized relationships need not be included because the purpose was to test the fit of an empirically and theoretically generated model and modify

as needed to account for the most covariance as parsimoniously as possible (Byrne, 2016; Jaccard & Jacoby, 2010).

RQ1: To what extent does the ecological ethnic identity mental health seeking structural path model depicted in Figure 3 fit the data in a sample of African Americans?

Data Analysis

Prior to empirically testing the fit of the model, data was screened and cleaned for missing and out of range data, and composite variables were examined for outliers, reliability, normality, and multicollinearity. Each of these issues can adversely affect SEM (Osburne, 2013; West, Finch, & Curran, 1995).

Missing Data

Sixteen composite variables were computed from their constituent items. The number of items per composite variable varies from 3 to 10. If a participant has missing data on more than one-third of the items that make up a composite, that participant was dropped from further analysis. Otherwise a participant's mean composite score will replace any constituent missing item data. Because the survey was hosted on SurveyMonkey and participants respond electronically to preset response options, it was not expected that any item responses will be outside the preset range of values. Nonetheless, response range for each item was examined to ensure all values are within the preset range.

Composite Variables

Each of the 16 composite variables were computed as a mean composite so that the scale score was interpretable on the same response option scale of the constituent

items. Although out of range values are not expected, outlier values could exist on a composite variable. Cases with a value that exceeds ± 3.29 standard deviations from the mean were examined for any adverse outlier impact and recoded, if necessary. Even if a case was not a univariate outlier, it could be a multivariate outlier across a set of variables. Multivariate outlier cases were examined in a serial manner. First, cases were examined within each multiply-measured construct following Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) method of regressing the variables of interest on a random criterion and examining their Mahalanobis distance against a corresponding critical χ^2 value at a .001 alpha level as well as the discontinuity of the sample's Mahalanobis distribution. Suspect cases were examined for any observable patterns of scores across variables and, if necessary, eliminated from further analyses. Similarly, outlier cases were examined for the set of exogenous variables, the set of first-order mediators, the set of second-order mediators, and, finally, for the entire set of variables in the model.

After addressing missing data and outlier cases, the distribution of each composite variable was checked for skewness and kurtosis values outside the accepted range for normality (i.e., skewness $> |2|$, kurtosis $> |6|$). If necessary, a variable was transformed to reduce excess skewness or kurtosis.

In something of an iterative manner in addressing the issues noted above, reliability analyses were conducted to examine Cronbach's alpha and any item-level inconsistencies with the scale score. If warranted, items were eliminated from a scale if reliability was substantially enhanced. Scales with Cronbach's alpha less than .60 will not be used as a single composite variable. Principal axis factoring will be used to examine if

the items are multidimensional and warrant being represented as two or more composite variables.

Several of the constructs are represented by multiple subscale scores. Because SEM can be adversely affected by highly intercorrelated variables (Marsh, Dowson, Pietsch, & Walker, 2004), each construct represented by two or more subscales were checked for within construct multicollinearity following Tabachnick and Fidell's (2007) method of regressing the variables of interest on a random criterion and examining their variance inflation factor (VIF) values. If VIF values are outside of acceptable range (> 7.0 ; Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003), a principal components analysis was conducted to determine if the collinear variables can be reduced to component scores in order to eliminate multicollinearity. Multicollinearity was further assessed in the serial manner as described above for outliers.

Descriptive Statistics

After data cleaning, final descriptive statistics was reported. This includes the distribution of cases by demographics (e.g., sex, age) as well as the means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values, and Cronbach's alpha for each composite variable. In addition, a correlation matrix of all 17 variables were presented.

Model Fit

SPSS AMOS was used to assess the fit of the model. There was not a single index to assess a model and no compelling foundation to select one of the many indices available (Kline, 2016; McDonald & Ho, 2002). A common expectation, based on

continuity of professional practice, is to report the chi-square (χ^2) test, even though it is oversensitive to large sample size (Kline, 2016).

Of the array of global indices, recommendations have recently narrowed to reporting an absolute, parsimonious, and incremental index (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2016; Mueller & Hancock, 2010). The Standardized Root Mean Square (SRMR) is an absolute index of covariance discrepancy. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is a parsimonious index that takes into account a model's complexity. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is an incremental index that compares a model to the null model. While each of these indices has cutoff rules of thumb, Hu and Bentler (1999) recommended combinational rules of SRMR close to .08, RMSEA close to .06, and CFI close to .95 to minimize Type II error rates. Use of the term "close to" emphasizes that this is just a rule a thumb and not an absolute cutoff (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

If the model is deemed not to be a good global fit, local fit information will be examined for model improvement. This may include elimination of nonsignificant or low coefficient paths and the inclusion of additional paths. Any modifications of the model based on empirical results was discussed with respect to theory to minimize respecification that simply capitalizes on chance (Mueller & Hancock, 2010).

Protection of Participants' Rights

Conducting scientific research must be done in a fashion that is both respectful and ethical. Protection of participants' rights were safeguarded in a variety of ways. First, a measure to ensure both standards are being met, this proposed study was submitted to

Walden's IRB for review and permission prior to recruiting participants and collection of data. The IRB approval number was affixed to the completed dissertation. This process was in alignment with the federal guidelines and regulations for scientific research with human subjects.

The intended recruitment of participants was done by distributing and placing flyers (see Appendix A) on tables at several town hall gatherings, conferences, round table meetings, social gatherings, by the researcher and family and friends. The flyers contained the study purpose, instruments, and variables. At the same time, announcements were posted on various social medial websites. Further, to also recruit participants, utilization of Survey Monkey participant panel occurred which also allowed each participant to view the flyer. All interested participants then followed a url to the survey hosted by Survey Monkey where they found an informed consent. Upon completion of the informed consent, participants were then prompted to the survey questionnaire. Participants were advised completion of all nine instruments should take no more than 30-35 minutes. Participants were made aware their participation was completely voluntary, and at any time they have the liberty to withdraw without any penalty. The fact that participants filled out the survey online and no personal identifying questions are asked, their information was anonymous.

Each participant was informed that there were no monetary gifts or any other forms of compensation offered for participation and participation presented with minimal risks. In addition, participants were informed if at any time any level of discomfort occurred related to any question or item, refusing to the answer the question or item or

withdrawing from the study came with no detriment or penalty. Participants were made aware that at any time they feel they needed assistance because a level of discomfort was reached while responding to the survey questions, the contact information of a 24-hour toll-free crisis line was made available on the informed consent form and at the onset and conclusion of the survey.

Participants were ensured that all data collected and all supporting materials (e.g., flash drive backups) would only be accessible by the researcher. In addition, all materials were securely filed, stored, and locked in file cabinet within secured room within my home, which access would only be available to me alone. In accordance with Walden University policy, all materials will be completely destroyed after 5 years. Participants were provided with the university and my contact information for any concerns or questions they may have.

Summary

In this chapter, discussions were about the research design and approach, the setting and sample, and the properties of nine instruments to be used for the proposed study occurred. The chapter discussed the quantitative approach to test hypothesized relationships between identified constructs in the ethnic identity mental health seeking (EIMHS) path model. Data collection procedures were also described with the notation of conducting upon IRB approval and analyses for collected data was described as well. To conclude the chapter, discussions were related to protection of participants and their rights, including how research material were stored, locked, and destroyed. The study results from the analyses were reported in Chapter 4, and in Chapter 5 results argued the

support for the proposed ethnic identity mental health seeking structural path model, implications of the study and positive social change, and recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter starts with an explanation of the pilot study, an explanation outlining the review of the purpose of the study and the specific problem. Further, the methodology used for data collection and analysis procedures is explained. Specifically, concepts regarding the conceptual framework are explored with the research question. Findings of the study are outlined, along with a presentation of data analysis and results of the study using SEM to predict whether there are significant influences on mental health help-seeking attitudes of African Americans. AMOS 21 was used to depict the causal relationships among the constructs within the developed hypothetical ecological ethnic model shown in Figure 3.

It was hypothesized that bicultural identity, familial ethnic socialization, and self-concealment may predict positive ethnic identity of African Americans and how ethnic identity and bicultural self-efficacy may play mediating roles in predicting mental health help-seeking attitudes of African Americans. It was hypothesized that in confinement, bicultural identity, familial ethnic socialization, and self-concealment correlate with each other and there was not an alteration in ethnic identity development and mental health help-seeking attitudes of African Americans. AMOS 21 was used to obtain descriptive statistics measurements, path coefficients, and structural models, as well as report the results. AMOS 21 SEM was further used to report the conclusions presented in this chapter. For estimating the model fit, the indices used were chi square > 0.05 , SRMR =

0.08, RMSEA = 0.05, and comparison of fit index (CFI =0.95). According to Bentler (1999), these recommended combinational values are acceptable for model fit.

Purpose and Problem

The purpose of the study was to propose and test a structural equation ecological path model of African American ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes by examining the relationship among three ecological levels of human development and how each are expected to predict ethnic identity. In succession, ethnic identity was expected to influence bicultural self-efficacy, and bicultural self-efficacy was expected to influence mental health help-seeking attitudes. The literature review supported fragmented understanding and knowledge of the concepts that influence ethnic identity development and its relationship with mental health help-seeking attitudes.

Research Question

There was one primary research question addressed in the study. The research question involved testing whether there was evidence for an ecological ethnic identity mental health help-seeking structural path model using a sample of African Americans. Further, the research question involved understanding whether there are combinations of ecological factors that best discriminate among differing levels of ethnic identity development in African American adults.

Pilot Study

There were two submissions to gain IRB approval as there was a change from Google Docs to SurveyMonkey to host surveys. After receiving approval from the Walden University IRB (approval # 01-08-18-0266780), over a period of 6 days, in the

month of January 2018, I pilot tested the AAAS-33, BIIS-2, the FESS, SCS, DESMEIM-R, BSES, and ATSPPH-SF questionnaires with an anonymous sample of 20 African American residents of the Atlanta, GA metropolitan area. I administered the pilot study to assess the feasibility of recruitment procedures. Of particular interest was the response rate (number of individuals who accessed Google Docs per distributed flyer), completion rate (number of individuals who accessed Google Docs and substantially completed the survey), and the time it took to complete the surveys (automatically tracked by Google Docs). Based on the responses from the pilot study, feasibility of the recruitment procedures was favorable. A total of 35 flyers were distributed from which 20 participants answered the surveys. Only two items were left unanswered from all eight surveys and the vast majority of participants indicated it took 20-25 minutes to complete the surveys. The participants' responses to the questionnaires in the pilot study were combined with the final sample size for interpretation and data analysis.

Data Collection

Upon collecting the participants for the pilot study and receiving approval from both the chair and committee member to move forward with full data collection efforts, I collected data. Further, the flyer along with the survey link was placed on several social media platforms; in addition, friends and family members distributed flyers. Participants were asked to answer a series of surveys. Over a period of 45 days, from January 2018 to March 2018, a total of 172 participants answered the surveys. A total of 11 participants were excluded as a result of data screening and cleaning because of incompleteness of the survey items regarding one or more of the study primary variables. Thus, final number of

cases available for statistical analysis was 161, which was greater than what was needed to meet the sample size requirements of 153 determined by MacCallum et al.'s (1996) sample size table for a test of close fit. Survey data was collected and stored via Google Docs and SPSS was used for analysis and storage.

Data Screening and Preparation

For the current study, data taken from all eight measurement scales represents an expansive range of African American adults with a minimum age of 18 residing within the metro Atlanta, GA area. The metro Atlanta, GA area is considered a significant terminal for African Americans because this population has found increased growth potential in the area (Browne, Deckard, & Rodriguez, 2016). In addition, this area is one of the most accelerated expansion locations for the African American population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Examinations of univariate outliers were conducted (see Table 2 and Table 3). Skewness and kurtosis were within acceptable range for all 16 variables (skewness $> |2|$, kurtosis $> |6|$), resulting in no concerns about normality. Results of the composites suggested two of the composites FESM ($z = -3.37$) and MEIM-R ($z = -3.47$) had standard scores exceeding 3.29 from the mean. However, further analysis of the data with the use of histograms did not show a large gap between these and the rest of the distribution. Therefore, no concern about univariate outliers existed. An examination of multivariate outliers took place prior to considering any transformation. The critical value for Mahalanobis distance with 15 variables at a .001 alpha level is 37.7. One case exceeded this with a value of 43.3; however, its value was not extremely discontinuous with the rest of the distribution.

Therefore, no concern about multivariate outliers existed. Further, a second examination of univariate properties for each variable indicated that all variables skewness and kurtosis were within acceptable range.

Table 2

Table of Reliability and Inter-Item Correlations for Independent and Dependent Variables

Reliability and Inter-Item Correlations Statistics					
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Minimum	Mean	Maximum Inter- Item
BIIS Harmony	.846	10	.024	.358	.082
BIIS					
Blendedness	.808	9	.326	-.100	.638
FESM	.941	12	.581	.225	.655
DES Risk	.850	4	.589	.478	.721
DES Utility	.849	4	.585	.397	.758
MEIM-R					
Exploration	.892	3	.736	.647	.813
MEIM-R					
Commitment	.921	3	.796	.731	.865
BSES Social	.938	7	.683	.479	.817
BSES					
Communication	.837	4	.562	.374	.889
BSES Positive					
Attitude	.947	4	.817	.773	.897
BSES					
Knowledge	.909	4	.716	.619	.836
BSES Role	.927	3	.808	.799	.818
BSES					
Bicultural					
Beliefs	.923	4	.749	.688	.814
ATSPPH	.753	10	.237	-.068	.615

SCS	.913	10	.517	.255	.805
AAAS	.840	26	.159	-.274	.830

Table 3

Table of Descriptive for Independent and Dependent Variables

Reliability and Inter-Item Correlations Statistics								
	N of	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Minimum	Maximum
AAAS	161	4.4981	4.3846	.80102	.262	-.767	2.77	6.38
BIIS Harmony	161	3.6888	3.7000	.75017	-.067	-.430	1.60	5.00
BIIS								
Blendedness	161	3.5908	3.6667	.73822	-.262	-.208	1.33	5.00
FESM	161	4.0870	4.2500	.89109	-1.227	1.157	1.08	5.00
DES Risk	161	2.6087	2.5000	1.06058	.363	-.706	1.00	5.00
DES Utility	161	3.5000	3.5000	.95279	-.206	-.601	1.25	5.00
MEIM-R								
Exploration	161	4.1594	4.3333	.97830	-1.463	1.511	1.00	5.00
MEIM-R								
Commitment	161	4.2091	4.3333	.92556	-1.463	2.177	1.00	5.00
BSES Social	161	5.2428	5.0000	1.89245	.119	-.785	1.00	9.00
BSES								
Communication	161	6.0202	6.5000	2.01478	-.215	-.975	2.00	9.00
BSES Positive								
Attitude	161	5.6693	5.5000	2.13501	-.133	-.799	3.00	9.00
BSES								
Knowledge	161	5.7127	5.5000	1.80909	.322	-.946	3.00	9.00
BSES Role	161	6.6128	7.0000	1.87598	-.268	-1.281	3.00	9.00
BSES								
Bicultural								
Beliefs	161	6.5280	7.0000	1.86057	-.236	-1.089	1.50	9.00
SCS	161	2.2994	2.1000	.98752	.448	-.765	1.00	5.00
ATSPPH	161	1.8149	1.8000	.53212	.068	-.321	.60	3.00

Participant Demographics

The targeted population for this study were African American adults at least age 18. A total of 172 participants were recruited over a period of 45 days, and the final number of participants that successfully completed the surveys was 161 African American adults, 49 males (30.4%) and 112 females (69.6%).

The mean age of participants was 35.92 years ($SD = 9.19$), average time lived in the United States was 35.16 ($SD = 9.70$) and the average time lived in Atlanta, GA was 14.41 ($SD = 11.03$). Of the 161, approximately 0.6% had a junior high school level of education, 6% had a high school or GED level of education, 35% had some college, 30% had a Bachelor's degree, 26% had a Master's degree, and 3% had a Doctoral degree. The participants' marital status was reported as approximately 45% single, 33% married, 15% divorced, 1% widowed, and 6% lived with another person but not married. Most of the participants reported their physical appearance was extremely similar to that of members of their ethnic group (44%), quite a bit (35%), somewhat (14%), a little bit (8%), and not at all (0.6%).

Demographic information related to the parents of the participants was a focus for descriptive purposes. Approximately 94% of mothers and 92% of fathers were born in the U.S. with 6% of mothers and 8% of fathers born in a Caribbean country (e.g., Bahamas, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, and St. Thomas). The majority of mothers (92%) and fathers (95%) ethnically identified as African or Black American. In addition, approximately 8% of mothers and 5% of fathers identified as being ethnically mixed (e.g., Bahamian

American, White/Black American, Haitian/Black American, Jamaican/Black American, and Hispanic/Black American).

Data Analyses

The research hypothesis developed for this study was examined by structural equation modeling and analysis for model fit was predicted using AMOS 21. Figure 3 within Chapter 3 represents the SEM model tested. This model was constructed using the symbols presented in the toolbox of the AMOS 21 display of graphics. This model examined how the independent variables, development of bicultural identity, familial ethnic socialization, and social context level were related to mediating variables ethnic identity and self-efficacy and the dependent variable of mental health help-seeking attitudes of African American adults.

Single arrow paths represent direct paths and double arrows assume variables are correlated. Single headed paths contain the path coefficient from each independent variable (individual level, family level, and social context level) to the mediating variables (ethnic identity and self-efficacy) to the dependent variable (mental health help-seeking attitude). This figure is suggestive of all the significant correlations between the variables and it is explained by direct and indirect effects for significance.

Hypothesized Model Fit and Path Analysis

The initial hypothesized ecological ethnic identity mental health seeking structural path model (See Figure 4) is recursive with the sample ($n = 116$). The model contained a total of 25 variables of which 16 were observed exogenous and endogenous variables and 9 were unobserved regression residuals. The model indicated 136 distinct

sample moments and 85 distinct estimated parameters resulting in a chi-squared $\chi^2 = 94.706$ ($df = 51, p < .001, CMIN/df = 1.857$). According to Arbuckle (2011) if the chi square test results find the CMIN/df value less than 3, which it was for the model, it is considered a reasonable fit. The fit indexes indicated that the model fit (i.e., how well the collected data fit the hypothesized relationships between the pathway-coefficients and their associated results) in relation for the purpose of answering the research question was good and could not be significantly improved by the adding of more direct paths (NFI = 0.913, TL1 = 0.894, CFI = 0.955, RMSEA = 0.073, PCLOSE = 0.052) but only 4% of the variance in attitudes towards seeking mental health services is explained, meaning that the model may be improved in future research by identifying and measuring additional variables.

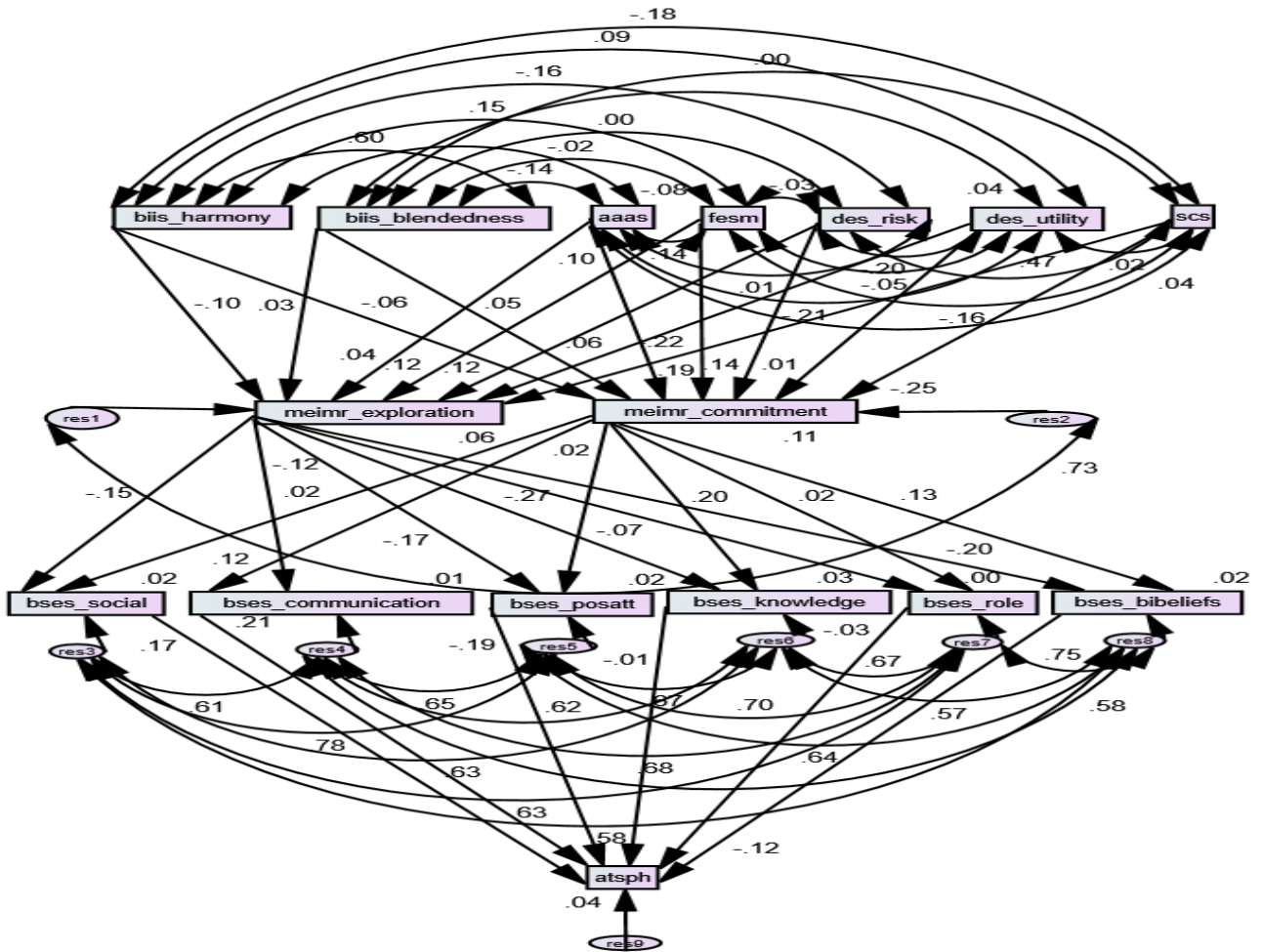


Figure 4. [SEM model with path coefficients]

Correlations Among Individual, Family, and Social Domain Exogeneous Variables

The exogeneous variables of the model were conceptualized as representing individual, family, and social domains. The individual domain included bicultural identity (biis_harmony and biis_blendedness in Figure 4) and African American acculturation (aaas in Figure 4). The family domain included familial ethnic socialization (fesm in Figure 4; this was originally expected to be two variables but a factor analysis of

the instrument indicated the overt and covert subscales were, in fact, unidimensional). The social context domain included disclosure expectations (des_risk and des_utility in Figure 4) and self-concealment (scs in Figure 4). For structural model purposes these exogeneous variables were allowed to covary. The correlations of these variables are detailed in Table 4. Bicultural harmony was positively correlated with bicultural blendedness, and negatively correlated with both disclosure expectation risk and self-concealment. Disclosure expectations utility was negatively correlated with both African American acculturation and disclosure expectations risk. Self-concealment was negatively correlated with familial ethnic socialization and positively correlated with disclosure expectations risk.

Table 4

Correlations Among Individual, Family, and Social Domain Exogeneous Variables (N = 161)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. biss-harmony		.598	-.083	.145	-.156	.085	-.175
2. biss_blendedness	< .001		-.144	-.022	-.005	.045	.003
3. aaas	.294	.068		.143	.013	-.208	.039
4. fesm	.066	.779	.070		-.029	-.051	-.161
5. des_risk	.048	.953	.871	.718		-.203	.471
6. des_utility	.283	.571	.008	.524	.010		.020
7. scs	.026	.975	.627	.041	< .001	.800	

Note. Upper diagonal contains Pearson correlation coefficients; lower diagonal contains two-tailed *p* values.

Direct Effects of Individual, Family, and Social Domains on Ethnic Identity

The structural model represented within chapter 3 (Figure 3) the set of individual, family, and social domain variables were expected to directly affect the first-order mediators of multigroup ethnic identity, specifically exploration and commitment. The

standardized direct path coefficients are depicted in Figure 4 and detailed in Table 5.

Only three predictors had statistically significant results: self-concealment, a direct negative influence, on both exploration and commitment; and family ethnic socialization, a direct positive influence, on commitment. Relative to other nonsignificant predictors, family ethnic socialization positively contributed to exploration, and disclosure expectations risk positively contributed to both exploration and commitment. Overall, 6.2% of the variance in exploration and 10.7% of the variance in commitment was explained by the set of individual, family, and social domain variables. The family and social domain variables were more influential than the individual domain variables. For a one standard deviation increase in self-concealment, exploration was predicted to decrease by .221 standard deviations and commitment was predicted to decrease by .253 standard deviations. Commitment was predicted to increase by .190 standard deviations for a one standard deviation increase in familial ethnic socialization.

Table 5

Direct Effects of Individual, Family, and Social Domains on Ethnic Identity (N = 161)

Domain/Predictor	Multigroup ethnic identity			
	Exploration ($R^2 = .062$)		Commitment ($R^2 = .107$)	
	Std. coeff.	<i>p</i>	Std. coeff.	<i>p</i>
Individual				
biis_harmony	-.103	.305	-.063	.520
biis_blendedness	.028	.773	.048	.619
aaas	.044	.583	.095	.223
Family				
fesm	.124	.120	.190	.015
Social				
des_risk	.118	.190	.143	.104
des_utility	.057	.479	.012	.876
scs	-.221	.014	-.253	.004

Direct and Indirect Effects on Bicultural Self-Efficacy

In the ecological ethnic pathway structural model represented in Figure 3, the exploration and commitment subscales of multigroup ethnic identity were expected to directly affect each of the six subscales of bicultural self-efficacy. The standardized direct path coefficients are depicted in Figure 4 and detailed in Table 6. Only the multigroup ethnic identity exploration subscale was statistically significant in predicting the knowledge subscale of bicultural self-efficacy; for a one standard deviation increase in exploration, knowledge was predicted to decrease .265 standard deviations. Exploration also approached significance in predicting bicultural beliefs and positive attitude. The multigroup ethnic identity commitment subscale approached significance in predicting the knowledge subscale of bicultural self-efficacy.

Because the exogenous variables had direct effects on the multigroup ethnic identity subscales, they had indirect effects on bicultural self-efficacy as shown in Table 6. The largest indirect effects were self-concealment on the positive attitude and on the social subscales of bicultural self-efficacy.

Table 6

Direct and Indirect Effects on Bicultural Self-Efficacy (N = 161)

Direct Effects	Bicultural self-efficacy					
	Knowledge	Role	Bibeliefs	Positive attitude	Communi- cation	Social
meimr_commitment	.198 (.091)	.022 (.853)	.128 (.277)	.023 (.847)	.122 (.305)	.023 (.846)
meimr_exploration	-.265 (.024)	-.073 (.539)	-.203 (.086)	-.171 (.147)	-.120 (.313)	-.147 (.213)
Indirect Effects						
biis_harmony	.015	.006	.013	.016	.005	.014
biss_blendedness	.002	-.001	< .001	-.004	.002	-.003
aaas	.007	-.001	.003	-.005	.006	-.004
fesm	.005	-.005	-.001	-.017	.008	-.014
des_risk	-.003	-.005	-.006	-.017	.003	-.014
des_utility	-.013	-.004	-.010	-.010	-.005	-.008

scs	.008	.011	.012	.032	-.004	.027
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Note. Standardized coefficients with *p* values in parenthesis; AMOS does not provide *p* values for indirect effects.

Direct and Indirect Effects on Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Help

In the ecological ethnic identity mental health help seeking structural model, ethnic identity was directly predicted by the six bicultural self-efficacy subscales and indirectly predicted by the seven exogeneous variables and the two multigroup ethnic identity subscales. Overall, 4.1% of the variance in ATSPH was accounted for by the structural model. The standard coefficients of the direct and indirect effects are detailed in Table 7. None of the direct effects were statistically significant, but the bicultural self-efficacy communication subscale approached significance ($p = .066$) and for a one standard deviation increase predicted a .211 standard deviation increase in ATSPH. All of the indirect effects were very small.

Table 7

Direct and Indirect Effects on Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Help (N = 161)

Direct Effects	Std. Coeff.	<i>P</i>
bses_social	.169	.193
bses_communication	.211	.066
bses_posatt	-.184	.176
bses_knowledge	-.013	.913
bses_role	-.031	.824
bses_bibeliefs	-.122	.316
Indirect Effects		
meimr_commitment	.006	
meimr_exploration	.014	
biis_harmony	-.002	
biss_blendedness	.001	
aaas	.001	
fesm	.003	
des_risk	.002	
des_utility	.001	

Summary

This chapter provided the results of the research study and summarized the data. Results from the pilot study was provided and during the preliminary process, data screening and preparation, correlations, and measurement models were completed. As this process concluded, the hypothesized model was tested for model fit.

Overall model fit was examined for the three domain levels: individual domain, which included bicultural identity (biis_harmony and biis_blendedness in Figure 4) and African American acculturation (aaas in Figure 4); the family domain, which included familial ethnic socialization (fesm in Figure 4); and the social context domain, which included disclosure expectations (des_risk and des_utility in Figure 4) and self-concealment (scs in Figure 4). The familial and social domains were direct predictors of ethnic identity development. These findings suggest those respondents that experience more family ethnic socialization were more likely to have a strong commitment to their ethnic identity and more likely to explore their ethnic culture. However, those respondents who scored high on self-concealment acts were less likely to explore or be committed to their ethnic culture.

Exploration of multigroup ethnic identify was directly negatively related to both knowledge, bi-beliefs, and positive attitude subscales of bicultural self-efficacy. The more one indicated exploring their ethnic identity the lower the knowledge, acceptance, and positive attitude toward either the mainstream or ethnic culture. However, a strong commitment to one's ethnic culture was directly related to greater bicultural self-efficacy

knowledge. The more committed to one's ethnic culture, the higher the bicultural self-efficacy knowledge of both mainstream and ethnic culture. Bicultural self-efficacy was minimally influenced by the indirect effects of bicultural identity, African-American acculturation, familial ethnic socialization, disclosure risk and utility, and self-concealment.

Attitudes toward seeking professional help—the culminating outcome of the structural model—had only 4.1% of its variance accounted for by all of the variables in the model. Only the communication ability subscale of bicultural self-efficacy had a direct effect on attitudes toward seeking professional help. The more one was able to communicate in both mainstream and ethnic cultural, the more positive the attitude toward seeking professional help. Table 8 summarizes the variables and substantial direct effects in the structural model.

In conclusion, of the set of individual, family, and social domain variables, the family and social level were more predictive of ethnic identity development. Further, ethnic identity commitment and exploration were positively and negatively, respectively, related to bicultural self-efficacy knowledge and bi-beliefs. The ability to communicate in both mainstream and ethnic cultures was directly predictive of positive attitudes toward seeking professional help. All indirect effects in the model were minimal. Noting the overall effects were small, the hypothesized structural ethnic identity mental health help seeking structural equation path model was an overall good fit. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the findings as a means to highlight how this study may contribute to social changes in the mental health help-seeking attitudes of African American adults.

Further, within Chapter 5, context included implications of the social change process and future research recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a summary of the current study and present the implications of findings based on the collected data presented in Chapter 4. Additionally, this chapter will provide interpretations of the findings and report suggestions for additional research related to mental health help-seeking attitudes of African Americans. Further, recommendations are discussed for future studies.

Research Overview

African Americans' poor mental health utilization rates represent an ongoing problem. Mental health practitioners need to be aware of the ecological context of mental health help-seeking attitudes. African Americans are likely to develop negative beliefs, approaches, and attitudes towards mental health help-seeking (Watson & Hunter, 2015). Although existing research has empirically explored some constructs of this path model (e.g., the influence of culture on ethnic identity, the influence of family ethnic socialization on ethnic identity, the influence of ethnic identity on self-efficacy, the influence of self-efficacy on mental help-seeking), no empirical studies have explored an ecological ethnic identity mental health help-seeking path model. Furthermore, theoretical and empirical research on the development of ethnic identity and its influence on mental health help-seeking attitudes among African Americans was limited. Thus, this study is the first to empirically examine this model for African Americans.

The purpose of this study was to pose and test an ecological ethnic identity mental health help-seeking structural path model using a sample of African American males and

females residing in the metro Atlanta, GA area. I outlined and examined the various relationships among three ecological levels: the individual levels (level of bicultural identity), family level (family ethnic socialization), and social context (self-concealment) and how each predicts ethnic identity. Ethnic identity was examined to identify its effects on bicultural self-efficacy and mediation effects on the relationships between individual, family, and social context, and bicultural self-efficacy. Bicultural self-efficacy was examined to identify its effects on mental health help-seeking attitudes and its mediation effects on the relationship between ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes. A quantitative research methodology was used to provide solutions for the following research question: To what extent does the ecological ethnic identity mental health help-seeking structural path model fit the data in a sample of African Americans in the metro Atlanta, GA area?

Interpretation of Findings

Major findings of this study support an understanding of ethnic identity development, its mediating role between three ecological variables, and mental health help-seeking attitudes., in the present study, a relationship was found between both internal and external influence on ethnic identity development.

Cheng et al. (2013) and Marks, Patton, and Coll (2011) concluded that internal as well as external factors have a strong relationship with how an individual gains sense of their ethnic identity. Based on the findings, correlations between the individual, family, and social domain variables were demonstrated, with family and social domain having a statistical significant influence. These demonstrated correlations within this study not

only support the assumptions that both internal and external factors influence ethnic identity development; but also support that the three ecological factors affect one another and play a role either directly or indirectly on ethnic identity development. Overall, individuals who experience more family ethnic socialization were more likely to have a strong commitment to their ethnic identity and explore their ethnic culture. The correlations further support, individuals who were more likely to engage in self-concealment acts were less likely to explore or be committed to their ethnic culture.

In the present study, a direct negative relationship was identified between multigroup ethnic identity subscale exploration and bicultural self-efficacy subscales knowledge, bi-beliefs, and positive attitude. As an individual seeks to explore their ethnic identity, a decrease in the knowledge, acceptance, and positive attitude towards either the mainstream or ethnic culture is observed. Further, analysis revealed commitment of multigroup ethnic identity was directly and positively related to knowledge subscale of bicultural self-efficacy. Findings within this study identified there were minimal indirect effects of bicultural identity, African American acculturation, familial ethnic socialization, disclosure risk, and utility and self-concealment influence on bicultural self-efficacy.

Examining attitudes toward seeking professional help had only a 4.1% of its variance accounted for by the all of the variables in the model. The bicultural self-efficacy communication ability subscale had a direct effect on attitudes toward seeking professional help. If an individual is able to communicate effectively in both mainstream and ethnic culture, they are more likely to have a positive attitude toward seeking

professional help. The ethnic identity mental health help-seeking structural equation model data output was insignificant but was considered a good fit. This structural model suggests that the chosen variables presented within this study directly and indirectly influence ethnic identity development and mental health help-seeking attitudes. However, further adjustments to the model may yield significant outputs that may demonstrate statistical significant correlations for each of the elected variables.

Limitations of the Study

As noted in Chapter 1, this study had several limitations. First, because the sampling method was convenience sampling, the participants represented a comparatively small proportion of all African American residents residing in the 28 metro counties of Atlanta, GA. This suggested the results may not be generalizable to all African Americans' ethnic identity development and mental health attitudes in this area or other parts throughout the United States. Second, the study examined ethnic identity development and mental health help-seeking attitudes of African Americans solely, avoiding the presence of cultural diversity within the sample. By only using African Americans and avoiding in-group cultural diversity, this limited the results to be generalized to understand same constructs among African Americans in a different geographical area, or among individuals from different cultural and racial backgrounds.

Third, the ecological variables selected to assist in understanding ethnic identity and its influence on mental health help-seeking attitudes were not exhaustive; other ecological variables may be pertinent to African Americans' ethnic identity development and its impact on mental health help-seeking attitudes. Further, although other ecological

variables not explored in this study have support from previous research, there was true representation of all direct or indirect influences on ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes of African Americans.

Fourth, the study relied on the self-report nature of data from adult African Americans, limiting the study from the standpoint of participants' reported answers to a question related to their perception of what is socially accepted instead of a true representation of their perception of ethnic identity development and attitudes toward seeking mental health. This occurrence is common to self-reports. Participants may have the desire to provide the research what they think the researcher may want or expect to hear (Kormos & Gifford, 2014).

Fifth, as the researcher, racially identifying as African American and having a personal background working as a therapist with African Americans within the mental health field possibly had an influence during the interpretation process. Lastly, the proposed question and directional pathways may not foster a collective understanding of each measurable variable. Therefore, the measures may under- or overestimate the true prediction of ethnic identity and its impact on mental health help-seeking attitudes.

Recommendations For Future Research

The results of this study and identified limitations suggests there are recommendations for further research. The results of this study identified five variables, which could potentially impact mental health help-seeking attitudes of African American adults. Subsequently, research exploring African Americans' mental health help-seeking attitudes should continue. First, while there is a significant utilization gap of seeking and

continuing mental health services for adult African Americans, more than other ethnic minority adult groups; which continues to grow as the populations grows, the research must continue to be central in identifying some resolution to the issue. Research in the future needs to be conducted with a larger sample of African Americans in metro Atlanta, GA area as well as African Americans and other African immigrants in other areas, such as New York City, the highest area for African American residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018), in order to explore African Americans mental health help-seeking attitudes with larger populations and in other geographical areas

The use of semi-structured interviews in addition to the use of participant's self-report measurements should be an alternative approach to data collection. Semi-structured interviews support qualitatively enriched and specific personalized information to be explored and obtained. Highlighting conducting qualitative studies can be more time consuming and financially unfavorable, using multiple data collection research methodologies may provide significant empirical improvement for the validity of the proposed model. Further, psychometrically empirical based measures for the constructs outlined within this study are of significant need for African American populations.

The significant pathway relationships found within this study should be studied further. Research in the future needs to be longitudinal. The results of this cross-sectional study identified ethnic identity as central mediator in mental health help-seeking attitude formation of African Americans. The use of longitudinal data to further clarify the model should be considered in future research. Thus, future research could explore other common ecological constructs that make up ethnic identity development and mental

health help-seeking attitudes would result in increased knowledge and understanding of the nature of mental health help-seeking attitudes.

Implications for Social Change

This research study supported both practical and theoretical implications for constructive positive social change. First, the practical implication identified of this study is an advancement towards understanding why some African American adults have difficulty developing a positive ethnic identity and attitudes towards seeking mental health services leading to a specific insight as to why the difficulty may be present. This insight can encourage future work in developing interventions that support progression of an African Americans positive ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes towards increased mental health utilization rates. Second, the study provided an in-depth theoretical frame of reference for examining and understanding specific constructs, and mediating variables involved in ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes development.

The ecological path model posed and tested within this study also contributed to modeling of the process of ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitude development useful to professional clinicians (counselors, therapists, psychologists, and mental health researchers) who in turn can play a role in the social awareness of individuals and the mental health systems. Primarily, there needs to be a constructed definition of these professional clinician's involvement. These clinicians are involved as the individual leaves their setting and as the individual returns to their setting. When there is a positive impact on ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitude

development of African Americans, collaboration at the individual level and professional clinician level, assumption of variables can be aligned. When African Americans ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes are negatively affected, the gap continues to widen.

Cross (1971, 1978) proposed a theory of Nigrescence of African American ethnic identity development (i.e., identification with other African Americans and positive attitudes) in particular, which is a suited analysis of the self-actualization process within the field of developmental psychology. Cross's model argued the process of ethnic identity development, low Black identity to high Black identity, occurs in five stages (i.e., Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment). Cross's model places emphasis that ethnic identity progression occurs because of the evaluation of one's attitudes and beliefs over time, one's ability to learn their environment, increased cognitive capabilities, and personal identity exploration.

In addition, Bronfenbrenner's (1995) work placed significant value on the importance of outlining the developmental process of individuals being influenced by the environments they interact with. Bronfenbrenner (1995, 1979) argued the development of an individual's behavior and thinking process can be influenced and shaped by their personal interaction with four distinct systems: microsystem, one's immediate environment; mesosystem, one's social system; exosystem, one's formal or informal social structures, such as societal influences by government or neighborhood; and, macrosystem, one's cultural values. This study provides a specific ecological pathway model which could have significant positive social change implications for understanding

the process of interconnection and bidirectional effects associated between the interaction of internal and external factors of ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes resulting in positively impacting both the development of ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes and interventions to ensure more African Americans develop positive ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes earlier.

Conclusion

Over several years there has been an increased interest in exploring and examining both internal and external influences on ethnic identity and mental health help seeking attitude development of ethnic minority groups, specifically African Americans. The outcome of the research only reveal there is a relationship but there continues significant conflict of understand ethnic minority groups ethnic identity and mental health help seeking attitudes. The purpose of this study was to propose and test a structural equation ecological path model of ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitudes, which included measures associated with concepts of three ecological levels of human development- (a) individual level (level of bicultural identity), (b) family level (familial ethnic socialization), and (c) social context level (self-concealment), how each are expected to predict ethnic identity, how ethnic identity influences bi-cultural self-efficacy, and bi-cultural self-efficacy influences mental health help-seeking attitudes. The sample included 161 African Americans adults in the Atlanta, Georgia metro area. Scores from a variety of psychometric instruments were utilized in a structural equation pathway modeling approach to test model fit.

Ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitude development was found to involve internal and external factors as a multifaceted model supported by specific human developmental processes. The results of multigroup ethnic identity having influence on bicultural-self efficacy support the ecological pathway model of ethnic identity mental health help-seeking attitudes to be founded upon internal and external variable domains. Bicultural identity, familial ethnic socialization, and self-disclosure as attributes associated with predicting multigroup ethnic identity were present and had an impact on bicultural self-efficacy but was minimal. The overall posed pathway model was a good fit, suggesting the model supports understanding ethnic identity and mental health help-seeking attitude development of African Americans.

This study proposed that ecological theory would be an effective theoretical framework for studying ethnic identity and its influence on mental health help-seeking attitudes development. Ecological theory provides a comprehensive outlook of human functioning and psychological phenomena by exploring the effects of both internal and external factors. While this study expands the current literature on ethnic identity development and its influence on mental health help-seeking attitudes by examining contextual constructs and empirically testing model fit of ethnic identity, understanding of the potential impact of the relationship between both internal and external factors was this study purpose, specifically with African Americans, and exploration of this kind of relationship has been argued to achieve more insight in studies throughout history . Findings related to this study provide evidence that contextual factors play a role in

ethnic identity development, and thus, this study challenges ethnic identity impacts on mental health help-seeking attitudes.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

Instructions: Please provide your responses to the following questions by circling all that apply or writing in the necessary information.

1. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is your marital status?
 - a. Single-Never married
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Widowed
 - e. Live with another person but not married

4. What is your highest level of education?
 - a. No schooling
 - b. Elementary School
 - c. Junior high school
 - d. High school/GED
 - e. Some College
 - f. College degree
 - g. Master's degree
 - h. Doctoral degree

5. Where was your mother born? _____

6. What is your mother's ethnicity? _____

7. Where was your father born? _____

8. What is your father's ethnicity? _____

9. How much is your physical appearance similar to that of members of your ethnic group?
Circle one: not at all a little bit somewhat quite a bit extremely

10. How long have you lived in the United States? _____

11. How long have you lived in metro Atlanta? _____

Appendix B: Permission to Use African American Acculturation Scale II (AAAS-33)

PsycTESTS Citation:

Landrine, H., & Klonoff, E. A. (1995). African American Acculturation Scale II

[Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t21392-000>

Instrument Type: Rating Scale

Test Format:

Subjects indicate their agreement with the items on scales ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). Higher scores (higher agreement with the statement) indicate a more traditional cultural orientation, and lower scores indicate a more acculturated cultural orientation.

Source:

Landrine, Hope, & Klonoff, Elizabeth A. (1995). The African American Acculturation Scale II: Cross-validation and short form. *Journal of Black Psychology, 21*(2), 124-152. doi: 10.1177/00957984950212003, © 1995 by SAGE Publications.

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Appendix C: African American Acculturation Scale II (AAAS-33)

Instructions: Please tell us how much you personally agree or disagree with the beliefs and attitudes listed below by circling a number. There is no right or wrong answer. We want your honest opinion.

Totally disagree	Disagree	Sort of disagree	Not True at All	Sort of agree	Agree	Totally agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Most of the music I listen to is by Black artists.						
.....						
2. I like Black music more than White music.						
.....						
3. The person I admire the most is Black.						
.....						
4. I listen to Black radio stations.						
.....						
5. I try to watch all the Black shows on TV.						
.....						
6. Most of my friends are Black.						
.....						
7. I believe in the Holy Ghost.						
.....						
8. I believe in heaven and hell.						
.....						
9. I like gospel music.						
.....						
10. I am currently a member of a Black church.						
.....						
11. Prayer can cure disease.						
.....						
12. The church is the heart of the Black community.						
.....						
13. I know how to cook chit'lins.						
.....						
14. I eat chit'lins once in a while.						
.....						
15. Sometimes, I cook ham hocks.						
.....						

16. I know how long you're supposed to cook

 collard greens. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. I went to a mostly Black elementary school.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. I grew up in a mostly Black neighborhood.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I went to (or go to) a mostly Black high school.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. I avoid splitting a pole.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. When the palm of your hand itches, you'll
 receive
 some money. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. There's some truth to many old superstitions.
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. IQ tests were set up purposefully to discriminate

 against Black people. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. Most tests (like the SATs and tests to get a job)
 are
 set up to make sure that Blacks don't get high scores
 on them. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. Deep in their hearts, most White people are
 racists. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. I have seen people "fall out."
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix D: Bicultural Identity Integration Scale–Version 2 (BIIS-2)

Instructions to be given to respondents:

As a bicultural individual living in the U.S., you have been exposed to two cultures: your own heritage or ethnic culture (for example, Japanese, Mexican, Kenyan, and African) and mainstream American culture. The experience of being bicultural differs across individuals and we are interested in **YOUR PARTICULAR EXPERIENCE**.

Now please think for a few minutes how much **YOU** tend to **combine** (vs. **separate**) these two cultural orientations or identities; and how much **harmony** (vs. **conflict**) **YOU** see or experience about the norms and values implicit in each culture. Next, read the statements below and rate (by circling a number) the extent to which each statement describes your experience **in general**. Please rate **all** statements, even if they seem redundant to you. Try to avoid “Not sure” if possible. Use the rating scale below:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

In general, how much do the following statements describe **YOUR** experience as a bicultural individual?

A. Bicultural Harmony vs. Conflict Items:

1. I find it easy to harmonize _____ and American cultures.
2. I rarely feel conflicted about being bicultural.
3. I find it easy to balance both _____ and American cultures.
4. I do not feel trapped between the _____ and American cultures.
5. I feel that my _____ and American cultures are complementary.
6. I feel torn between _____ and American cultures.
7. I feel that my _____ and American cultures are incompatible.
8. I feel conflicted between the American and _____ ways of doing things.
9. I feel like someone moving between two cultures.
10. I feel caught between the _____ and American cultures.

B. Bicultural Blendedness vs. Compartmentalization Items:

11. I cannot ignore the _____ or American side of me.
12. I feel _____ and American at the same time.
13. I relate better to a combined _____-American culture than to _____ or American culture alone.
14. I feel _____-American.
15. I feel part of a combined culture.
16. I find it difficult to combine _____ and American cultures.
17. I do not blend my _____ and American cultures.
18. I am simply a(n) _____ who lives in North America.
19. I keep _____ and American cultures separate.

Appendix E: Familial Ethnic Socialization Measure

Instructions: Answer each of the questions as honestly and clearly as you possible can. Please use the best response that reflects your understanding of the question and circle the answer that you are in agreement with.

1. My FAMILY teaches me about my ethical cultural background.

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
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2. My FAMILY encourage me to respect the cultural values and beliefs of our ethnic cultural background

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
----------------------	---	--------------------	---	---------------------

3. My FAMILY participates in activities that specific to my ethnic group

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
----------------------	---	--------------------	---	---------------------

4. Our home is decorated with things that reflect my ethnic cultural background

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
----------------------	---	--------------------	---	---------------------

5. The people who my FAMILY hangs out with the most are people who share the same ethnic background as my FAMILY

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
----------------------	---	--------------------	---	---------------------

6. My FAMILY teaches me about the values and beliefs of our ethnic/cultural background

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
----------------------	---	--------------------	---	---------------------

7. My FAMILY talks about how important it is to know about my ethnic/cultural background.

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
----------------------	---	--------------------	---	---------------------

8. My FAMILY celebrates holidays that are specific to my ethnic/cultural background

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
----------------------	---	--------------------	---	---------------------

9. My FAMILY teaches me about the history of my ethnic/cultural background.

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
----------------------	---	--------------------	---	---------------------

10. My FAMILY listens to music sung or played by artists from my ethnic/cultural background

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
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11. My FAMILY attends things such as concerts, plays, festivals, or others events that represent my ethnic/cultural background.

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
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12. My FAMILY feels a strong attachment to our ethnic/cultural background.

Not at all true 1	2	Somewhat true 3	4	Very much true 5
----------------------	---	--------------------	---	---------------------

Appendix F: Self-Concealment Scale (SCS)

Instructions: This scale measures self-concealment, defined here as a tendency to conceal from others personal information that one perceives as distressing or negative. Please place a X in the box, to the right of each of the following 10 statements, that best describes how much you personally agree or disagree with the statement.		1=strongly disagree	2=moderately disagree	3=don't disagree or agree	4=moderately agree	5=strongly agree
1.	I have an important secret that I haven't shared with anyone					
2.	If I shared all my secrets with my friends, they'd like me less					
3.	There are lots of things about me that I keep to myself					
4.	Some of my secrets have really tormented me					
5.	When something bad happens to me, I tend to keep it to myself					
6.	I'm often afraid I'll reveal something I don't want to					
7.	Telling a secret often backfires and I wish I hadn't told it					
8.	I have a secret that is so private I would lie if anybody asked me about it					
9.	my secrets are too embarrassing to share with others					
10.	I have negative thoughts about myself that I never share with anyone					

Appendix G: Permission to Use Disclosure Expectations Scale (DES)

PsycTESTS Citation:

Vogel, D. L., & Wester, S. R. (2003). Disclosure Expectations Scale [Database record].

Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t43360-000>

Instrument Type: Inventory/Questionnaire

Test Format:

The 8-item Disclosure Expectations Scale is measured on a 5-point scale.

Source:

Vogel, David L., & Wester, Stephen R. (2003). To seek help or not to seek help: The risks of self-disclosure. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *50*(3), 351-361. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.50.3.351

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Appendix H: Disclosure Expectations Scale (DES)

Instructions: For the following questions, you are asked to respond using the following scale:

(1) Not at all, (2) Slightly, (3) Somewhat, (4) Moderately, or (5) Very

1. How difficult would it be for you to disclose personal information to a counselor?
2. How vulnerable would you feel if you disclosed something very personal you had never told anyone before to a counselor?
3. If you were dealing with an emotional problem, how beneficial for yourself would it be to self-disclose personal information about the problem to a counselor?
4. How risky would it feel to disclose your hidden feelings to a counselor?
5. How worried about what the other person is thinking would you be if you disclosed negative emotions to a counselor?
6. How helpful would it be to self-disclose a personal problem to a counselor?
7. Would you feel better if you disclosed feelings of sadness or anxiety to a counselor?
8. How likely would you get a useful response if you disclosed an emotional problem you were struggling with to a counselor?

Appendix I: Permission to Use Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised

PsycTESTS Citation:

Phinney, J. S., & Ong, A. D. (2007). Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure—Revised

[Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t03615-000>

Instrument Type: Full Test

Test Format:

5-point scale, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), with 3 as a neutral position.

Source:

Phinney, Jean S., & Ong, Anthony D. (2007). Conceptualization and measurement of ethnic identity: Current status and future directions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*(3), 271-281. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.271

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Appendix J: Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEMI-R)

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Slightly agree (3) Neutral (4) Moderately agree (5) Strongly agree

1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
2. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
3. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
4. I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.
5. I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.
6. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.

Appendix K: Permission to use Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale

PsycTESTS Citation:

Vogel, D. L., & Wester, S. R. (2003). Disclosure Expectations Scale [Database record].

Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t43360-000>

Instrument Type: Inventory/Questionnaire

Test Format:

The 8-item Disclosure Expectations Scale is measured on a 5-point scale.

Source:

Vogel, David L., & Wester, Stephen R. (2003). To seek help or not to seek help: The risks of self-disclosure. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 50*(3), 351-361. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.50.3.351

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Appendix L: Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale

Instructions: Please answer each statement as carefully as possible. Please use one of the numbers below to indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement.

1 = strongly disagree, 3 = disagree, 5 = neutral, 7 = agree, and 9 = strongly agree

Social Groundedness

I can count on both mainstream Americans and people from the same heritage culture as myself.

1 3 5 7 9

I can develop new relationships with both mainstream Americans as well as people from the same heritage culture as myself.

1 3 5 7 9

I feel comfortable attending a gathering of mostly mainstream Americans as well as a gathering of mostly people from the same heritage culture as myself.

1 3 5 7 9

I have strong ties with mainstream Americans as well as people from the same heritage culture as myself.

1 3 5 7 9

I feel at ease around both mainstream Americans and people from the same heritage culture as myself.

1 3 5 7 9

I have an extensive network of mainstream Americans as well as an extensive network of people from the same heritage culture as myself.

1 3 5 7 9

I feel like I fit in when I am with mainstream Americans as well as people from the same heritage culture as myself.

1 3 5 7 9

Communication Ability

I can communicate my ideas effectively to both mainstream Americans and people from the same heritage culture as myself.

1 3 5 7 9

I can communicate my feelings effectively to both mainstream Americans and people from the same heritage culture as myself.

1 3 5 7 9

I am proficient in both standard English and the language of my heritage culture (e.g., urban street talk, Spanish, etc.)

1 3 5 7 9

I can switch easily between standard English and the language of my heritage culture.

1 3 5 7 9

Positive Attitudes

I have generally positive feelings about both my heritage culture and mainstream American culture.

1 3 5 7 9

I have a generally positive attitude toward both mainstream Americans and my cultural group.

1 3 5 7 9

I have respect for both mainstream American culture and my heritage culture.

1 3 5 7 9

I take pride in both the mainstream American culture and my heritage culture.

1 3 5 7 9

Knowledge

I am knowledgeable about the history of both mainstream America and my cultural group.

1 3 5 7 9

I am knowledgeable about the values important to mainstream Americans as well as to my cultural group.

1 3 5 7 9

I am knowledgeable about the gender roles and expectations of both mainstream Americans and my cultural group.

1 3 5 7 9

I am knowledgeable about the holidays celebrated both by mainstream Americans and by my cultural group.

1 3 5 7 9

Role Repertoire

An individual can alter his or her behavior to fit a particular social context.

1 3 5 7 9

I can choose the degree and manner by which I affiliate with each culture.

1 3 5 7 9

I am confident that I can learn new aspects of both the mainstream American culture and my heritage culture.

1 3 5 7 9

Bicultural Beliefs

It is acceptable for an individual from my heritage culture to participate in two different cultures.

1 3 5 7 9

It is acceptable for a mainstream American individual to participate in two different cultures.

1 3 5 7 9

Being bicultural does not mean I have to compromise my sense of cultural identity.

1 3 5 7 9

It is possible for an individual to have a sense of belonging in two cultures without compromising his or her sense of cultural identity.

1 3 5 7 9

Appendix M: Permission to use Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Help Measure--
Short-Form (ATSPPH-SF)

PsycTESTS Citation:

Fischer, E. H., & Farina, A. (1995). Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional
Psychological Help Scale--Short Form. Retrieved from PsycTESTS.

doi:10.1037/t05375-000

Instrument Type: Rating Scale

Test Format:

Participants indicate agreement or disagreement with each statement on a 4-point
continuum.

Source:

Fischer, E. H., & Farina, A. (1995). Attitudes toward seeking professional psychological
help: A shortened form and considerations for research. *Journal of College
Student Development, 36*, 368-373.

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Appendix N: Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Help Measure (ATSPPH-SF)

Instructions: Read each statement carefully and indicate your degree of agreement using the scale below. In responding, please be completely candid.

0 = Disagree 1 = Partly disagree 2 = Partly agree 3 = Agree

_____ 1. If I believed I was having a mental breakdown, my first inclination would be to get professional attention.

_____ 2. The idea of talking about problems with a psychologist strikes me as a poor way to get rid of emotional conflicts.

_____ 3. If I were experiencing a serious emotional crisis at this point in my life, I would be confident that I could find relief in psychotherapy.

_____ 4. There is something admirable in the attitude of a person who is willing to cope with his or her conflicts and fears without resorting to professional help.

_____ 5. I would want to get psychological help if I were worried or upset for a long period of time.

_____ 6. I might want to have psychological counseling in the future.

_____ 7. A person with an emotional problem is not likely to solve it alone; he or she is likely to solve it with professional help.

_____ 8. Considering the time and expense involved in psychotherapy, it would have doubtful value for a person like me.

_____ 9. A person should work out his or her own problems; getting psychological counseling would be a last resort.

_____ 10. Personal and emotional troubles, like many things, tend to work out by themselves.