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The “I Can’t" Mentality: Overcoming Stereotype Threat and Stigma in Latinx Community Leaders

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand how stereotype threat and stigma consciousness affect academic success, and if so, whether they create additional educational barriers for young people who live in marginalized communities. The participant sample was composed of Latinx professionals that currently hold leadership positions in socially and economically challenged communities and who are representative of the demographics of the community. Participants responded to a survey designed to explore experiences with the following themes: ethnic identification, stereotype and stigma awareness, self-perception, attitudes towards academic abilities, and negative responses. The research findings provided an analysis of the extent to which stereotypes and stigma impact the development of the Latinx ethnic-identity and self-perception on abilities to attain academic success.

Keywords: ethnic-identity, stereotype threat, stigma, academic outcomes

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Overcoming Stereotype Threat and Stigma in Latinx Community Leaders

How does one develop an "I can't!" mentality? This mental attitude is an unconscious cognitive response to when outsiders' have low expectations of their abilities and capacity to perform in any given setting. Imagine having to face these misperceptions solely because you belong to a predominantly immigrant, Spanish- speaking, Latinx community such as Lawrence, Massachusetts. The population in Lawrence is 73% Latinx or Hispanic, 39 % of which are foreign-born ("Lawrence Ma Population," 2018). Lawrence has been categorized as a gateway city, which is a community that serves as a "gateway" for working class people and immigrants to opportunities that make achieving the "American Dream" a reality ("Gateways Mag", 2019). Gateway cities, such as Lawrence, encounter many social and economic barriers, which consequently results in the fabrication of negative stereotypes and stigmas surrounding the residents and the city. As someone who was born and raised in this community, it is very disheartening that blatantly undisguised stigmas and stereotypes are attached to the city and its' residents. As I became more self-aware and conscious of my social identity as a Lawrence native, I developed an understanding on how my ethnicity and my sense of belongingness to my community influenced my life's trajectory. Did outsider's perceptions of my community and me influence how I perceived my social identity, abilities, and attitudes towards what I could accomplish? According to Guyll, Madon, Prieto, and Scherr (2010), Latinxs members have a significantly decreased chance of attaining undergraduate and graduate degrees in comparison to white counterparts because of social barriers that influence academic achievement. The educational attainment of residents over the age of 25 data from the Lawrence population states that 32 percent are high school graduates, but only 7.96 percent complete and earn a post-secondary degree ("Lawrence Ma Population", 2018). Does the "I Can't!" mentality confirm

negative stereotypes and stigmas and have an impact on high school completion and college enrollment rates? The goal of this study is to explore whether stereotype threats and stigma consciousness affect academic success and potentially create an additional educational barrier for young people who live in economically and socially vulnerable communities. I hope to gain an understanding of whether these components have a significant impact on academic achievement and success, and if so, can future research investigate approaches on how to effectively support students in overcoming barriers caused by social-identity threats.

Literature Review

There is a large body of research that supports how social stress and identity threats can dramatically impact the trajectory of ethnic minorities in the United States. Considerable research provides evidence on how identity threats can come about in many forms and the impact they may have on the specific target group. Literature with regard to identity threat and Latinx students in marginalized communities explores to what extent identity threats, such as stereotypes and stigmas, can impact behaviors and attitudes towards academic success and achievement. A review of the literature intends to establish a correlation between identity threat, perceived identity, self-identity, self-perception, and academic achievement, as well as common themes within each category.

Stereotypes are negative generalizations and assumptions which are assigned to specific groups of people in response to their minority status. Studies suggest that consciousness of negative stereotypes which are assigned to the Latinx ethnic group can affect the development of negative self-perceptions in regard to ability to achieve academic success. Sherman et al., (2013) discuss to the extent to which identity threats effect how one interprets ethnic identification by can creating social stress which disrupt feelings of belongingness in marginalized groups. Research attempts to establish a positive relationship between ethnic identity, identity threats, and academic performance and achievement in Latinx students. Sherman et al., (2013) argue that social risk factors such as stereotype threat negatively impact Latinx student’s attitudes towards their academic abilities and performance, therefore affecting academic outcomes.

Stigma consciousness is the awareness of rejection, avoidance, and discrimination which is socially attributed to one’s social group on the basis of perceived characteristics that socially constructed by dominant culture. Guyll et al., (2010) propose fundamental consequences of

stigma consciousness are the negative impact on behavior, self-perception, and attitudes. Furthermore, stigma consciousness has shown to negatively impact Latinx student’s development of self-perception and their perception of members within their own social group. Ingroup self-discrimination typically occurs within groups that are assigned negative stereotypes and stigma by dominant groups. Self-fulfilling prophecies are distinguished as the positive relationship between belief and behavior. The initial stage a self-fulfilling prophecy occurs when awareness of negative perceptions and expectations influence the treatment of a target group. Consequently, the spillover affects the behaviors of the target group and results in conforming to initial negative perceptions and expectations. The consequences of perceived low expectations impact student’s academic performance and attitudes because educators may not present students with opportunities to demonstrate they can have the ability to perform past a certain capacity. This may negatively affect the academic outcomes of students because they conform to low-expectations which assumes they cannot perform, therefore confirming the original belief (Guyll et al., 2010). For example, Guyll et al., (2010) discuss the scenario in which educators may attribute a student’s difficulty learning in the classroom to low motivation, overlooking other variables which are specific to student’s identity. However, studies argue that the academic outcomes of Latinx students are not positively correlated with the consequence of self-fulfilling prophecies. Researchers Hawley, Chavez, and Romain (2007) and Guyll et al., (2010) agree that research does not establish a positive relationship between threats such as self-fulfilling prophecies and the trajectory of Latinx student’s academic outcomes. It does, however, affect students of color disproportionately in comparison to white students. Researchers credit the dissimilarity in experiences with self-fulfilling prophecies between ethnic groups to low-expectancy projected by educators. This point assumes that identification specific to ethnicity

and race result in the development of educator's perception towards Latinx students, such as stereotypes and stigmas.

Social Identity & Ethnic Identification

The process of interpreting social identity is personal and unique to every individual. The multifaceted nature of social identity is due to the fact that identity is composed of various components, all which interact and/or counteract with one another. Influencing variables of social identity of those whose self-identify as Latinx members may include, but are not limited to, ethnicity/race, age, gender identity, socioeconomic status, religion, immigrant status, immigrant generation, and language. French and Chavez (2010) admit there is limited research that investigates exclusively the Latinx ethnic-identification experience. In response to limited research on Latinx ethnic-identification, Zarate, Bhimiji and Reese (2005) reject scholars' approaches to labeling social identity with regard to ethnic-identification. By rejecting pre-existing ethnic-identification labels, the opportunity to choose how to interpret membership to their social group is presented (Zarate et al., 2005). This approach allows for the interpretation of social identity and ethnic-identification to be more meaningful and personal. In this study, Zarate et al., (2005) also discovered a variable which is often overlooked by researchers when exploring the experiences of ethnically diverse groups is place of birth. In the study, findings suggest that Latinx American-born adolescents, do not often give preference to immigration status when self-identifying ethnicity, despite having bi-cultural identities by definition (p. 105). The findings suggest immigrant status/generation and place of birth do not contribute to ethnic-identification for Latinx students, because most chose to identify with parent's birthplace and language, such as speaking Spanish. It is suggested that a significant component for feelings of connectedness

and belongingness to the Latinx identity is positively correlated with parent's birth place and bilingualism.

Acculturation

Acculturation describes the process of adopting dominant culture, values, or beliefs for foreign-born Latinx students upon arrival to the United States. Research defends the argument that there is a significant relationship between ethnic identity, acculturation, and the development of self-perception such as attitudes and behavior. Research that explores the implications of acculturation has provided inconsistent findings. This inconsistency can be attributed to the variation of acculturation outcomes ranging from serving as a protective barrier to adverse outcomes for Latinx students in response to identity threats. Additionally, another component that influences Latinx student experience is biculturalism. According to Zarate et al., (2005) bicultural identity experiences of Latinx students is directly comparable to the acculturation process Latinx first generation immigrant experience because it includes simultaneously counterbalancing dominant culture and home culture.

According to the literature, acculturation occurs to different extents and degrees. The acculturation strategy of assimilation maintains a connection with one's home culture, while constructively engaging with dominant culture (Guyll et al., 2010). The acculturation strategy of separation occurs when there is minimal engagement with host culture and a strong attachment to one's home culture. In addition to adapting to dominant culture, foreign born Latinx students have to overcome the language barrier and acquire conversational English proficiency. Latinx students who have limited English proficiency have lower rates of acculturation and have worse perceived academic outcomes than those who have a greater English proficiency (Guyll et al., 2010). It is worth noting that experiences with the acculturation process differ between ethnic

groups, immigrants, and later immigrant generations (Hawley et al., 2007). For example, experiences with acculturating to dominant culture and standards varies when comparing Latinx and European immigrants. Components that cause variation in the acculturation process are dependent on cultural characteristics, language, spiritual attitudes, and interpersonal beliefs. Additionally, within these components are sub-variables exclusive to Latinx acculturation experience. The most significant components which shape the outcomes of overall well-being to Latinx students during the acculturation processes are family/ parental support and religiosity (Corona et al., 2017; Hawley et al., 2007). Family support and religion have a significant role in the acculturation process for Latinx students because these cultural values tend to serve as a protective factor that promote resiliency against identity threats. Family belongingness, support, and religion come into play when ethnic-identity is threatened as result of perceived discrimination. A consequence of perceived discrimination is that it discourages Latinx students to seek outgroup peer support, if it is available, and instead rely on family support (Hawley et al., 2007).

As mentioned earlier in the literature, the process of interpreting and understanding one’s social identity is personal and fluid. Identity is a complex array of components that have the ability to change, shift, adapt throughout a lifetime depending on lived experiences, environment, and views of belongingness. Perceived identity is the extent in which one interprets how outgroups understand and perceive their identity. Identity threats influence the process of adopting negative or positive perceived identity. Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, and Martin (2005) investigate the causes, roles, and impact that identity threats have on target groups. The threat model of prejudice begins to explain how identity threats shape attitudes and behaviors at the expense of specific ethnic groups, such as Latinx students (Stephan et al., 2005). The threat

model includes four types of threats: realistic threats symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes (Stephan et al., 2005, p. 2). Negative perceptions and attitudes are formed when dominant groups view outgroups as a threat to their own identity, therefore influencing dominant groups’ views and perceptions on immigrant and ethnic minority groups. Stephan et al., note that those who defend negative stereotypes of specific groups tend to hold onto negative attitudes in order to maintain a path of congruency between personal beliefs and stereotypes (2005, p. 2). The theory model of ethnocentrism intends to provide a deeper understanding behind motives for adopting and negative stereotype. Ethnocentrism is the process which dominant groups critique the culture, values and beliefs of outgroups with the perspective that there is a dominant standard culture (Stephan et al., 2005, p.15-16). Ethnocentrism reinforces stereotypes and prejudice against target groups because, most times, stereotypes and attitudes are negative. According to Stephan et al., (2005) negative stereotypes assigned to outgroups are more likely to have higher rates of retention in comparison to positive stereotypes. As a result of lower retention rates, positive stereotypes cannot serve as buffers against negative stereotypes. Researchers conclude that consequently, the impact of negative stereotypes is much greater than that of positive stereotypes.

Additionally, French and Chavez’s racial identity theory should be considered when attempting to understand how perceived identity shapes the experience and outcomes of Latinx students (2010). Racial identity theory is a theoretical concept that explains the process of coming into consciousness of outgroup perceptions and attitudes towards the social group to which you belong (French & Chavez, 2010). Racial identity theory is divided into four phases: centrality, regard, private regard, and group orientation. Centrality explains the implications and importance of one’s ethnic/racial identity to development of perception of self. Secondly, regard

also known as public regard explains one’s perceptions and beliefs about how outsiders interpret and view one’s ethnic/racial identity. The component of regard can be used to understand how one becomes aware of stereotypes and stigmas that are assigned to the ethnic group to which they belong. Thirdly, private regard encompasses the process in which we construct perceptions and beliefs about others that belong to the same ethnic/racial group. Lastly, other group orientation is our perceptions and beliefs towards outgroups (French & Chavez, 2010). French and Chavez’s (2010) theory provides an in-depth step-by-step explanation on the process becoming aware of one’s perceived identity. French and Chavez, (2010) and Stephan et al., (2005) conceptual theories provide insight on the complexity of ethnic-identification, perceived identity and the intersectionality of these concepts.

Implications on Academic Outcomes

Corona et al., (2017) note how although Latinx is the fastest growing population in the United States, this group is underrepresented in high school and college completion rates. Studies that explore the relationship between ethnic identity and academic performance and achievement suggest inconsistent findings according to researchers. The data has shown to be inconsistent because numerous studies have found that strong ethnic identity is linked to positive academic attitudes, performance, and outcomes. In retrospect, there are also a significant number of studies providing opposing evidence that suggests strong ethnic identity is linked to poor academic attitudes, performance, and outcomes. Zarate, et al., (2005) and Hawley et al., (2007) agree that the relationship between ethnic-identification and academic outcomes is not significant enough to establish a positive correlation. Throughout the review of the literature, researchers provide various explanations as to why ethnic-identification should not be considered as the primary influencer of academic outcomes in Latinx students. Guyll et al., (2010) propose

that the inconsistency in the data can be attributed to how one interprets and defines their ethnic identity. Supporting literature attributes inconsistencies to the dissimilarity in the approaches for measuring and defining ethnic identity. As noted earlier in the literature, ethnic identity is not constant and has the ability to adapt depending on the circumstances. For example, in the study conducted by Guyll et al., (2010), diversity and variability within Latinx and Hispanic identification was not distinguished. In contrast, Zarate et al., (2005) believes that ethnic-identification should not be limited to pre-existing labels therefore constricting the scope in which one can self-identify. The literature also suggests academic outcomes of Latinx students does not depend solely on ethnic-identification, but on the dynamic process of the interplay of social identifiers, such as demographics and cultural values (Taggart, 2018, p. 452).

Demographic variables that are significant predictors of academic achievement in Latinx academic achievement and success are socioeconomic status, parental education level, bilingualism, immigrant status, and the neighborhood in which they live. According to recent studies, socioeconomic status and household income is a significant predictor to Latinx academic outcomes in regard to test scores, high school completion, and college enrollment (Taggart, 2018). Socioeconomic status is positively correlated with parent’s highest degree received or level of schooling. Moreover, parental education level is also a factor in Latinx academic achievement and success. Taggart (2018) suggests that parental education, which includes premigration education is a positive influencing variable for Latinx student’s academic achievement. Latinx students who have parents which have completed a post-secondary degree have higher rates of test scores, high school completion, and college enrollment (p.456). Another variable which is exclusive to Latinx students is bilingual capabilities. Studies suggest Latinx student’s proficiency in both Spanish and English is significantly associated with achievement,

although English-speaking homes tend to have higher rates of college completion (Taggart, 2018, p. 453). The variation in academic achievement between English and Spanish speaking students, regardless of bilingualism, is an implication of the acculturation process.

As discussed earlier, a determinant of the Latinx experience is the acculturation process. Researchers can agree that acculturation has a significant role in the process of identifying one’s ethnic-identity, self-perception, and academic outcomes. Scholars challenge evidence that suggests those who experience the process of assimilation tend to have better academic outcomes than those who reject U.S culture (Guyll et al., 2010). It is suggested that acculturative stress in Latinx students can influence underperformance, which significantly affects academic achievement. Taggart (2018) provides supportive empirical evidence to support this argument by discussing the academic success rates of immigrant Latinx students. According to Taggart, immigrant Latinx students report higher grades than U.S born Latinx students (2018). In spite of achieving higher grades, immigrant Latinx students have lower high school completion rates and college enrollment (Taggart, 2018). The findings of a study conducted by Zarate and Pineda (2014) found that the high school completion rate was 22% higher for U.S born Latinx students in comparison to immigrant Latinx students (as cited in Taggart, 2018, p. 453). Owens and Lynch (2015) attribute the dissimilarity in high school completion rates and college enrollment between first generation and second generation of Latinx students to assimilation and biculturalism. U.S born Latinx students have the advantage of understanding cultural and structural dynamics in the U.S, therefore making them better equipped to effectively navigate educational structures (Owen & Lynch, 2015, p. 320). Reynolds et al., (2010) raise the point on the critical role schools and educational institutions hold in the academic success of Latinx students. More specifically, Steele (1992) and Cokley (2003) suggest the development of

negative self-concept and motivation in students of color is related to negative school experiences such as teacher biases and lack of representation (as cited in Reynolds et al., 2010, p. 144).

Researchers collectively suggest a fundamental component for overcoming identity threats and influencing the trajectory of academic achievement and success of Latinx students are their cultural values (Brown & Picho, 2011; Hawley et., 2007; Taggart., 2018; Reynolds et al, 2010). The social identity theory should be considered when examining the positive correlation between connectedness to cultural values and academic achievement in spite of risk factors such as identity threats. Social identity theory suggests that high ethnic-identification is positively correlated with positive developmental outcomes under identity threat (Picho & Brown, 2011, p. 382). Positive developmental outcomes include psychological and behavioral outcomes that support Latinx student’s overall well-being. In support of social-identity theory, Taggart (2018) states that associating with Latinx cultural values over dominant culture positively influences academic achievement for Latinx students. Further discussion suggests that strong ties to cultural values have a protective and resilient effect on student’s Latinx identity (French & Chavez, 2010). Ethnic identity as a protective factor is demonstrated in a study conducted by Hawley et al., (2007). The analysis of the data suggested that acculturative stressors and social stress such as identity threats were not indicators of low academic achievement in Latinx students. Although Latinx students experience higher levels of social stress in comparison to White students, there was no significant variance in the academic achievement between both groups of students (Hawley et al., 2007, p. 293). In their study, researchers also found that Latinx students displayed lower rates of positive self-perception with regard to academic abilities in comparison to other ethnic-groups. These findings are significant

in the argument which suggests Latinx cultural values serve as a protective factor and indicators of resiliency.

As discussed earlier in the literature, Latinx cultural values are strongly connected with family/ parental support and religiosity. Cupito, Stein, and Gonzalez (2014), Taggart (2018), and Hawley et al., (2007) support this point by suggesting the core of cultural values for Latinx member are family cultural values. Familial cultural values are known as “familism,” which is defined as “a strong attachment to one’s family, reciprocated loyalty, and obligation, and a subjugation of self to one’s family (Lugo, Steidal, & Contreras, 2003; as cited in Cupito et al., 2014). Familial cultural values are correlated with positive outcomes in Latinx students, such as higher grades and school belongingness (Cupito et al., 2014). Better academic outcomes as a result of familism may be due to obligations to school and homework placed on students by parents (Cupito et al., 2014). Another component at the core of the cultural values of Latinx identity which deflects the negative academic outcomes as a result of the sociopsychological burden of identity threats is the role of self-worth and self-affirmations. Identity threats in an academic may burden student’s perception on their abilities to perform and succeed. As argued by Sherman et al., (2013), the effects of identity threats in an academic setting are significantly less in students who engage in self-affirmations (p. 593). According to the self-affirmation theory, “people who are motivated to see themselves as globally capable, moral, and good- as being “adequate” or having self-integrity” (Sherman et al., 2013, p. 593, as cited in Steele, 1999). When faced with identity threats, self-affirmations do not remove the threat, however, this protective factor does lessen the impact of disruption identity threats have on self-perception.

Researchers provide supporting literature in regard to challenges students of color face in the pursuit of attaining academic success and social acceptance (Reynold et al., 2010, p.135).

Reynold et al., present the argument that in order to support the academic achievement and success of minority students, there must be an understanding on how social identity and ethnic-identification influences social and academic experiences (2010, p.137). The point presented by researchers validates how addressing challenges specific to Latinx students influences academic experiences, interactions, and outcomes.

Methodology

This study consisted of a single-phased emergent framework, which used an exploratory analysis method. A single-method research strategy consisted of a survey with the purpose of collecting quantitative data [Appendix A for Survey Questions]. The objective of the survey was to investigate if experiences with stereotype threat and stigma consciousness affected their academic success and potentially created additional educational barriers for Latinx individuals who live in marginalized communities. The survey is compiled of question items from a pre-existing measuring instrument, The Social Identity and Attitude Scale (SIAS, 2011). The use of a pre-existing measurement scale allowed for the validity and reliability of the survey. Picho and Brown (2011) use the following methods for ensuring the reliability and validity of question items; item redundancy, double-barreled items, social-identity specific items, and ambiguous items. The SIAS does not specifically distinguish which social-identity is being measured. For the purpose of this study, the social identity specific items were defined as ethnic-identification.

In the opening section before accessing the survey, participants were provided a consent to participate in research study script which outlined key information related to participating in the research study. Key information provided the participants with a general overview of the purpose of the study, description of the study procedures, risks/discomforts of participation, and confidentiality [Appendix B]. By continuing with the survey, participants indicate that they have

read and understood the information. The survey completion time was estimated at 10-15 minutes. The initial stage of the survey focused on collecting demographic information such as age, gender, marital status, education, parental education, employment status, household income, work organization, job title, and immigrant generation. The secondary stage of the survey included 35 questions selected from the SIAS instrument (Picho & Brown, 2011). Participants were instructed to rate each item statement with the following perspective, "throughout high school, my younger self believed…". In this stage of the survey participants were required to rate items on a 7-point scale with responses ranging from (1) *strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) slightly agree, (4) neutral, (5) slightly agree, (6) agree,* (7) *strongly agree*. Point scales ranging from 1 to 3 were grouped as 50% negative. Lastly, point scales 5 to 7 were grouped as 50% positive.

Participants and Procedures

The recruitment of this study was very intentional in the sense that this study sought out to target a distinct sample population. The participant sample was inclusive of Latinx professionals that currently hold leadership positions in socially and economically challenged communities and who are representative of the demographics of the community. The initial stage of connecting with potential participants that fit within the criteria intended for this study was arranged through local non-profit organizations. Joan Kulash, Executive Director of *Community Inroads* in Lawrence Massachusetts, provided a contact list of graduates from their Cultural Inclusion program [See Appendix C for Letter of Authorization]. Community InRoads' Cultural Inclusion program trains, places, and engages professionals with the skills needed to serve on boards in communities in which they are representative of the demographics. This workshop engages Latinx professional in order to increase diversity and inclusivity on Board of Directors

that serve non-profit organizations throughout the Merrimack Valley ("Community InRoads", 2019). Delia Duran-Clark, Executive Director of *Mill Cities Leadership Institute* also shared the survey link to currently enrolled community leaders and alumni within the MCLI network. [See Appendix C for Letter of Authorization]. *Mill Cities Leadership Institute* aims to challenge community leaders to become socially responsible in order to influence change and have positive impact in the Lawrence and Lowell communities. ("Lawrence CommunityWorks", 2019). MCLI is not a Latinx specific program, therefore it was highlighted how this study sought to connect with individuals who self-identify as Latinx. The survey was administered through a data collecting platform, Google Forms.

Measurements

The surveys' statement items were designed for quantitative data analysis, which investigates the following measures:

Social identity and Ethnic-identification- This 9-item measure explores to the importance of ethnic-identification in the development of social identity (French & Chavez, 2011). This instrument explores to what extent of importance ethnic identity has on overall social identification. For example, "My ethnicity formed a major part of my identity."

Stereotype Threat and Stigma Consciousness- An 8-item measure which seeks to explore the participant's cognitive awareness on how others perceive and interpret their social identity on the basis of their ethnicity. These measurement items explore participants' perception on the influence of stigma with the use of subscales: *judgements* (e.g., "Most people judged me on the basis of my ethnicity"), *treatment* (e.g., "My ethnicity affects how my peers interact with me"), and *interactions* with outgroups (e.g., "People from other ethnic groups interpret my behaviors based on my ethnicity")(French & Chavez, 2011).

Self-Perception and Attitudes Towards Academics- This 11-item measure explores participants' self-concept and attitudes towards academic success and achievement. These item scales are designed to explore participants attitudes towards their academic abilities, performance, and aptitude. Additionally, this item measured participant's self-perception on their abilities during the processes of learning, mastering new concepts, exceling, and ultimately achieving academic success (French & Chavez, 2011).

Negative Outcomes- The measurement of negative outcomes is assessed in 6 items. These items have participants rate to which degree they experienced negative emotions towards their academic achievement and success in response to stereotype threat and stigma (French & Chavez, 2011). Negative emotional responses measured in this item scale were feelings of frustration and giving up. Additionally, the survey investigated occurrences of feelings of self-doubt, such as the development of negative self-efficacy and negative expectations of self.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

The survey ensured anonymity and confidentiality of participant response data. The survey was created with the intention of maintaining the anonymity of all participant information and survey responses. As outlined in the pre-survey consent form, the study is anonymous and does not collect personal identifiers [Appendix B for Consent Form]. Additionally, the data was collected electronically through an online survey tool, which was coded and secured in the researcher's personal computer.

Results

This section presents an analysis summary of the data collected from the survey. The findings provide an overview of participant demographic data and responses which measure ethnic-identification, stereotype and stigma consciousness, self-perception towards academics, and negative outcomes of Latinx community leaders. The findings also provide an overview of

whether stereotype threat and stigma consciousness affected how participants interpreted their ethnic identities and academic abilities during their high school years.

Demographic Findings

The initial stage of the survey consisted of a 10-item instrument which collected demographic data of the study participants. A total of 14 Latinx community leaders voluntarily participated in the survey and provided quantitative data for further analysis. Forty-one percent (41%) of the participants identified being 38+ years old. The remaining participant sample identified as the following age groups: 22-25 years old (17%), 26-29 years old (25%), 30-33 years old (17%). Figure 1 demonstrates the participant’s responses to survey question, “What is your age?”.

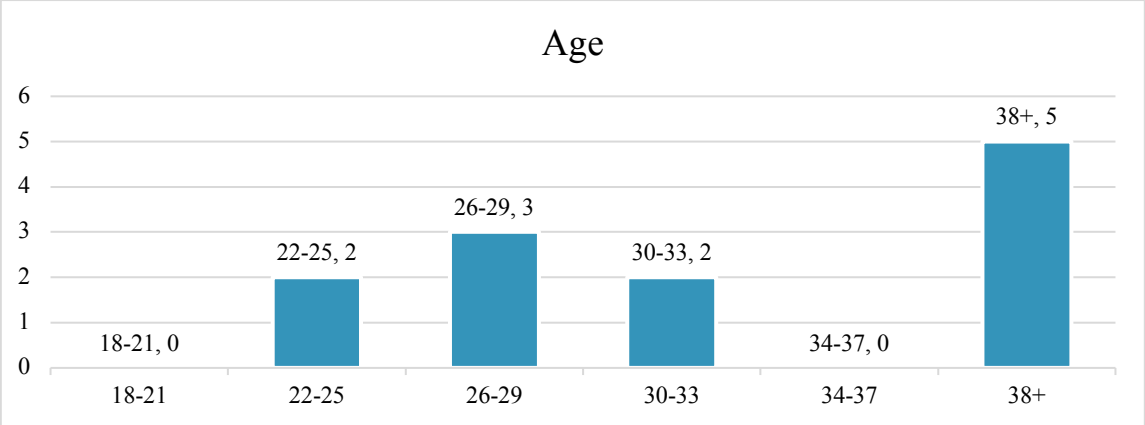


Figure 1: Bar Graph - Age Distribution

Gender was presented as multiple-choice, with the option to self-identify. There were 10 participants who identified as female (77%), 4 male (15%), and one participant self-identified as transgender (8%). Figure 2 provides a visual representation of participant’s responses to survey question, “*What is your gender?*”.

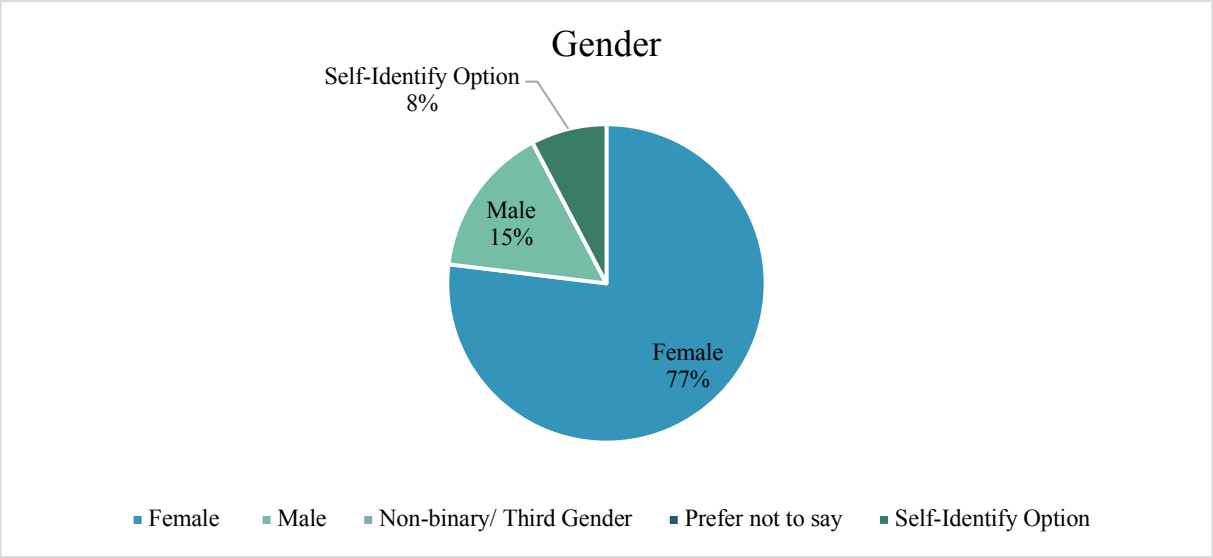


Figure 2: Pie Chart: Gender

In consideration of the purpose of this study, measuring participants highest level or degree of schooling was of importance. The survey question was, “What is the highest degree or level of schooling you have completed?”. This survey question was intended for measuring the academic achievement and success of Latinx community leaders, which is vital for the credibility of the research. The findings suggest 81% of the participant sample had completed post-secondary education. A breakdown of post-secondary education completion is as follows: 14% completed an associate degree; 36% completed a bachelor’s degree; 21% completed a master’s degree. It is worth noting that one out of the 14 participants attended college but did not receive a degree. The findings for the portion of the participant sample that did not go on to post-secondary education was 22%. Three out of the fourteen participants did not go to college but completed trade/technical/vocational training. The figure below illustrates participant’s highest degree received:

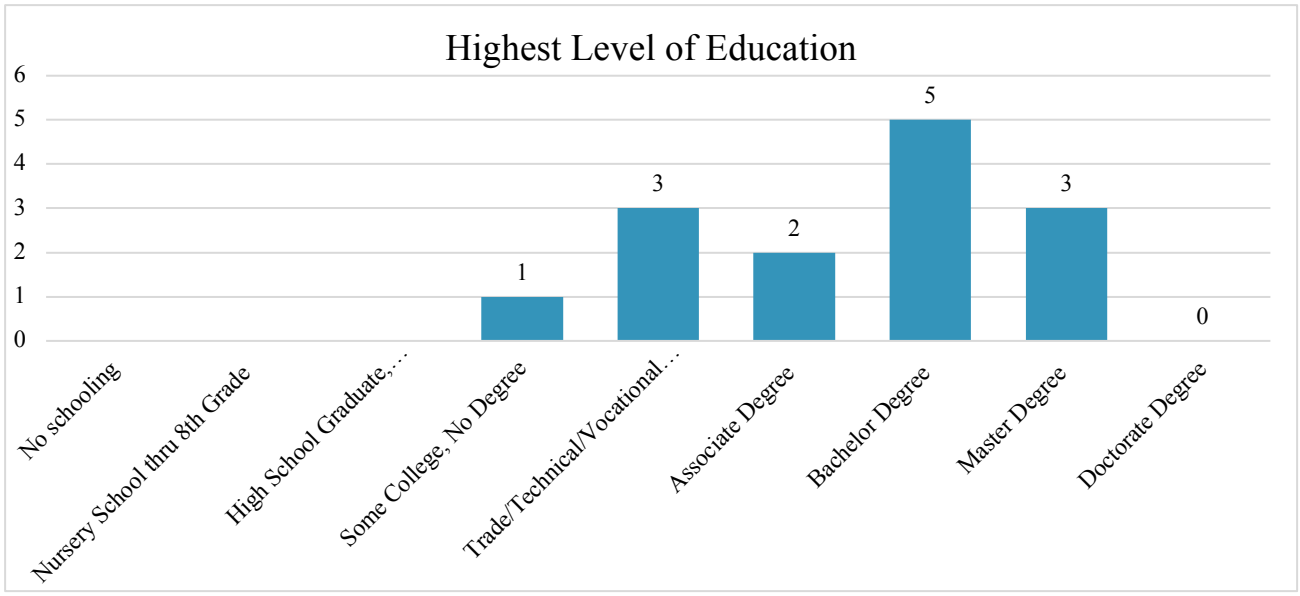


Figure 3: Bar Graph - Participant’s Highest Degree Received

In the review of the literature, researchers suggest parent’s education level is a predictor for academic outcomes for students. Therefore, it was appropriate that the survey included a measure to capture the highest degree or level of schooling for participant’s mother and father. The findings suggest that 72% of the participant’s parents (both mother and father), did not complete a post-secondary degree. Figure 4 presents a breakdown on parent’s educational level by educational level and for each parent.

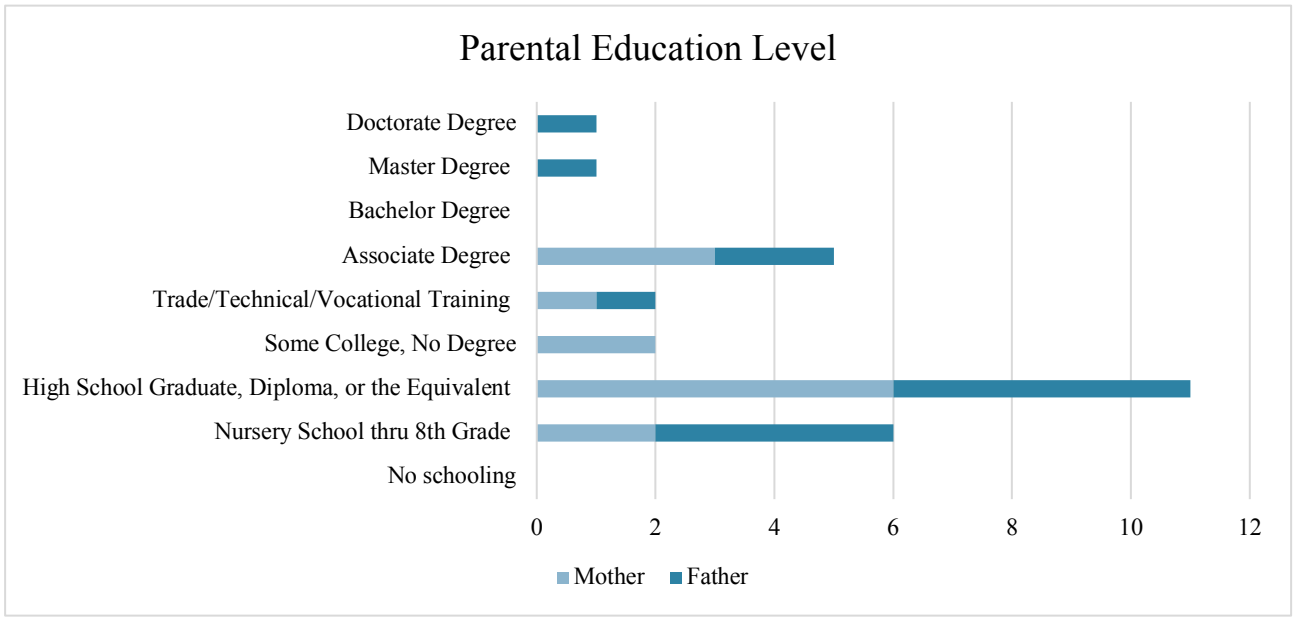


Figure 4: Bar Graph - Parent’s Highest Degree or Level of Schooling

Figure 5 provides a visual representation of the general fields of job industries most pertinent to participants’ current job titles. As depicted in Figure 5, 50% of participants selected the non-profit industry (7 out of 14 participants) as the most accurate descriptor for the type of organization they work for. The other half of the responses pertaining to job industry were to be unevenly distributed between government (3 out of 14 responses), health-care (2 out of 14 responses), education (1 out of 14 responses), and the option “other” (1 out of 14 responses). One participant chose to identify the Real Estate industry under the “other” option. It is worth noting that zero of the participants reported working for a for-profit organization.

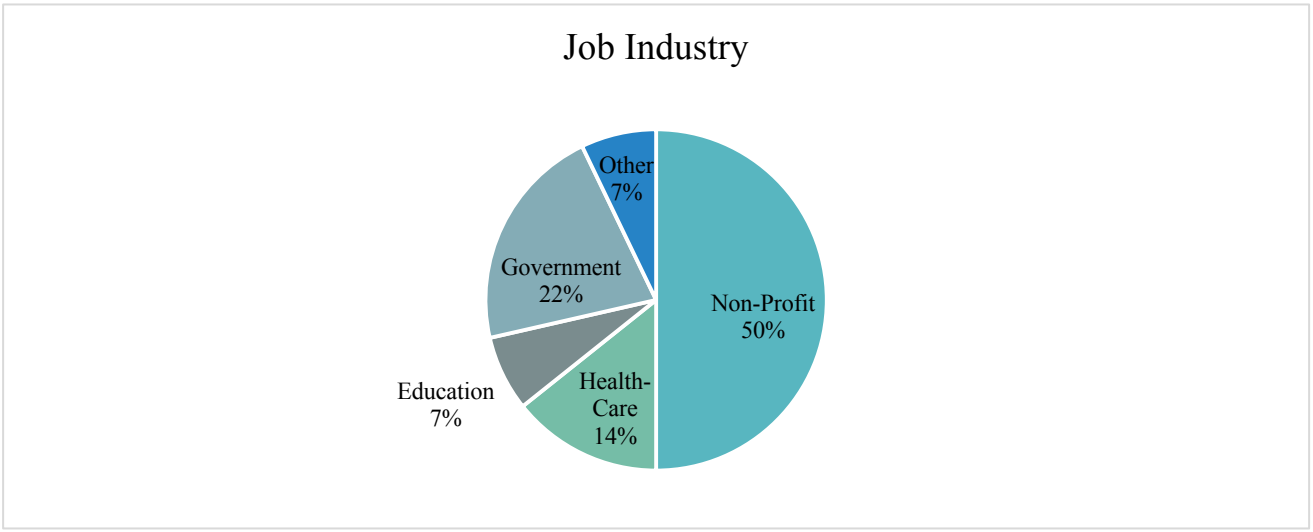


Figure 5: Pie Chart- Breakdown of Job Industry

The survey collected job title data in order to gain a comprehensive view at which level of leadership participants contribute within their communities. The analysis of the data provided the following findings; 6 out of 14 participants selected the job level of Manager. The highest-level position reported by the participant sample was President or CEO, which included 3 out of the 14 responses. The composition for responses for Entry level position were 2 out of the 14 participants. Associate/Analyst level position yielded the same results (2 out of 14 responses).

Figure 5 presents an illustration of responses for survey question, “Which of the following most closely matches your job title?”

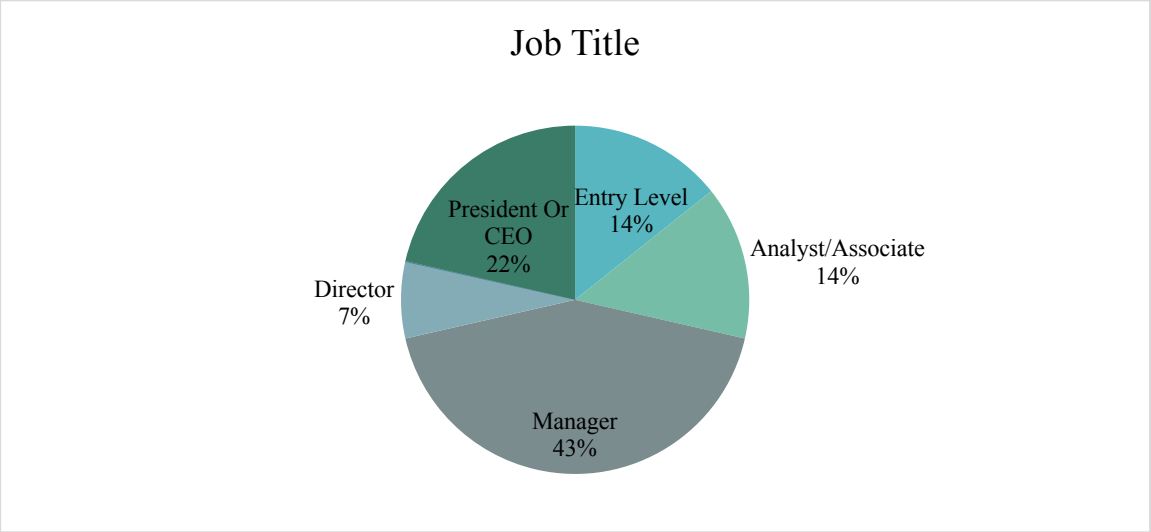
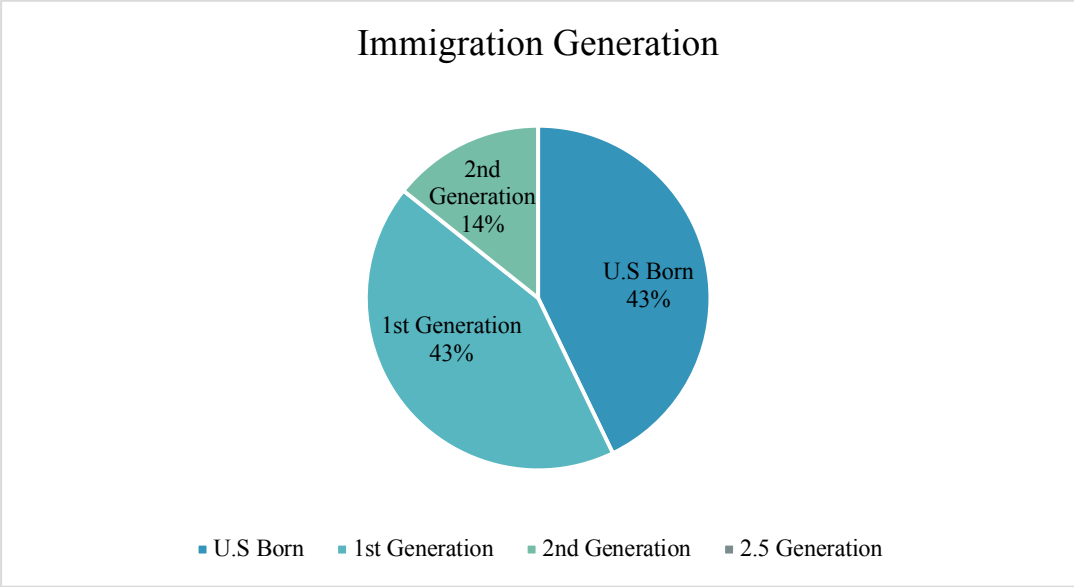


Figure 5: Pie Chart - Current Job Title

As shown in Figure 6, the survey intended to explore the experiences of Latinx community leaders with regard to immigration generation. In order to ensure participants understood the labels attributed to each immigrant generation, a concise, yet brief description was provided for each option. The findings analysis shows the responses for immigration generation varied. Six out of the 14 participants were U.S born natives. First generation immigrant (6 out of 14 participants) yielded similar results as U.S born participants. Out of the 14 participants responses, only 2 identified as being 2nd generation immigrants (one foreign-born parent). Refer to Figure 6 for a visual representation of the break-down of immigrant generation among the participants.

Figure 6: Immigration Generation



Survey Findings

The following section presents an analysis of the data collected through the second stage of the survey. This stage of the survey instrument measures the following themes: social identity and ethnic-identification, stereotype threat and stigma consciousness, self-perception and attitudes towards academics, and negative outcomes. Figure 7 provides a visual representation of responses for measuring participant’s ethnic-identification. The measurement items are presented in a 100% stacked bar graph in order to interpret how participants evaluate and think about the role of one’s Latinx identity. The analyses of responses to ethnic-identification indicated an overall comprehension of item measurements. It is worth noting that although every participant submitted different responses for each item, there appears to be consistent ratings. Participant responses were significantly consistent within the following ratings: 5 (slightly agree) to 7 (strongly agree). Therefore, the analyses suggest participants rated ethnic-identification as positive terms. However, one item yielded different results. The item statement, “My ethnicity

affected how I felt about myself" was the only item in the ethnic-identification measurement which provided neutral results. Refer to the figure below:

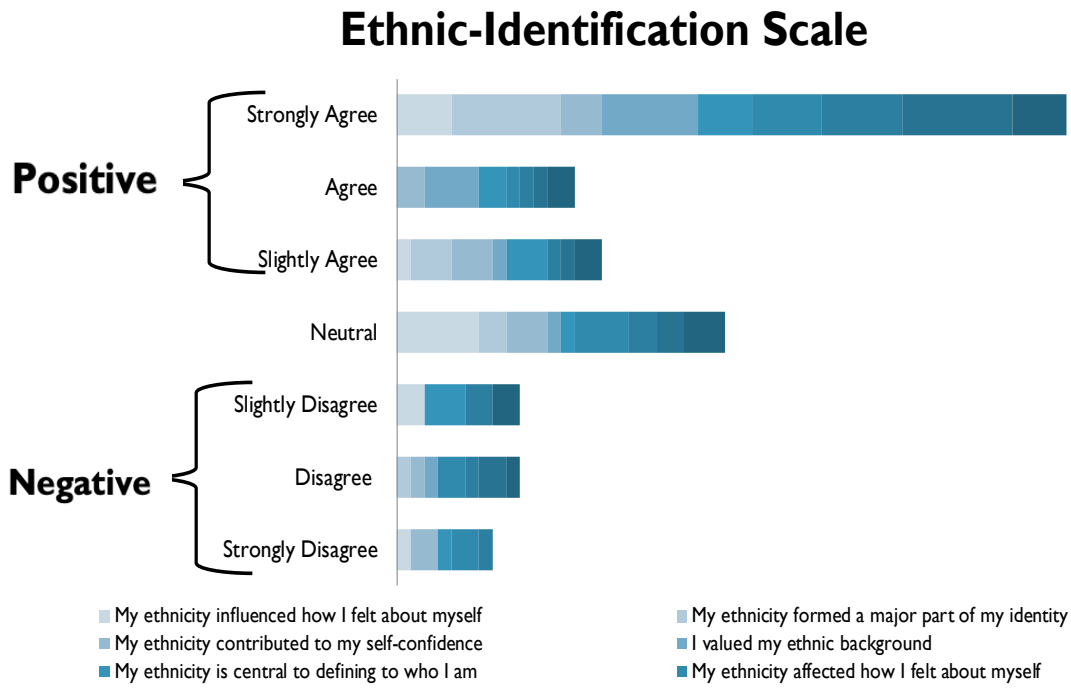


Figure 7: Stacked Bar Graph – Ethnic Identification Measurement Items

Figure 8 provides an illustration of responses which measures to what extent participants were aware of stereotypes and stigmas assigned to their identity. The measurement items are presented in a 100% stacked bar graph in order to interpret the levels of awareness for each statement item. An analysis of the responses suggest that participants had high levels of awareness of stereotypes and stigma. The responses suggest a continuation of overall comprehension of item measurements. It is noteworthy, that while every participant submitted different responses for each item, there appears to be consistent ratings between points 5 (slightly agree) through 7 (strongly agree). Participant's experiences with stereotype and stigma

consciousness yielded positive ratings. Refer to the figure below:

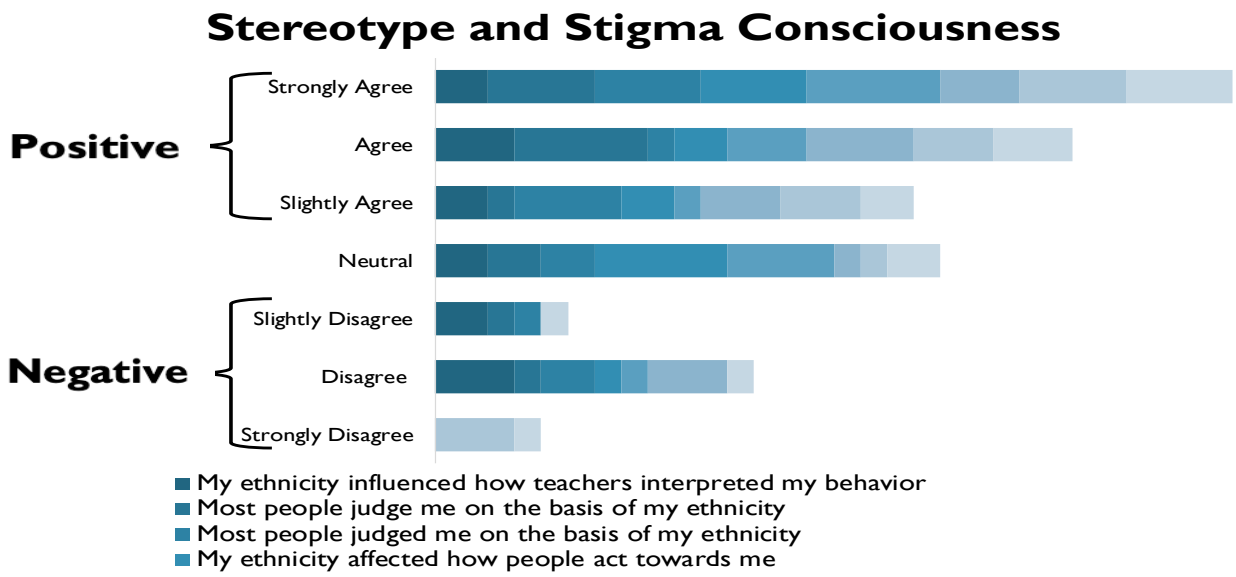


Figure 8: Bar Graph –Measurement Items for Stereotype and Stigma Consciousness

Figure 10 is a demonstration of the measurement items for negative outcomes, such as feelings of frustrations and negative self-efficacy. Analyses of the findings revealed heterogenous results within the responses. Items statement which yielded mostly positive results were, "I had feelings of hopelessness," "Experienced doubt about my academic abilities," "I experienced feelings of frustration," and "I felt like I was letting myself down." Correspondence for these items were consistent within ratings 5 (slightly agree) through 7 (strongly agree). Items which yielded negative responses between rating 1 (strongly disagree) and 3 (slightly disagree) were the following items: "At times, I felt like giving up," and "I was unable to do well in my academics."

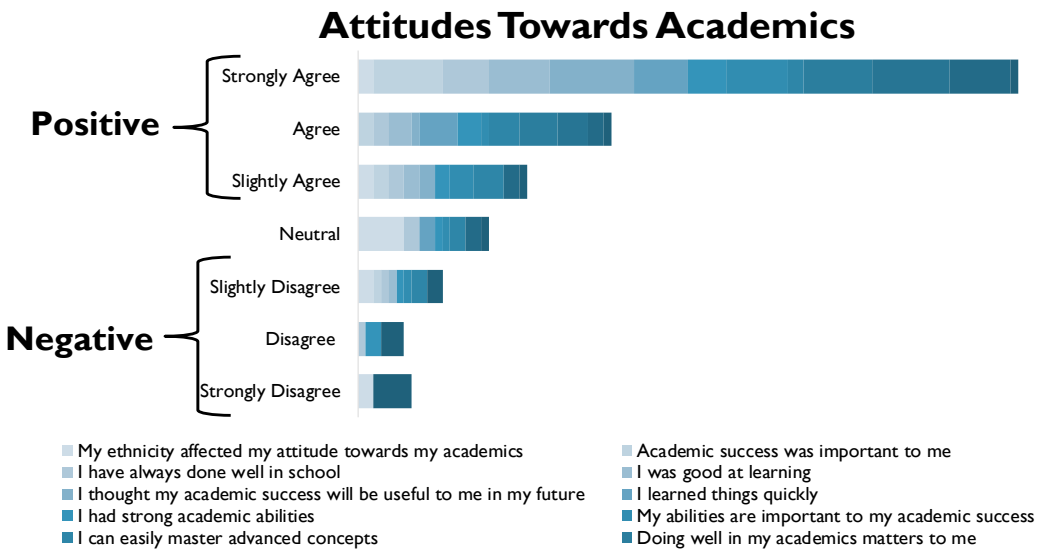


Figure 9: Stacked Bar Graph – Measurement Items for Self-perception on Academic Abilities, Performance, and Aptitude

Figure 10 is a demonstration of the measurement items for negative outcomes, such as feelings of frustrations and negative self-efficacy. Analyses of the findings revealed heterogenous results within the responses. Items statement which yielded mostly positive results were, "I had feelings of hopelessness," "Experienced doubt about my academic abilities," "I experienced feelings of frustration," and "I felt like I was letting myself down." Correspondence for these items were consistent within ratings 5 (slightly agree) through 7 (strongly agree). Items which yielded negative responses between rating 1 (strongly disagree) and 3 (slightly disagree) were the following items: "At times, I felt like giving up," and "I was unable to do well in my academics."

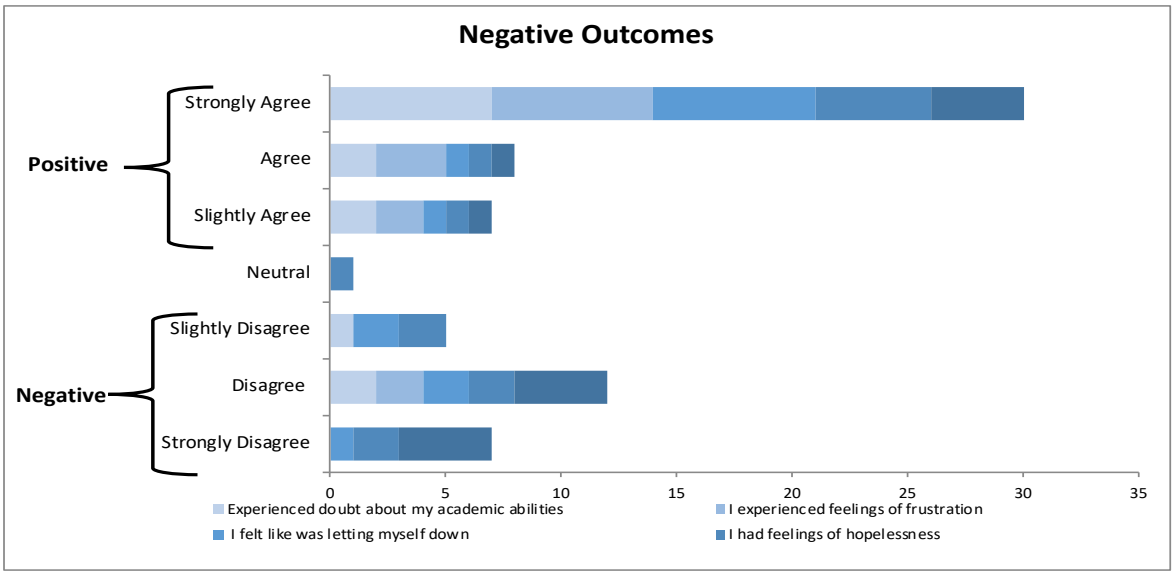


Figure 10: Stacked Bar Graph – Measurement Items for Negative Outcomes

Discussion

The review of the literature maintains that research concerning the overall scope of Latinx identity is inconsistent because of limited available research. The research findings enhance the understanding of Latinx community leader’s experiences with ethnic-identification, stereotype threat, stigma, and self-perception on academic abilities. This section provides an in-depth interpretation of research findings with regard to what extent these components pose as barriers to the academic achievement and success of Latinx community leaders. The findings of this study were inconclusive to the initial research question, which suggests Latinx students’ experiences with stereotype threat and stigma consciousness is positively correlated with academic success and achievement. Although the research findings did not support the initial research question, they can be applied to magnify other significant components that contribute to the Latinx identity experience. In addition to the research discussion, this section includes limitations and recommendations for future research.

Overall, the analysis of the data suggested that ethnic-identification and social stressors such as identity threats are not correlated with low academic achievement. Participants reported significantly positive ratings in the 8-item ethnic-identification instrument. High ratings in the ethnic identification scale suggests that participants interpret their Latinx identity as a significantly positive component of their overall social identity. The findings correspond with social identity theory, as mentioned in the literature review by Picho and Brown (2011, p.382). Social identity theory can be applied in understanding how participant’s high ethnic-identification serves as a protective barrier when threatened by negative stereotypes and stigma. Social identity theory suggests that a significant component of social identity are cultural values, which motivates Latinx members to maintain positive social identity, despite being compared to the standards of outgroup norms (Picho & Brown, 2011, p. 382). These findings are significant because they highlight cultural values as contributors to positive ethnic-identification which is significant to academic achievement and success in Latinx community leaders.

Also, findings for items which measure participant’s experiences with stereotype and stigma consciousness produced positive results. These findings are important for understanding Latinx community leader’s consciousness of negative stereotypes and stigma that were assigned to their ethnic group during high school years. Positive results are translated as high levels of awareness and cognition of stereotypes and stigma. Additionally, participants reported being highly aware of the extent to which stereotypes and stigma affected their interactions with peers, educators and outgroups. Although participants reported being conscious of identity threats and perceived identity, it can be inferred that high ethnic-identification counteracts the implications of identity threats. Positive ethnic-identification as a protective factor can also be applied in understanding overcoming identity threats in Latinx-identity (Hawley, Chaves & Romain.,

2007). Identity as a protective factor assumes that positive ethnic-identification buffers the negative effects of stereotypes and stigma on self-perception towards their academic abilities to achieve and succeed.

Additionally, another component of the survey which yielded positive responses is participant’s development of self-perception and attitudes towards academic abilities and negative outcomes. Positive ratings for self-perception and attitudes suggest that participants had positive judgements towards their ability to achieve academic success during high school. Despite having positive self-efficacy, the majority of participants also reported experiencing negative emotions such as feelings of frustration and self-doubt. This is worth highlighting because although participants experienced feelings of self-doubt and frustration, these feelings did not directly impact self-perception and academic outcomes. In this study, academic achievement and success is correlated with highest degree or level of schooling attained. Eighty-one percent of participants completed a post-secondary degree despite of stereotype threat, stigma consciousness, and negative outcomes. Taggart (2018) suggest that parental education level is a predictor of academic achievement and success. The findings in this study challenge Taggart’s argument because percentage of parents who had completed post-secondary education was only 28%. These findings are significant to this research because it supports the argument that participants did not limit their perception of their academic abilities on the basis of parental education level. This point also supports the argument that high-identification, cultural values, and family support remain to be contributing factors for resiliency and achieving academic success.

Limitations

The initial study proposal was in compliance with Merrimack College’s research regulations and was approved by the Merrimack College Institutional Review Board [See Appendix D for IRB approval]. Although, the participant sample belonged to a marginalized community, they were not deemed as a vulnerable population and there were no foreseeable potential risks. A limitation posed by the intentional specificity of participant criteria is that it limited the participant pool to a small sample. The consequence of having a small sample size is that the findings cannot be generalized and are not representative of the entire Latinx community leaders’ experiences with regard to ethnic identification, stereotype threat, stigma, and the implications of these intersecting components. However, having an established and distinguished and specific criterion for the participant sample was beneficial during the recruitment process of connecting with local community organizations. After analyzing the data, a limitation worth mentioning is that the majority of respondents identified their gender as female. Gender can influence how participants interpret and respond to stereotype threat and stigma. Although participant sample criteria outlined that participants are to be individuals that currently serve the communities in which they are from, it does not specify whether they attended high school in their community. Not specifying the location of the high school attended is a limitation because this technicality could possibly impact participant’s exposure to identity threats. Lastly, the survey does not efficiently measure whether participants were aware of stereotypes and stigmas during high school or if the understanding of these concepts developed over time.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research study sought to establish a correlation between stereotype and stigma consciousness as additional educational barriers for Latinx students who live in marginalized communities. When addressing social barriers that affect the academic outcomes of Latinx students, it is worthwhile exploring what components of identity have the most significant

impact on students as a whole. This approach aids in the understanding of the development of intrinsic motivation and positive self-perceptions towards academic abilities despite the influence of external factors such as identity threats (Reynold et al., 2010). For Latinx students, ethnic-identification, which includes cultural values and family support, serve as protective barrier. The findings suggest ethnic-identification is a protective factor that prevents Latinx members from conforming to stereotypes and stigmas which are attributed to their social identity.

This study initially ascribed ethnic identification as a disadvantageous component to Latinx student’s experiences and academic outcomes. However, as discussed in the findings, strong ethnic-identification for Latinx students is a predictor of overall positive well-being and outcomes. A recommendation for future research that emerged from the findings is that studies could shift the positionality of research that aims to capture the experience of Latinx members. This entails allowing for participant self-identification of ethnic labels rather than limiting identification to pre-existing labels. Additionally, research could exclusively investigate experiences in regard to distinct nationalities including those associated with Latin American and Caribbean heritage. By acknowledging the diversity that exists within Latinx ethnic-identification, researchers demonstrate a commitment to understanding how multiculturalism influences a variation in experiences.

Considering schools and educational institutions hold a vital role in the academic success of students, it is worth presenting recommendations that address ways to identify negative ethnic identification in young people in order to better support students in developing more positive self-perception and greater academic achievement. As mention in the review of the literature, self-affirmations deflect negative effects of identity threats in Latinx students. Therefore, a recommendation worth considering is implementing curricula that encourage all students to

engage in self-affirmation which allows for exploration of how students interpret and understand overall their identity. This approach not only deflects the negative effects of threats on overall identity, it supports the development of positive self-perception and personal integrity for all students. As discussed in the review of the literature, a significant component to positive ethnic-identification in Latinx groups is familial support and belongingness. Therefore, schools should recognize that familial support is a significant variable in positive Latinx ethnic identity and academic outcomes. The next recommendation puts a focus on family/parental engagement and support. In order to increase feelings of school belongingness in Latinx students, it is important that schools create a welcoming environment for not only the students, but also for families. Family involvement and inclusion promotes higher school satisfaction, therefore, better academic outcomes. This approach showcases schools and institutions commitment to supporting student’s needs in a manner which celebrates the student as a whole.

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Appendices

Appendix List

- Appendix A: Survey Questions
- Appendix B: Informed Consent
- Appendix C: Community Signed InRoad’s Letter of Authorization
- Appendix D: MCLI Signed Letter of Authorization
- Appendix E: IRB Research Approval Form

Appendix A

Survey Questions

1. What is your age?
    a. 18-21 years old
    b. 22-25 years old
    c. 26-29 years old
    d. 30-33 years old
    e. 34-37 years old
    f. 38+ years old
2. What is your gender?
    a. Female
    b. Male
    c. non-binary / third gender
    d. Prefer to self-describe _____
    e. Prefer not to say
3. Education: What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.
    a. Some college, no degree
    b. Trade/technical/vocational training
    c. Associate degree
    d. Bachelor’s degree
    e. Master’s degree
    f. Professional degree
    g. Doctorate degree
4. What is the highest degree or level of school your mother has completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.
    a. No schooling
    b. Nursery school to 8th grade
    c. Some high school
    d. High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent
    e. Some college, no degree
    f. Trade/technical/vocational training
    g. Associate degree
    h. Bachelor’s degree
    i. Master’s degree
    j. Professional degree
    k. Doctorate degree

5. What is the highest degree or level of school your father has completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.
    a. No schooling
    b. Nursery school to 8th grade
    c. Some high school
    d. High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent
    e. Some college, no degree
    f. Trade/technical/vocational training
    g. Associate degree
    h. Bachelor’s degree
    i. Master’s degree
    j. Professional degree
    k. Doctorate degree
6. What is your marital status?
    a. Single, never married
    b. Married or domestic partnership
    c. Widowed
    d. Divorced
    e. Separated
7. What is your current employment status?
    a. Employed
    b. Self-employed
    c. Unemployed, looking for work
    d. Unemployed, not currently looking for work
    e. Student
    f. Military
    g. Retired
    h. Homemaker
    i. Unable to work
8. What is your household income?
    a. $0-$9,999
    b. $10,000-$19,9999
    c. $20,000-$29,999
    d. $30,000- 49,999
    e. $50,000-$69,999
    f. $70,000-$89,999
    g. $90,000 or more
9. What best describes the type of organization you work for?
    a. For profit
    b. Non-profit

    c. Health care
    d. Education
    e. Government
    f. Other
10. Which of the following most closely matches your job title?
    a. Intern
    b. Entry level
    c. Analyst/associate
    d. Manager
    e. Director
    f. Vice President
    g. Senior Vice President
    h. C level executive
    i. President or CEO
    j. Owner
11. Immigrant generation
    a. U.S born
    b. first generation (foreign born)
    c. Second generation (U.S.-born with foreign-born parents)
    d. 2.5 generation (U.S born with one foreign-born parent)

Throughout high school, my younger self believed…

(1) strongly disagree (7) strongly agree

1. My ethnicity influenced how I felt about myself
2. Academic success was important to me
3. My ethnicity formed a major part of my identity
4. My ethnicity contributed to my self-confidence
5. My ethnicity influenced how teachers interpreted my behavior
6. I have always done well in school
7. I valued my ethnic background
8. I was good at learning
9. Most people judge me on the basis of my ethnicity
10. My ethnicity is central to defining to who I am
11. I thought my academic success will be useful to me in my future
12. My ethnicity affected how I felt about myself
13. Most people judged me on the basis of my ethnicity
14. I learned things quickly
15. My identity is strongly tied to my ethnicity
16. I felt a strong attachment to my ethnicity

17. I was unable to do well in my academics
18. I had strong academic abilities
19. My ethnicity was an important reflection of who I was
20. My ethnicity affected how people act towards me
21. Most people have unexpressed racist thoughts
22. My abilities are important to my academic success
23. My ethnicity affects how my peers interact with me
24. I can easily master advanced concepts
25. Doing well in my academics matters to me
26. I value education
27. My ethnicity affects how I interact with people of other ethnicities
28. Doing well in my academics is critical to my future success
29. People from other ethnic groups interpret my behaviors based on my ethnicity
30. Experienced doubt about my academic abilities
31. I experienced feelings of frustration
32. I felt like was letting myself down
33. I had feelings of hopelessness
34. At times, I felt like giving up
35. My ethnicity affected my attitude towards my academics

Appendix B

Informed Consent

MERRIMACK COLLEGE

315 Turnpike Street, North Andover, MA 01845 | www.merrimack.edu

Consent to Participate in Research Study

Title of Study: **The "I Can't Mentality": Overcoming Stereotype Threat and Stigma in Young Latinx Community Leaders**

Investigators: Ashley Duran

Co-Investigator: John Giordano

IRB Number: IRB-FY18-19-112

Key Information

1. This project is being conducted as research and your participation is entirely voluntary.

2. The goals of this study is to understand how stereotype threats and stigma consciousness affect academic success and possibly create additional educational barriers for people who live in marginalized communities. The purpose of the survey is to gain an understanding of whether these variables play a significant role in academic achievement. Ultimately, this research may be presented as a paper and published in an academic journal.

    a. Online survey – approximately 15-20 minutes

3. There are no anticipated foreseeable risks or discomforts.
4. There are no expected benefits for participation in this study.

5. Should you wish, you may complete a hard copy version of the survey as opposed to the online version.

Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study of will measure how aware you were of stereotypes and stigmas during high school, and whether stereotypes and stigmas contributed to the development of your social identity and attitudes towards your academic abilities.
- You were selected as a possible participant because you were identified as currently holding a community leader role in the community of Lawrence, in which you are representative of the demographics. For this study, we are looking for young Latinx professionals who overcame educational barriers and are now serving the community.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study

- The purpose of the study is to understand how stereotype threats and stigma consciousness affect academic success and possibly create additional educational barriers for young people who live in marginalized communities, such as Lawrence. The purpose of the survey is to gain an understanding in if these variables do play a significant role on how high school students view their academic abilities and performance, and if so, how did the participants overcome these barriers to later became community leaders.
- Ultimately, this research may be presented as a Community Engagement graduate Capstone project for the School of Education and Social Policy at Merrimack College.

Description of the Study Procedures

- If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things: We will send you a link to an online survey tool via email. The survey will include questions about your demographics and your attitudes about stereotypes in relation to your personal social identity. The survey will take about 30 minutes to complete.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study. There are no reasonably foreseeable (or expected) risks. There may be unknown risks.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- There are no benefits to you as a participant in this study. This study will create a conversation and increase awareness on how stereotypes and stigmas may influence a high schooler's self-perception on how they view their academic abilities and how far they can

go.

Confidentiality

- This study is anonymous. We will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity.
- The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and/or all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.

Payments or Compensation

- You will not receive the any form of payment or reimbursement for participating in this study.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* without affecting your relationship with the investigators of this study, Merrimack College or any study partners. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview or survey at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

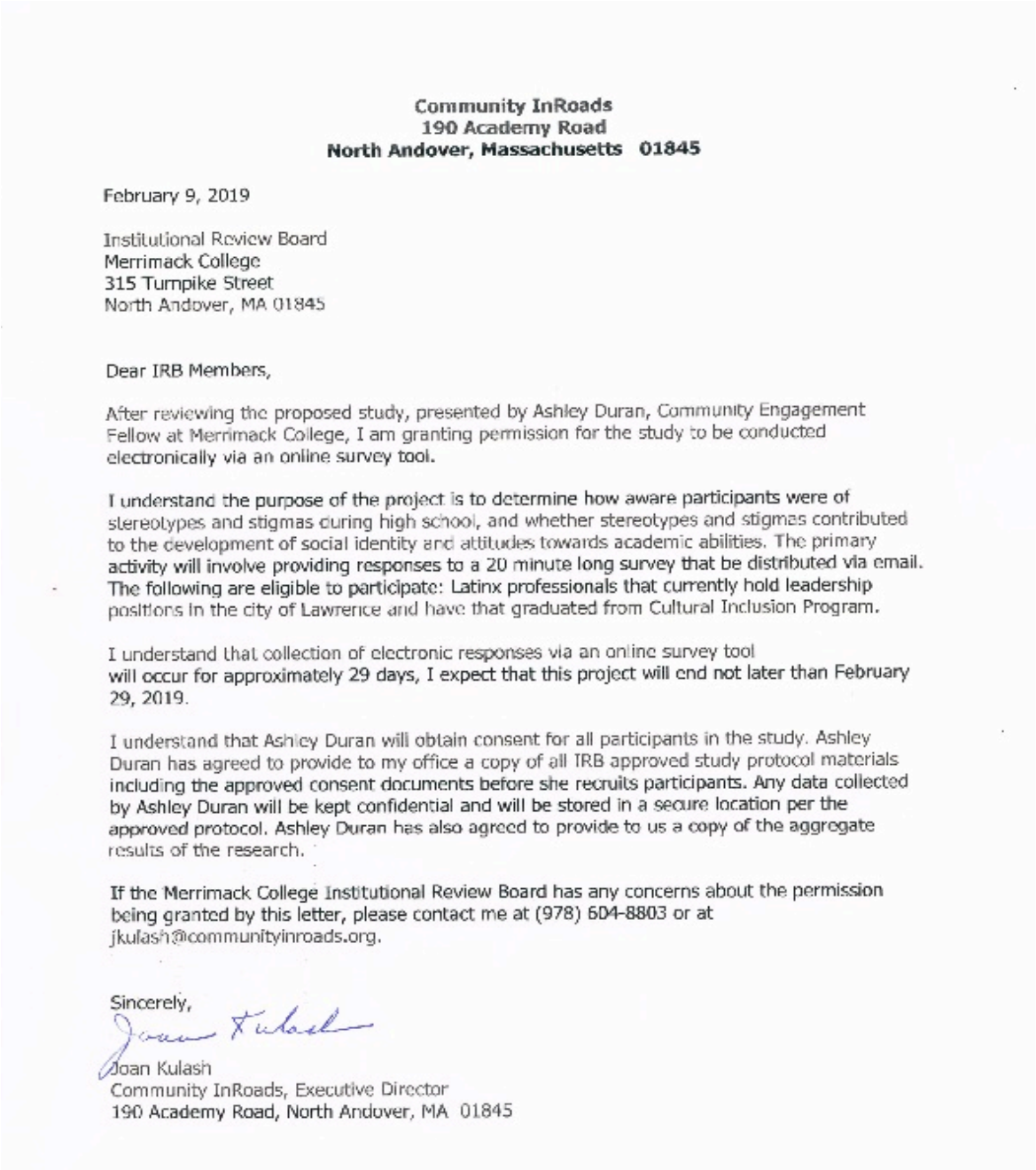
- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact, Ashley Duran at duranam@merrimack.edu or by telephone at (978) 590-5082 or John Giordano at giordanoj@merrimack.edu. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators, you may contact the Chair of the Merrimack Institutional Review Board at (978) 837-5280 or by email at irb@merrimack.edu.
- If you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you can report them to the Chair of the IRB at the contact information above.

Informed Consent

- Continuing with this survey indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above.

Appendix D

Community Organization Authorization Letter



Community InRoads
190 Academy Road
North Andover, Massachusetts 01845

February 9, 2019

Institutional Review Board
Merrimack College
315 Turnpike Street
North Andover, MA 01845

Dear IRB Members,

After reviewing the proposed study, presented by Ashley Duran, Community Engagement Fellow at Merrimack College, I am granting permission for the study to be conducted electronically via an online survey tool.

I understand the purpose of the project is to determine how aware participants were of stereotypes and stigmas during high school, and whether stereotypes and stigmas contributed to the development of social identity and attitudes towards academic abilities. The primary activity will involve providing responses to a 20 minute long survey that be distributed via email. The following are eligible to participate: Latinx professionals that currently hold leadership positions in the city of Lawrence and have that graduated from Cultural Inclusion Program.

I understand that collection of electronic responses via an online survey tool will occur for approximately 29 days, I expect that this project will end not later than February 29, 2019.

I understand that Ashley Duran will obtain consent for all participants in the study. Ashley Duran has agreed to provide to my office a copy of all IRB approved study protocol materials including the approved consent documents before she recruits participants. Any data collected by Ashley Duran will be kept confidential and will be stored in a secure location per the approved protocol. Ashley Duran has also agreed to provide to us a copy of the aggregate results of the research.

If the Merrimack College Institutional Review Board has any concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me at (978) 604-8803 or at jkulash@communityinroads.org.

Sincerely,

Joan Kulash
Community InRoads, Executive Director
190 Academy Road, North Andover, MA 01845

Appendix D

Community Organization Authorization Letter

MILL CITIES LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

January 23, 2019

Institutional Review Board
Merrimack College
315 Turnpike Street
North Andover, MA 01845

Dear IRB Members,

After reviewing the proposed study, presented by Ashley Duran, Community Engagement Fellow at Merrimack College, I am granting permission for the study to be conducted electronically via an online survey tool.

I understand the purpose of the project is to determine how aware participants were of stereotypes and stigmas during high school, and whether stereotypes and stigmas contributed to the development of social identity and attitudes towards academic abilities. The primary activity will involve providing responses to a 20 minute long survey that be distributed via email. The following are eligible to participate: Latinx professionals that currently hold leadership positions in the city of Lawrence and have that graduated from Mill City Leadership Institute.

I understand that collection of electronic responses via an online survey tool
will occur for approximately 29 days, I expect that this project will end not later than February 29, 2019.

I understand that Ashley Duran will obtain consent from all participants in the study. Ashley Duran has agreed to provide to my office a copy of all IRB approved study protocol materials including the approved consent documents before she recruits participants. Any data collected by Ashley Duran will be kept confidential and will be stored in a secure location per the approved protocol. Ashley Duran has also agreed to provide to us a copy of the aggregate results of the research.

If the Merrimack College Institutional Review Board has any concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me at (978) 332-2327 or at
dduran-clark@lawrencecommunityworks.org

Sincerely,

Della Durán-Clark, MSW, M.Ed
Mill Cities Leadership Institute, Executive Director
Lawrence CommunityWorks
168 Newbury Street, Lawrence, MA 01841
Main: 978-685-3115 / Direct: 978-722-2600

Appendix E

IRB Research Approval Form

Date: 4-4-2019

IRB #: IRB-FY18-19-112
Title: The "I Can't" Mentality: Overcoming Stereotype Threats and Stigma In Young Latinx Community Leaders
Creation Date: 11-28-2018
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Ashley Duran
Review Board: Merrimack IRB
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Review Type	Decision
Initial	Exempt	Exempt

Key Study Contacts

Member Ashley Duran	**Role** Principal Investigator	**Contact** duranam@merrimack.edu
Member John Giordano	**Role** Co-Principal Investigator	**Contact** giordanoj@merrimack.edu
Member Ashley Duran	**Role** Primary Contact	**Contact** duranam@merrimack.edu