

Nadie Me Ve Como Latino: Relating Perceived Phenotype and Discrimination to Ethnic-

Racial Identity in Young Latinx Children

Luis Mendez
University of Michigan
luismen@umich.edu
310-895-6919

Teresa Satterfield Linares
University of Michigan
tsatter@umich.edu
734-647-2332

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Luis Mendez

Department of Education and Psychology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Email: luismen@umich.edu

Abstract

Previous research demonstrates positive associations between Ethnic-Racial Identity (ERI), well-being, and positive academic engagement (Umaña-Taylor, Wong, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2012). However, this literature's focus has been mainly limited to adolescents. Furthermore, prior studies discuss implicit racial bias (phenotypes) in ERI, but fail to take into account the highly salient marker of non-English language use in stereotypes. We present results of a recent pilot study carried out in Spanish that examines ERI formation, perceived phenotypes and experiences of Ethnic-Racial Discrimination (ERD) in Midwestern U.S.-born Latinx students, ages 7 – 13. Pilot study subjects were 43 participants in a Saturday Spanish school in Southeast Michigan. into Spanish. Preliminary findings suggest young Latinx children express high levels of ERI, specifically EI affirmation. Data correlate with participation in the Saturday Spanish school where standardized literacy tests indicate significant academic achievement: 85% of the students read at grade-level in Spanish. This pilot has important implications for shaping future research on the unique position of young U.S. Latinx children to overcome implicit bias effects.

Keywords: Latinx children, Ethnic-Racial Identity, Ethnic-Racial Discrimination, Spanish in the U.S.

Nadie Me Ve Como Latino: Relating Perceived Phenotype and Discrimination to Ethnic-Racial Identity in Young Latinx Children

Youth Ethnic-Racial Identity (ERI) is associated with significant well-being and positive academic engagement (Umaña-Taylor, Wong, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2012). Exposure to experiences in life may offer great insight into the exploration of the individual's ethnicity/race. Since studies demonstrate that a greater understanding of an one's own ethnic-racial group over time also comes with experiences of discrimination (Umaña-Taylor, Wong, Gonzales & Dumka, 2012), it is not surprising that the bulk of findings linking ERI to academic engagement and experiences of discrimination are limited to adolescents and young adults. However, identifying similar aspects that shape one's experiences prior to adolescence may productively advance our understanding of the mechanisms by which ERI impacts overall academic engagement, and in turn, shed light on how a child's scholarly success is impacted by implicit racial bias (phenotypes). In addition, previous ERI research on discrimination in U.S. adolescents often fails to take into account the highly salient marker of non-English language usage in certain communities.

With an eye to filling these gaps in the literature, the current study begins to examine the relation of perceived ethnicity, experiences of discrimination, and ethnic-racial identity (ERI) among young U.S.-born Latinx children. Using a mixed methods approach, we modify the Ethnic Identity Scale - Brief (EIS-B; Douglass & Umaña-Taylor, 2015) as well as the Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index (ADDI; Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000) with age-appropriate cues in order to capture primary school children's

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experiences. We translate both instruments into Spanish to elicit student responses from participants in a Saturday Spanish school for heritage Spanish speakers. The emerging research questions are: Do younger Latinx children express high levels of ERI, specifically Ethnic Identity affirmation? Will the proposed study's quantitative data support previous studies where stronger ERI map to higher academic achievement? Do Latinx children experience ERD in their daily schools, and if so, does this experience occur at a young age? We also explore outcomes qualitatively, delving into types of possible discrimination encountered by U.S.-born Latinx children in the Midwest. We ask if negative experiences may be mediated by the child's phenotype, such that higher levels of discrimination correlate with darker skin? Innovatively, we also ask if linguistic factors (e.g., child's use of Spanish) play a role in any negative experiences.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 offers a brief overview of key themes of this investigation, highlighting critical references on ethnic-racial identity, perceived identity and linguistic development. Section 3 outlines the methodology of the pilot study, while Section 4 provides preliminary results and analysis. The paper concludes with final comments and implications for future research in Section 5.

Background

Perceived ethnicity refers to an outsider's view of the ethnic category or categories of the individual. There are many factors that become salient when an individual is ethnically categorized by others, including the outgroup and individual's own group. These factors can be a function of the outside observer (e.g., the person analyzing the individual) or the individual being categorized (e.g., participant). This is a

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subjective approach to the individual as opposed to other kinds of measures (e.g. measuring skin tone, hair, language, etc.) that are considered more objective.

Previous studies relate how ERI processes may differ for Latinx adolescents who vary in objectively assessed phenotypic characteristics, such as ambiguity of so-called "Latinx" appearance (Gonzales-Backen & Umaña-Taylor, 2011; Santos & Updegraff, 2014), European appearance (Gonzales-Backen & Umaña-Taylor, 2011), and skin tone (Gonzales-Backen & Umaña-Taylor, 2011; López, 2008).

In addition, other components of appearance (e.g., clothing) can affect the way that race is socially constructed within groups and how individuals develop and maintain racial identities (Roach-Higgins, Eicher, & Johnson, 1995). Clothing and language can be strategically used by the individual to be part of a specific ethnic identity (Goffman, 1959; Eckert 1989; Bucholtz, 2011). Therefore, clothing and language can be altered in efforts to associate and be associated with another ethnic group (e.g., White) that does not experience the negative discrimination that their own ethnic group (e.g. Latinx) experiences. Ultimately, for Latinx who are perceived as White, ethnicity might become largely "symbolic," in that it has little impact in an individual's life chances and/or everyday interactions (Waters, 1990).

Latinx youth who are perceived to be part of the majority group (e.g., White) could experience societal benefits compared to their counterparts who are categorized as part of the minority group. For example, Mendez, Camacho-Thompson, & Juvonen (2017) found that students who were erroneously categorized as members of marginalized ethnic groups (e.g., African American, Latinx) were rated lower on academic engagement by their teachers compared to those categorized as other

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groups (e.g., White, Asian), irrespective of their own self-identification. Research shows that through variations in colonization across Latin America, lighter Latinx have been placed on top compared to their darker skinned counterparts (Jiménez, 2017).

Experiences in environments (e.g., schools and neighborhoods) may promote or inhibit the adoption of different adaptive cultures (e.g., acculturation, traditions, current contextual demands) among Latinx. For instance, a Latinx individual may be more inclined to assimilate because they are perceived to be White and conform to societal norms. Similarly, a Latinx individual may oppose assimilation because they are perceived to be Latinx. Current contextual demands (e.g., racism and hostile political climate) may also alter the experiences of these two groups.

Scholars have argued that Latinx have physical characteristics that fall between those of Whites and Blacks (Roth, 2010). For example, while there may be a variety of skin tones among Latinx, the more typical skin tone is "brown", which falls in between the color scheme of "black" and "white". In addition, Latinx are often seen with racially ambiguous hair textures (e.g. straight, curly hair) (MacLin & Malpass, 2001). Latinx are consciously aware that they may be "white-passing" if they are phenotypically light, of higher socioeconomic status, and are of families that have been in the U.S. for generations (Murguia & Telles, 1996).

Theoretical work suggests that identity is influenced by older youths' perceptions of how they are perceived by others (Cooley, 1956), an idea that has been empirically supported for Latinx (Hurtado, 1994; McCombs & Gay, 1988). For example, light-skinned people have been shown to internalize skin tone hierarchies; and students who are lighter-skinned will benefit over their darker-skinned counterparts (Hall, 2011). In

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other words, even when students of color are numerically the ethnic majority, they still experience a hierarchy that places Whites at the top - what is known as white supremacy - in their peer culture even when few or no White students are present (Hunter, 2016). Preference for White characteristics is often internalized by Latinx communities without having the "oppressor" present (Hunter, 2016).

Physical appearance may also influence how youth view themselves and in turn, their ERI. When considering ERI among Latinx, it is important to consider the many forms of phenotypic variability among this ethnic/racial group. For example, depending on the lightness or darkness of their complexion, they may be perceived to be members of other ethnic/racial categories (Hochschild, 2006). Such (mis)categorizations can affect the life course of Latinx youth (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2008). For example, Mexican-Americans with European features have 1.5 times more years of schooling than darker and more Indigenous looking Mexican-Americans (Murguía & Telles, 1996). There is also evidence that people with lighter skin complexions are ascribed more positively valued characteristics (Keith & Monroe, 2016). Therefore, how Latinx youth view themselves and how they experience others to perceive them may ultimately manifest in differences in their ERI.

Physical appearance can limit Latinx youth's ethnic label options, which can also be linked to their ERI processes. Light-skinned Latinx youth, for example, are more likely to self-identify as "White" than their dark-skin counterparts who may self-identify as "Black" (Golash-Boza & Darity, 2007). Physical appearance can influence the kind of feedback (e.g., "You are *too* light skinned to be Mexican") and comments (e.g., "You look White") that they experience at a young age, which can become internalized and

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reflect how Latinx youth navigate their day-to-day life onto adolescence and throughout their lives.

In addition to physical appearance, language and the way individuals express themselves can have important functions in how others ethnically categorize Latinx youth. For example, individuals may speak exclusively Standard English, culturally influenced English, or code-switch between both (Delpit, 1988; Smitherman-Donaldson, 1987). Language for Latinx is also an important part of ethnic identity formation, starting as young as 5 years of age (Arredondo, Rosado & Satterfield, 2016; Laroche, Pons & Richard 2009). Unfortunately, Latinx youth may be discriminated against by teachers and peers based on language (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). When Latinx are discriminated against for speaking Spanish, Spanglish, and/or English with a heavy Spanish interference, it is often the case that Latinx youth are considered inferior and/or assumed to have poor English skills (Roth, 2010). This kind of discrimination from their peers and teachers may be implicitly or explicitly expressed, which in effect may alter the behaviors of the targeted individual (e.g., may conform and not speak Spanish; Masuoka & Sanchez, 2010). The pattern has been shown to be historically rooted in colonialism and practices in which indigenous peoples of Latin American countries were forced to adapt the Spanish language (Telles, 2014). This socialization has played out similarly in contemporary U.S. society and often forces Latinx to acquire English to the exclusion of Spanish. Studies show that schools in the U.S. typically practice subtractive linguistic behaviors, prioritizing English as the only language of use (Telles & Ortiz, 2008).

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However, not all Latinx individuals will choose to adapt their language usage the same way and/or form language choices based on their environment. Some may not care or let other people influence how they speak and/or what language they choose to speak. Others might immediately conform at the first sign of discrimination (e.g., teacher's microaggressive comment). This within-group variability could influence the experiences of discrimination based on language and the intensity of social exclusion that these Latinx youth face. For example, Latinx college students whose parents had discussed discrimination with them reported perceiving more barriers to opportunity among non-native English speakers due to language (Rivas-Drake, 2011). In addition, bilingual Latinx youth who serve as 'language brokers' or interpreters for their parents and adult family members, experience more exposure to discrimination, as they may observe the discriminatory treatment faced by their parents, thereby developing a heightened awareness of their own language minority status and the discrimination that comes with it (Benner & Graham, 2011; Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera, 2009). Moreover, language discrimination based on language can become salient regardless of the perpetrators' race/ethnicity. For example, Latinx have experienced resentment from other Latinx who do not speak English (Ochoa, 2004) and/or monolingual Latinx who do not speak Spanish (Bedolla, 2005). These factors are important to consider when examining ERI for Latinx as they must to navigate their interactions consciously aware of how they want to present their identities to others. More specifically, Latinx may need to prove to non-Latinx that they are American and to prove to Latinx that they are authentically Latinx (Jiménez, 2010).

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Given that research has shown that ERI development occurs through adolescence youths' social interactions and the social perceptions that youth experience from those social interactions (Phinney, 1996), it is critical to consider perceived ethnicity when studying Latinx populations. Studies show that not only are Latinx discriminated against for being Latinx, but that this discrimination is compounded if they are also of dark skin complexion and/or resemble the appearance of a more typical Latinx (Hunter, 2008).

It is also important to investigate perceived ethnicity among youth, as they are constantly interacting with peers, teachers, and others who may expose them to various forms of discrimination. These interactions with peers and teachers could be influenced by their perceived ethnicity (Murguia & Telles, 1996). Perceived ethnicity is relevant because studies suggest that Latinx students who are unambiguously Latinx experience felt pressure to always be Latinx as opposed to their more racially ambiguous counterparts, who have the privilege to be able to choose and pass as other (e.g., White) (Golash-Boza & Darity, 2007). The ability and need to switch from Latinx to other ethnicity (e.g., White) in order conform to societal expectations may alter individuals' behaviors, attitudes, and experiences based differently on the ethnic group into which they are ethnically categorized. Experiencing the felt pressure to conform to such expectations is likely to influence youths' ERI (See Santos & Updegraff, 2014). In sum, youth may be correctly or incorrectly ethnically categorized during daily interactions due to variation in their physical appearance, language use, and these categorizations may have implications for social and educational outcomes.

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The current study addresses questions that have rarely been addressed in empirical research (see Arredondo, Rosado & Satterfield 2016 for a notable exception). In addition, previous research does not specifically consider the potential societal benefits (e.g., reduced exposure to discrimination) in the case of Latinx children who are ethnically miscategorized them as Non-Latinx. Drawing from empirical literature reviewed, we predict that the child's perception of being perceived as Latinx or his/her perception of being miscategorized as another group, is directly related to the way Latinx children feel about their own ethnicity and to their experiences of perceived discrimination. Specifically, we hypothesize that being ethnically categorized as Latinx will link to stronger identification with the child's own ethnicity, as well as with being more prone to experience discrimination than Latinx children who perceive that they are categorized as non-Latinx. In addition, we explore these processes by incorporating Spanish language into these associations. The current study's hypotheses are as follows:

- 1) Children who are perceived as Latinx will report higher levels of ERI exploration, resolution, and affirmation.
- 2) The association between the child's perceived ethnicity and ERI will be influenced by perceived ethnic/racial discrimination.

Method

Participants

Forty-three Spanish speaking children ($M_{\text{age}} = 9.24$; $SD = 1.35$; 22 females) in Southeast Michigan took part in a mixed methods pilot study. Children were living with

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their families in various mid-size Midwestern US communities in Michigan with a rapidly growing Latinx population, and were attending daily schools whose language of instruction was English at the time of data collection. On Saturdays, all participants attended a Spanish heritage speakers language school in which they received academic instruction exclusively in Spanish covering mathematics, science, language arts and culture. No child had a history of health and/or limiting cognitive deficits. All children were born in the U.S., and all participants had been exposed to Spanish since birth. No participants were excluded from the present study on the basis of the Spanish dialect to which they had been exposed. All students were at an advanced proficiency and able to express themselves fluently and to comprehend classroom instructions in rapid native Spanish.

Procedure

Participants took part in a self-reported written survey administered in three Saturday school classrooms. The survey was first modified with age-appropriate cues to capture primary school children's experiences. The written instrument was then translated into Spanish. The researcher presented a powerpoint presentation in Spanish with each question shown and engaging pictures included to help the participants understand the questions. The researcher, classroom teacher and teacher assistants circulated throughout the class space to help clarify any questions among the young participants. Students completed the survey by hand in Spanish. The task took approximately 25 minutes to complete. Participants were not compensated.

Measures

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Perceived Ethnicity. For the purpose of this study, child's perceived ethnicity was assessed by a Spanish-speaking adult who did not have a personal interaction with the children, "¿Qué raza / etnia crees que es el niño?" ; "What race/ethnicity do you think the child is?" in an open-ended manner. The adult filled in their answer(s). These responses were reduced into a dummy code. During the dummy code procedure, responses that referred exclusively to non-Latinx terms (e.g., White) were coded as "0." Responses that referred exclusively to a Latinx or Latin American term (e.g., Mexican) were coded as "1."

Ethnic-Racial Discrimination. ERD was measured using an adapted version of the Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index (ADDI; Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000). The 3 subscales were used: Institutional Discrimination Distress Subscale (6-items), Educational Discrimination Distress Subscale (4-items), Peer Discrimination Distress Subscale (5-items). Ethnic-Racial discrimination was converted to age-appropriate terms (e.g. police to principal) and translated into Spanish. Responses were measured on a 3-point scale: 1 (*Yes*), 2 (*No*), 3 (*I don't know*). The 3's were re-coded as missing. The 1's and 2's were re-coded such that higher values indicated higher levels of ethnic-racial discrimination among children.

Ethnic-racial identity. ERI was assessed with the Ethnic Identity Scale - Brief (EIS-B; Douglass & Umaña-Taylor, 2015). We implemented the brief scale as an effort to keep the survey as short as possible to maximize the attention from the young children. The EIS-B was translated into Spanish. Exploration was assessed with 3 items regarding the extent to which youth engaged in behaviors to learn more about their ethnicity or race (e.g., "He participado en actividades que me han enseñado sobre mi

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origen étnico" ; "I have participated in activities that have taught me about my ethnicity"). Resolution was assessed with 3 items regarding the extent to which youth have a sense of clarity regarding what their ethnicity means to them (e.g., "Tengo un claro sentido de lo que significa mi origen étnico para mí" ; "I have a clear sense of what my ethnicity means to me"). Affirmation was assessed with 3 items regarding the feelings youth had formed about their ethnicity (e.g., "Me gusta mi etnicidad" ; "I like my ethnicity"). All EIS-B responses were measured on a 3-point scale: 1 (*Yes*), 2 (*No*), 3 (*I don't know*). The 3's were re-coded as missing. The 1's and 2's were re-coded such that higher values indicated higher levels of ethnic-racial discrimination among children.

Analysis Plan

Bivariate correlations were conducted with demographic variables and variables of interest. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were conducted to investigate the associations between Perceived Ethnicity and ERI. Simple linear regression analyses were carried out to investigate the associations between ERD and ERI among Latinx children. Analysis were conducted for each ERI process (i.e., exploration, resolution, affirmation) and ERD context (i.e., Institutional, Educational, Peer).

Results

Preliminary Results

In this pilot research, we predicted that the child's perception of being perceived as Latinx or his/her perception of being miscategorized as another group is related to the way Latinx children feel about their own ethnicity and to their experiences of perceived discrimination. Specifically, we had hypothesized that being ethnically categorized as Latinx will link to stronger identification with own ethnicity and also with

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being more prone to experience discrimination than Latinx children who perceive that they are categorized as non-Latinx.

The tentative results are based on the study's primary hypotheses:

(1) Children who are perceived as Latinx will report higher levels of ERI exploration, resolution, and affirmation. Results of Hypothesis (1) show that Latinx children in this study demonstrated moderately high levels of affirmation. In addition, they perceived relatively low levels of discrimination. ERI exploration was positively correlated with perceived ethnicity and ERI resolution.

Regarding Hypothesis (2), we predicted that the association between the child's perceived ethnicity and ERI will be influenced by perceived ethnic/racial discrimination.

Preliminary findings suggest that ERI resolution was positively correlated with institutional discrimination, revealing that children who had a strong sense of clarity regarding what their ethnicity meant to them reported experiencing discrimination by someone in their school.

To begin examining the differences among ERI processes by perceived ethnicity, we conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA). Only significant results are reported. An analysis of variance showed that the effect of perceived ethnicity on ERI exploration was significant, $F(1, 27) = 4.46, p = .04$. Students who were perceived to be Latinx reported higher levels of exploration compared to their peers that were perceived to be non-Latinx.

Primary Results

A simple linear regression was calculated to predict ERD based on ERI resolution. A significant regression equation was found ($R^2 = 0.14, (1,27) = 4.48, p =$

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.04), with an R² of 0.14. ERI exploration and ERI affirmation did not result in significant results.

In our open ended responses, all of the children, but one, mentioned they had attended events that have helped them learn about their ethnic-racial group.

All children mentioned they were clear in what it meant to be part of their ethnic-racial group. All of them mentioned that they felt positively about their racial-ethnic group.

The discrimination component is where the children openly shared more about their experiences. There was a common theme of the children being concerned about parents confronting discrimination, particularly due to language matters. Children in our study felt extremely proud of speaking Spanish, but they also understood the U.S. power dynamic for having a strong command of English. For example, one child said, "[la discriminación] Pasa mucho a mi papá, por no hablar buen inglés ; It [discrimination] happens a lot to my dad because he doesn't speak English well".

Discussion

This study is similar to perceived ethnicity research that have addresses specific phenotypic characteristics such as skin color in adolescents (e.g., Villarreal, 2010), and connects it to ethnic identity (e.g., Gonzales-Backen & Umaña-Taylor, 2011) and discrimination also in adolescents (e.g., Golash-Boza & Darity, 2008). Recently, research has suggested a link between physical appearance and ethnic identity among Latinx youth (Santos & Updegraff, 2014). However, due to the high complexity of race and ethnicity, ethnic categorization of people becomes multifaceted (Feliciano, 2016).

The current study is unique in its broad focus in the various factors extending from younger children's physical appearance (e.g. skin tone) to non-physical

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appearance (e.g. language) that can be relevant to ethnic categorization. We found that when a child indicated that they have explored their race/ethnicity, there is a higher association with having a better understanding of what it means to be part of that ethnic group. However, for those children who had a better understanding of their ethnic group, they also experienced more discrimination in the context of school. These students are all highly functioning bilingual English-Spanish which allows them to express themselves more freely. Language is an important part of culture for Latinx youth (Ochoa, 2004; Bedolla, 2005). Engaging in Spanish conversations at school allows children to solidify this component of their culture and identity, but it also opens a door for language discrimination (Benner & Graham, 2011).

Aligned with previous research, we found significant outcomes relating phenotype with ERI. Specifically, perceived ethnicity influenced ERI exploration, students who were perceived to be Latinx reported higher levels of exploration compared to their peers that were perceived to be non-Latinx. This finding is important as some of these children may not be perceived to be Latinx and therefore, may not be given the same opportunities to engage in Latinx-specific cultural events or experiences. For example, a child who looks Latinx may be offered an opportunity in class to share what their family does for Christmas; whereas someone who is perceived to be non-Latinx may be "white-passing" and not given the same opportunity.

We were unable to produce similar results for ERI resolution and ERI affirmation. This lack could be due to many reasons. First, the Latinx population continues to grow in the U.S., and significantly in the Midwest region. Unlike Illinois, the midwestern state with the largest Latinx demographic, Michigan along with the other 10 Midwest states

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house lower numbers of Latinx (Raffaelli & Wiley, 2013). With that being said, Latinx are, for the first time, reaching small primarily white and homogeneous neighborhoods. This recent change has introduced cultural, socioeconomic, and racial tensions as these "newcomers" are immediately noticed (Lazos Vargas, 2002). This makes sense given the ongoing presidential promises of "the Wall" at the U.S. border, attaching the negative sentiments to Latin American "newcomers" as well as current U.S. Latinx citizens. In the current study, these Latinx children are unique in that they may have different experiences in their daily English-immersion school that are feasibly counteracted by the Saturday Spanish-immersion program. These contrasting experiences are equally formative in the ways that the children are being ethnically categorized, experiencing discrimination, and development of their ethnic-racial identity.

Supporting evidence that the Saturday Spanish school is an effective heritage-language Spanish academic resource has been demonstrated by the participating students' consistent grade-level performance on standardized Spanish literacy assessments (ISEL; Barr et al., 2004; Fountas-Pinnell Reading Evaluation System, 2011). The Spanish school participants also show comparable growth in English-language measures, with 85% attaining the appropriate grade-level outcomes. Since the Saturday school instruction is exclusively in Spanish, academic success in English is an added value. Studies indicate that overall scholastic achievement is positively correlated with participation in this SHS program (Arredondo, Rosado & Satterfield, 2016; Pollard-Durodola, González, Satterfield, Benkí & Vaquero, 2017; Tjunelis, Satterfield & Benkí, 2013).

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To further explore the processes of Latinx who experience high levels of discrimination precisely because they are being (mis) categorized as Latinx or miscategorized may require more nuanced qualitative data to investigate these Latinx children in greater detail. In the current study's young population, there is an interesting dynamic where phenotypically 'white' Latinx children in the Saturday school who could easily assimilate into the dominant Anglo culture of the Midwestern U.S. (Michigan), have actually been raised to have strong ties to the Latinx community and a native command of spoken and written Spanish. In a focus group setting, typical comments elicited include the following: Josiana (names and nationalities changed to protect confidentiality): "Me ven como blanca, pero soy totalmente latina porque mi mamá es boliviana y mi papá cubano. Soy hispana ; I'm seen as white, but I'm completely Latina because my mom is Bolivian and my dad is Cuban. I'm Hispanic". Phenotypically, this child looks white and is often perceived to be white, but has a strong connection to her ethnic-racial roots that she gets from her parents from two different Latin American nationalities. Josiana also clearly defines "them," as the white out-group of students in her school, distinct from the in-group "Hispanics" with whom she aligns herself.

This pilot study is a first pass effort to better understand child ERI formation, perceived ethnicity and experiences of ERD in Latinx children. Returning to our initial research questions: Do younger Latinx children express high levels of ERI, specifically Ethnic Identity affirmation? We found that the preliminary response is decidedly so. Do the proposed study's quantitative data support previous studies where stronger ERI map to higher academic achievement? Here, we correlated standardized literacy scores from the Spanish school students, and the early quantitative results closely follow

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Arredondo et al's (2016) findings on young U.S. Midwest Latinx grade school children in heritage language Spanish programs. Do Latinx children experience ERD in their daily schools, and if so, does this experience occur at a young age? We explored these outcomes qualitatively, uncovering discrimination encountered by U.S.-born Latinx children in the Midwest. We ask if negative experiences may be mediated by the child's phenotype, such that higher levels of discrimination correlate with darker skin? We found children used skin tone when asked about their ethnicity/race, which may give us an insight to how children this age think about ethnicity and race as well as how others around them talk about it. For example, one boy in the study described himself as "Soy mexicano...(then hesitant, a bit uncomfortable)...Soy café ; I am Mexican...(then hesitant, a bit uncomfortable)...I'm brown". These children may have negative associations based on their ethnicity/race that they tie to their skin tone. Innovatively, we also ask if linguistic factors (e.g., child's use of Spanish) play a role in any negative experiences. These results could be biased due to the environment in which they were administered, a Saturday Spanish school for heritage speakers. In this school, everyone speaks only Spanish and is welcoming of the language and cultures. Our findings show that these experiences are different from the ones that they experience outside of their Saturday Spanish school.

For future studies that expand this preliminary base, we note that modifying the instruments so that they consist of age-appropriate cues is a complicated procedure. In addition, while added value to the instruments by translating the survey into Spanish, a greater level of complexity was also acquired. Therefore, there were decisions that were made to the best of our knowledge using the literature for the dummy coding procedure.

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The lack of scales that had been previously used and replicated could explain the lack of more significant results. However, in the final analysis, these limitations do not outweigh the preliminary outcomes; on the contrary, the push for the development of these scales shines light on the much needed work that remains with younger youth. Given our baseline steps to advance a broader approach to perceived ethnicity, it is hoped that future investigations will productively implement new scales, and to build on the current study's attempt to capture the diversity of Latinx children and youth and their experiences in the United States.

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