

Self Referent and Self-Esteem of
Adolescents of Mexican Descent

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Research asserts that the selection of an ethnic label can have important implications for the self-esteem of the members of the ethnic group in question. Several studies have investigated the ethnic labels (self referents) selected by persons of Mexican descent, but none have investigated the relationship between the selection of a particular ethnic self referent and self-esteem.

The purpose of this study was to determine if the choice of ethnic self referent (Latino, Mexican American, Chicano, Hispanic, Mexicano) and generational status (first, second, third generation) was related to self-esteem as measured by the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory Form AD (SEI-Form AD). Participants were drawn from formal and informal youth groups throughout the Austin, Texas metropolitan area. Individual participants had a Spanish surname and were 14 to 20 years of age. Results showed no significant relationship between ethnic self referent, generational status, and SEI-Form AD raw scores. A significant relationship was found between generational status and ethnic self referent. First generation chose the ethnic self referents Mexicano and Mexican American only. Second generation chose the ethnic self referents Hispanic, Mexican American, and Chicano only. Third generation

chose among all the ethnic self referents with Hispanic and Mexican American being their first and second choices. Generational status is associated with a preferred ethnic self referent as reported in prior research, but the top ethnic self referents selected by second and third generations has changed.

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Contents

	Page
Chapter	
1. Introduction	1
2. Method17
Sample17
Instrument18
Procedure	19
3. Results	21
4. Discussion23
References26
Footnotes	34
Table 1	35

Chapter 1

Introduction

Research into the mental health of Americans of Mexican descent prior to 1959 is very limited. It was not until then that the mental health system began to consider that perhaps this minority population had special mental health needs that were not being met. With over three million Americans of Mexican descent in the United States, it became increasingly clear that critical research issues needed to be investigated.

Numerous studies were conducted at the beginning of the research movement that looked at the utilization of mental health facilities by Americans of Mexican descent (Bachrach, 1975; Jaco, 1959; Karno & Edgerton, 1969; Kruger, 1974; Sue, 1977). With the discovery that Americans of Mexican descent significantly underutilized existing mental health services, researchers began probing into possible explanations (Karno & Edgerton, 1969; Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1978; Morales, 1971; Torrey, 1970).

In the late 1970's a dramatic increase was seen in the amount of research being conducted with Americans of Mexican descent. This was largely due to the beginning involvement of Americans of Mexican descent in their own civil rights movement (called the Chicano civil rights movement¹) during the 1970's which brought to the forefront the Mexican American community as a legitimate entity. Following the 1980 U.S. Census, the federal government began to recognize that Americans of Mexican descent not only existed, but were also one of the fastest growing communities in

the United States, showing a 62% population increase as compared to the 1970 U.S. Census. These facts, along with the Task Panel Report submitted to the President's Commission on Mental Health in 1978 (which looked at the specific issues concerning Americans of Mexican descent and gave recommendations that included the continuation of research to keep abreast with the status of mental health needs among Americans of Mexican descent) spurred the formation of a number of government funded research centers to investigate Hispanic issues.

Researchers have since expanded their investigations to include research into the areas of psychotherapy (Herrera & Sanchez, 1976), psychology of the Mexican American (Hernandez, Huag, & Wagner, 1976; Martinez, 1977), translation and standardization of psychological tests with Mexican Americans (Lubin, Schoenfeld, Rinch, & Millhan, 1981; Roberts, 1980), and various personality aspects that include self-esteem, stereotypes, and self identification (Calhoun, Jr., Sheldon, Serrano, & Cooke, 1978; Casas & Atkinson, 1981; Hughbanks, 1978; Little & Ramirez, 1976; Loomis, 1974; Powers & Sanchez, 1982; Stephan, 1977).

Self concept and self-esteem are two terms which are often used interchangeably when in fact there is a very important distinction between them. For the purpose of this study self concept will be defined as how one views oneself. Self-esteem is how much one likes or dislikes himself or herself. Due to the close relationship between these two variables researchers have often found it difficult to determine self-esteem. Coopersmith

(1959), in describing a method of determining self-esteem, found that there is substantial agreement between self evaluation and behavioral expression - in other words the way we report how we behave agrees with the way we actually behave. He found that persons who have had more success experiences were significantly higher in their self evaluations than individuals with fewer such experiences. Academic achievement in children is an area that reflects a child's successes. Primavera (1973) found that self-esteem was significantly related to the academic achievement of school age children, as was suggested in Coopersmith's findings.

Nisbett and Gordon (1967) found that the success-failure manipulation does not alter self-esteem, but triggers ego-defense mechanisms which differ for individuals at different self-esteem levels. Herbert, Gelfand, and Hartmann (1969) attempted to investigate the possibility that self-critical behavior can be acquired through imitation of a self-critical model without the observer having had any prior interaction with the model. The imitation of adult self-critical comments by elementary students and their relation to three measures of self-esteem were investigated. The results indicated that children do imitate model behavior even when imitation results in the loss of material rewards but that this is independent of self-esteem. This suggests that self-critical behavior acquired through imitation does not alter self-esteem (as was found by Nisbett & Gordon in their success-failure manipulations).

White (1971) attempted to determine the extent to which, among

urban high school youth, feelings of self-esteem are related to race, sex, and socioeconomic variables. Subjects were administered the Dean's Alienation Scale, Srole's Anomia Scale, and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Feelings of esteem, when associated with parental race, were higher for Black youths as a group and highest for Black males, contrary to predictions. Socioeconomic status and gender were found not to be significantly related to feelings of esteem.

McElroy (1971) investigated the relationship between self-esteem, socioeconomic status, and race among elementary students. Each was administered the Hollingshead Two Factor Index of Social Position and two measures of self-esteem: self rated and teacher rated. He concluded that race and social class did have a significant interaction effect on teacher rated self-esteem of males even though no differences were noted between Blacks and Anglos in terms of social class, intact home environment, or self rated versus teacher rated self-esteem. Ward and Braun (1972) investigated the interrelation of self-esteem and racial preferences in 60 Black children between the ages of seven and eight. The researchers demonstrated that students who made more black color or same race preferences had higher self concept scores than those who made fewer black color or same race preferences. No significant sex differences were found.

Children learn to understand their social environment at the same time as they are developing a self concept. Children see themselves as they believe they are seen. The group to which the

child belongs becomes a factor in self concept. Incidents of discrimination, segregation, and social ostracism tend to reflect and reinforce low self concept and breed frustration. The negative self concept of Americans of Mexican descent is still seen by most educators as the principal reason for their lack of success in school (Carter, 1968). Cabrera found that, "In too many instances the school has bred an atmosphere that impresses upon him not only his difference but also his inferiority. He is told he is American but made to feel he is a poor Mexican." (cited in Cross & Maldonado, 1971, p. 29). Saldate (1973) found that Americans of Mexican descent who were high achievers were rated significantly higher by teachers on behavior characteristics and also scored significantly higher than low achievers on self-esteem.

Smith (1978), in investigating the relationship between self-esteem and the contribution to self-esteem by significant others, found that students of Mexican descent frequently had teachers which did not make a significant contribution to their self-esteem. He also concluded that since there were no significant changes in self-esteem for Anglo American, Americans of Mexican descent, or Black students from 1966 to 1969, desegregation neither enhanced nor eroded the self-esteem of the members of the sample. Little and Ramirez (1976) found that the self-esteem of students of Mexican descent was no different from that of the Anglo students, although older students of Mexican descent did describe themselves more positively when the test was administered by an Anglo.

Hernandez (1977) studied females of Mexican descent and found them to be more competitive than males of Mexican descent. The investigation found that women of Mexican descent have lower self-esteem among Americans of Mexican descent. This was not confirmed by Calhoun et. al. (1978) who found that Mexican descent and Anglo self-esteem comparisons were not significant for either males or females. Larned and Muller (1979) assessed the positiveness of self concept and self-esteem in four areas: physical maturity, peer relations, academic success and school adaptiveness. For all children studied the mean positiveness of the physical maturity and peer relations self concept tended to increase slightly with grade level while the positiveness of the academic success and school adaptiveness self concept declined dramatically. Although self concept did change across grades, the self concepts of Mexican descent and Anglo children were not differentially affected by the school experience. Kagan and Knight (1979) investigated the relationship of cooperation-competition to self-esteem among two generations of children of Mexican descent and an Anglo American comparison group. They found it to be partially culturally determined. Second generation Americans of Mexican descent and Anglo Americans tend to be higher in self-esteem than third generation Americans of Mexican descent. Powers and Sanchez (1982) found self-esteem among adolescents of Mexican descent to be significantly and positively correlated with speaking English, occupational level, and reading. This pattern suggests that self-esteem should be considered in the education of

Americans of Mexican descent.

A great deal of literature implies that minority members accept the stereotypical image that others have of them. Kurokawa (1971) found that except among children, explicitly derogatory racial comments are disappearing perhaps to be replaced by more subtle ethnic humor. Minority children in white dominant schools seemed to be constantly aware of physical differences, felt intimidated by the dominant whites, and seemed unable to develop their potentials. In racially mixed schools, children of various racial groups held less stereotypical images of one another and reported more genuine and friendly interaction. Ramirez (1969) found that adolescents of Mexican descent often find themselves caught between two opposing sets of values. When they decide to reject one of the sets, they become overwhelmed by feelings of guilt and self derogation. This occurs because the values rejected are associated with a person important to them, usually a parent.

The literature reveals that the image of the American of Mexican descent has had a history of degradation. However, the self image of the American of Mexican descent appears to be changing through the continued activism and militancy first evidenced by Chicanos (the self referent used by Americans of Mexican descent, born in the United States, who adhere to the ideals of the Chicano civil rights movement) in the 1970's. Americans of Mexican descent studied by Renas (1972) were proud of their ethnic heritage. Students of Mexican descent did not try to distance themselves from Mexican American values or from other

Americans of Mexican descent in all areas tested. Strong family ties were stressed, with patriarchal rather than matriarchal families in evidence.

In a study by Loomis (1974) not a single respondent in the sample of Americans of Mexican descent claimed identity with their minority group when the questionnaire was administered in 1963. In contrast 13% of Blacks did mention their own race. The results of these interviews stand in greater contrast when compared with those from family members of Mexican descent in 1970 with the same procedure. Loomis concluded that emphasis on ethnicity in self-identification for both Americans of Mexican descent and Blacks had increased greatly in that last decade. Leyva (1975) found that a positive relationship between Chicanismo (the practice of identifying oneself as Chicano) and higher educational aspirations does exist as compared with those Americans of Mexican descent who do not have an affinity for this concept and with Anglo Americans. Miott (1977) found that children of Mexican descent responded less positively to concepts associated with their group than Black and Anglo American children. He also concluded that positive attitudes toward race related concepts do not necessarily increase with academic achievement.

Abraham (1986) concluded that youth of Mexican descent appear to be more inclined than Anglo American youth to accept their parents' commitments to occupational and ideological choices and activities. Parents of Mexican descent may guide their children into preconceived roles and commitments more so than do Anglo

American parents because of their membership in a minority group; that is they may feel that these roles and commitments are adaptive for their children as members of a minority group. The identity process undergone by Americans of Mexican descent and Anglo Americans in addressing and resolving interpersonal issues such as sex roles, dating, friendship, and recreational preferences was not as markedly different as it was for occupational/ideological issues. Perhaps this is true because commitment to these interpersonal issues, unlike occupational/ideological issues, does not require youth of Mexican descent to cross cultural boundaries and be subjected to the cultural boundaries and/or constrictions of the larger majority culture. Fernandez-Barillas and Morrison (1984) found that among male college students of Mexican descent a bicultural affiliation appeared to foster greater interpersonal adjustment to the college environment than a monocultural affiliation with the minority culture. On the other hand, a monocultural affiliation with the minority culture was related to achievement of a higher mean grade point average than a monocultural identification with the majority culture.

Marcia (1966) described, measured, and validated four identity statuses: identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and identity diffusion. Marcia concluded that foreclosure identity persons tend to maintain high goals in spite of failure. They also receive significantly higher authoritarian submission and conventionality scores than identity achievement scores. There is a tendency for foreclosure identity persons who have been given

negative information to show a greater decrease in self-esteem than identity achievement persons under similar conditions. The foreclosure identity status' most outstanding feature is its endorsement of authoritarian values such as obedience, strong leadership, and respect for authority. Self-esteem is vulnerable to negative information and foreclosure identity persons performed more poorly on a stress attainment task than did identity achievement persons. In addition, foreclosure identity persons' response to failure on this task was unrealistic, maintaining rather than moderating unattained high goals. This behavior pattern is associated with the achievement of superiority through identification - one who is becoming his parent's alter ego. The foreclosure identity status best depicts the American's of Mexican descent style of coping with the psychosocial task of forming an ego identity.

Rice, Ruiz, and Padilla (1974) found that only subjects of Mexican descent, among a group of four and five year old Anglo, Black, and Mexican descent children, expressed a preference for their own ethnic group. This study concluded that certain aspects of the environment in which children of Mexican descent are reared fosters in them a strong sense of self-esteem and ethnic group pride which manifests itself when they are old enough to be aware of ethnic group differences. In contrast, Grossman, Wirt, and Davids (1985) concluded that there is a relationship between being American of Mexican descent and having lower self-esteem, lower behavioral adjustment, and higher ethnic esteem. Hughbanks (1978)

found that Black and Anglo students did not differ in self-esteem but were higher in self-esteem than students of Mexican descent. Social position of Black and Anglo students did not differ but was found to be higher among students of Mexican descent. No differences were found among the three ethnic groups on the saliency of ethnic identification. Stephan (1977) found that Anglos perceive people as being more responsible for their positive behavior than other ethnic groups. This suggests that Anglos feel that positive behavior is internally controlled. The fact that Anglos made slightly more dispositional attributions to the positive behavior of Americans of Mexican descent than the Americans of Mexican descent did themselves may have been due to the Anglo's general tendency to attribute positive behaviors more to dispositions than other ethnic groups.

De La Torre (1979) concluded that for clients of Mexican descent seeking psychiatric assistance, the ethnic identity conflict is not so much between being Anglo or Mexican American (or Latino) as much as it is between being Mexican American or Chicano. In other words, the Latino clients have a strong sense of being Latino but have a confused sense of where they lie on the Latino spectrum: as either Mexican American or Chicano. The diversity of ethnic self referents employed by Americans of Mexican descent to identify themselves reveals that ethnic identity varies greatly among members of the minority. A wide range of labels, from Spanish American and Latin American to Chicano and Mexicano are used to identify members of the Mexican descent minority.

Grebler, Moore, and Guzman (1970) stated that individual self designation of Americans of Mexican descent reflects the wide variety of considerations that plague the definition of ethnic identity. De La Zerda Flores and Hooper (1975) stated that the Chicano is the American of Mexican descent who feels proud of what is most Chicano, and not necessarily for what is either Mexican or American. Tex-Mex is the language of the American of Mexican descent exclusively, and the Chicano does not look down upon it as do Latino and American groups. Also, in their choice of labels, the Latinos and Americans reveal a desire not to choose an obviously Mexican or Chicano label. In their evaluations, they were less tolerant of speakers that were obviously of Mexican descent than they were of those which could be regarded as either Mexican or American. Klineberg (1951) stated, "Unlike other generalizations... stereotypes are based not on an inductive collection of data, but on hearsay, rumor, and anecdotes - in short, on evidence which is insufficient to justify the generalization" (p. 505). Bayton (1941) commented: "Here is a group accepting what has been called the 'group fallacy.' They accept, without contradiction, the stereotypes assigned to themselves" (p. 102). Katz and Braley (1935) concluded that racial prejudice is thus a generalized set of stereotypes of a high degree of consistency which includes emotional responses to race names, a belief in typical characteristics associated with these race names, and incorporation of these typical traits.

An identifying name personally chosen can be very significant.

Anselm Strauss (1959) stated, "The names that are adopted voluntarily reveal even more tellingly the indissoluble tie between name and self image" (p. 12). A self referent not only identifies the individual but, also, at least one of his membership and/or reference groups. It may indicate, among other things, the individual's historical attachments, political beliefs and/or goals and aspirations. Gutierrez and Hirsh (1973) reported that students who identify themselves as Chicano tend to have a higher level of political consciousness than those who identify themselves as Mexican American. According to Delgado (cited in Lampe, 1975), Americans of Mexican descent that identify themselves as Chicano are generally more hostile to Anglos and are more likely to unite with Blacks in social action than those who identify themselves as Americans, Spanish Americans, or Mexican Americans. Davidson and Gaitz's study (cited in Lampe, 1975) found that Americans of Mexican descent in general, are more tolerant of, and sympathetic toward Blacks, than Anglos in matters of equality, civil rights, and social interaction. Race names or ethnic labels have long been associated with the development and maintenance of racial attitudes in American society. The hypothesis that labels describing Americans of Mexican descent would affect stereotyping behavior was partially supported by Fairchild and Cozens (1981). These researchers found that Mexican Americans were more often described as faithful, whereas Hispanics were more frequently described as talkative and tradition loving.

In a study by Lampe (1975), the majority of the respondents

preferred to be called Mexican American, followed by American, Chicano, and Spanish American. In this study Chicanos showed a decided preference for their own ethnic group, followed by Blacks. They also expressed more prejudice against Anglos than did any other group of respondents. Lampe concluded that a relationship between ethnic self referent and prejudice does exist and suggests that it may be possible to promote or encourage desired feelings relative to certain ethnic groups through the selection of appropriate terms. Buriel (1987) described the historical development of many of the ethnic labels used by Americans of Mexican descent (Mexicano, Chicano, Spanish American, Latino, Hispanic, Mexican American). This gives an important perspective which allows us to evaluate the multitude of ethnic labels which have been said to suggest intragroup confusion and uncertainty over an appropriate ethnic identity or self identity. Buriel demonstrated that the array of ethnic labels are not a reflection of identity confusion but a defense mechanism that allows them to maintain ethnic pride in the face of Euro-American prejudice.

Garcia (1981) found that over 90% of Americans of Mexican descent born in the United States, identified themselves as Mexican American, Chicano, or other Spanish. Of these three, Mexican American was found to be the most neutral ethnic label and therefore the one that was most acceptable to Americans of Mexican descent.

An assumption among many researchers is that identity with Mexican culture decreases in Mexican descent immigrants from one

generation to the next. Lamare (1982) studied four generations of Americans of Mexican descent: newcomer, first, second, and third generation. Family background data were used to classify respondents into a generational group: (1) newcomers: children, parents, and grandparents born in Mexico; (2) first generation: children born in the United States, parents and grandparents born in Mexico; (3) second generation: children and parents born in the United States, grandparents born in Mexico; and (4) third generation: children, parents, and grandparents born in the United States. Respondents were then asked to state their preferred self referent from among the Mexican American, American, Chicano, and Mexican labels provided. Lamare found that the Mexican label was the most popular label among the newcomer generation, with the Chicano label being their second choice. The Chicano label was the most popular among the first generation, but declined in the second generation, only to increase in popularity in the third generation. The Mexican American and American labels both increased through the generations, but declined in the third generation. By the third generation, the Chicano, American, and Mexican American labels were equally as popular, with the Mexican label being almost unmentioned.

According to Buriel (1987) generational status of Mexican descent children and adolescents is an important factor both in self labeling and acculturation. However, in spite of increasing use of the label Mexican American and on the increasing identification with the Anglo American culture these individuals

do not lose their identity as a distinctive ethnic group in the United States. Studies of ethnic labeling with adolescents are important because these individuals are in the process of solidifying their self identities including their ethnic self awareness. Kurokawa (1971) asserted that the selection of an ethnic label can have important implications for the self-esteem (and presumably group self-esteem) of the members of the ethnic group in question. With the variety of ethnic labels available to persons of Mexican descent, it has been speculated by the general public that this is due to this ethnic group's confusion about themselves and who they are. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship that exists between the choice of ethnic self referent and the self-esteem of adolescents of Mexican descent.

Chapter 2

Method

Sample. The sample for this study was drawn from Interfaith Youth Ministry groups, Austin High School, Austin Community College Hispanic Student Organization, Tilt Video Arcade, and from informal youth groups from throughout the Austin, Texas metropolitan area. Participants had a Spanish surname, were 14 to 20 years of age, had obtained parental permission (if under 18 years of age), and had given their own permission. Each participant completed the questionnaire booklet. Using the demographic data, only questionnaires of adolescents from Mexican descent who were bilingual; had selected Mexican-American, Chicano, Latino, Hispanic or Mexicano as their ethnic self-referent; and were first, second, or third generation were selected for analysis. The total number of participants was $N = 57$; $n = 9$ first generation, $n = 20$ second generation, $n = 28$ third generation, $n = 1$ Latino, $n = 16$ Mexican American, $n = 4$ Chicano, $n = 27$ Hispanic, and $n = 9$ Mexicano. The median age of the sample was 15.

Of the 57 participants, 25 were male and 32 were female. Under education, 23 reported that their parents had completed less than high school, 19 reported that their parents had completed high school, and 15 reported that their parents had completed at least some college. Under income, 12 reported an annual family income of less than \$10,000, 15 reported income of \$10,001 - \$15,000, 13 reported income of \$15,001 - \$20,000, 17 reported income over \$20,001. Under employment, 24 reported that their parents were

white collar workers, 31 reported that their parents were blue collar workers, and two reported that their parents were unemployed.

Instrument. The testing instrument was presented in a single questionnaire booklet. Self-esteem was measured by the Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI), Form AD (Battle, 1981). This questionnaire consists of 40 items and the following four subscales: (1) 16 general self-esteem items, (2) 8 social self-esteem items, (3) 8 personal self-esteem items, and (4) 8 lie items (items which indicate defensiveness). The items are divided into two groups: those which indicate high self-esteem, and those which indicate low self-esteem. The individual checks each item either "yes" or "no." Scores for the SEI-Form AD are derived by totaling the number of items checked which indicate high self-esteem, excluding the lie scale. Thus, the total possible score is 32, and the highest lie score is 8. The test-retest reliability of this measure is .81 for all subjects. The SEI-Form AD has also been found to correlate favorably with personality measures, including A.T. Beck's Depression Inventory (.75) and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) (.75).

On the background information questionnaire, subjects were asked in what country they, their parents, and their grandparents were born (to determine their generational status); their primary language; and their preferred ethnic self referent. For descriptive purposes, they were also questioned regarding their sex; the family income; the occupational and educational status of

both parents; and their age.

Procedure. An English/Spanish Parental Consent Form was sent home with each subject under age 18 prior to administering the questionnaire booklet. An English Participant Consent Form was completed by all subjects prior to administering the questionnaire booklet. The Parental and Participant Consent Form explained that all subjects would be encouraged to participate but that they would be allowed to decline if they wished and withdraw at any time. Parents and participants were advised that all material collected would be considered confidential and that the information provided would only be identified by a code number. The examiner's name and phone number was identified as a resource for parents and participants who wished to gain additional information on the study. Parents and participants were also advised that all subjects who indicated an interest would be debriefed on the purpose and results of the study after it is completed.

The SEI-Form AD and the background information questionnaire was administered to a sample of Spanish surname adolescents, ages 14-20, that had obtained parental consent, if under 18, and had given their own consent. The SEI-Form AD and background information questionnaire were both identified by a code number assigned by the researcher to insure confidentiality of subjects. Both forms were presented during the same administration. The questionnaires were self-administered. Each adolescent received a questionnaire booklet from the researcher, and was directed to read the general instructions and to complete the questionnaire

booklet. Administration of the test battery required 10-15
minutes.

Chapter 3

Results

All statistical analysis was conducted using the current version of the computer software S.P.S.S. (Statistical Programs for the Social Sciences [a registered trademark]). Mean self-esteem scores and standard deviations were $\bar{M} = 22.33$ ($SD = 4.90$) for first generation; $\bar{M} = 20.35$ ($SD = 7.27$) for second generation; $\bar{M} = 20.07$ ($SD = 5.87$) for third generation; $\bar{M} = 18.00$ ($SD = 0.00$) for Latino; $\bar{M} = 21.88$ ($SD = 6.72$) for Mexican American; $\bar{M} = 16.50$ ($SD = 6.86$) for Chicano; $\bar{M} = 20.48$ ($SD = 6.10$) for Hispanic; and $\bar{M} = 20.33$ ($SD = 6.06$) for Mexicano.

A 3 x 5 chi square statistical analysis was conducted using generational status and ethnic self referent as the two variables. Analysis indicated significant differences between the frequencies observed in the cells for these variables and those which would be expected ($\chi^2 = 32.83$, $df = 8$, $p < .001$). Table 1 provides the chi square contingency table.

Insert Table 1 about here

A one way analysis of variance using raw SEI, Form AD scores as the dependent variable and generational status as the independent variable was conducted which indicated no significant differences ($F(2, 54) = .45$, $p = .639$). A second one way analysis of variance was conducted using raw SEI, Form AD scores as the dependent variable and ethnic self-referent as the independent

variable. This second analysis also revealed no significance ($F(4, 52) = .630, p = .644$).

A two way analysis of variance was run with ethnic self referent and generational status as independent variables and raw SEI, Form AD scores as the dependent variable. No significant differences in scores were found among the main effects ($F(6, 47) = .787, p = .585$). Two way interaction between generational status and ethnic self referent was also found not to be significant ($F(3, 47) = .559, p = .645$).

Chapter 4

Discussion

This study was designed to determine if a relationship exists between the choice of ethnic self referent, generational status, and the self-esteem of adolescents of Mexican descent. Results showed that for this sample of adolescents of Mexican descent, no significant relationship existed between choice of ethnic self referent, generational status, and self-esteem. Significance was found though between an adolescents generational status and his choice of ethnic self referent. Gender and parent's socioeconomic status was not investigated as part of this study for other than descriptive purposes as researchers have found these two factors to not be significantly related to self-esteem (White, 1971; McElroy, 1971).

Research into interviewing has demonstrated that data can be attained with the same degree of reliability from Americans of Mexican descent as from any other group (Welch, Comer, & Steinman, 1973). In the Culture-Free SEI, Form AD, each of the stimulus items is culture-free thus assuring validity and reliability of the instrument across cultures (Battle 1981). In addition, past research has shown that individuals of Mexican descent appear as willing as other groups to submit to interviews (Freeman, 1969). In this study, difficulty was experienced in securing parental consent forms from the adolescents participating in the study who were under 18. That was the greatest factor in restricting the size of the sample for this study. Future studies should secure

the cooperation of a local school district to facilitate data collection.

In this study, generational status was defined as follows: first generation corresponds with the participant being born in Mexico; second generation corresponds with parents being born in Mexico; third generation corresponds with grandparents being born in Mexico. This study found that for the first generation, Mexicano was the most popular label, with Mexican American being their only other choice. The labels Latino, Chicano, and Hispanic were not chosen among this first generation. Lamare (1982) found among his Newcomer generation (corresponds with this study's definition of first generation) that their preferred label was Mexican. These individuals' identity is tied to their birth country of Mexico (Lamare, 1982). Therefore, the labels selected by this generation are only those that reflect their "Mexicanness." Among the second generation Hispanic was the most popular label, with Mexican American being their second choice, and Chicano being a distant third choice. The labels Latino and Mexicano were not selected among this generation. In Lamare's study, the Chicano label was found to be the most popular label among his first generation (corresponds with this study's definition of second generation). Although both samples were derived from the state of Texas some significant changes have taken place in the social and political climate since Lamare's study. First, the Chicano civil rights movement had faded into the political background and second, the label Hispanic was being promoted among the media and

government institutions. As adolescents searching for their ethnic identity the ready use of the label Hispanic by the media promotes its selection by this group. This is also true among the third generation where Hispanic was also the most popular label, with Mexican American being their second choice. It was only this third generation that selected each of the five labels studied. Contrary to Buriel (1987), this study suggests that the selection of the array of labels by this generation of adolescents does indicate this group's uncertainty over an appropriate ethnic or self identity. Although this finding did not reach significance levels, future studies are needed with a larger sample to test this suggested pattern further. In Lamare's study, his second generation (corresponds with this study's definition of third generation) selected the Mexican American label as their first choice. Whereas Garcia (1981) found that the Mexican American label was the most neutral ethnic label and therefore the one that was most acceptable to Americans of Mexican descent, this study seems to suggest that Hispanic is now the label most acceptable to Americans of Mexican descent.

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Footnotes

¹ The Chicano civil rights movement was a part of the larger civil rights movement of the late 1960's and early 1970's that reached its peak during the late 1970's. It protested the fact that Americans of Mexican descent were occupying a socially subordinate status as exemplified by residential, educational, occupational, and political inequalities; it fought to establish equal rights and opportunities for Americans of Mexican descent.

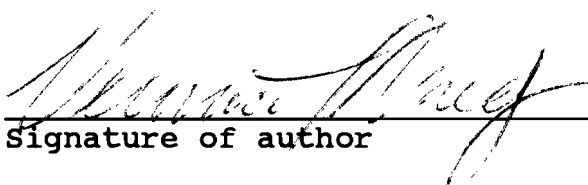
Table 1

Generation x Label Chi Square Contingency Table of Observed
Frequencies

Label	Generational status			Total
	1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd Generation	
Latino	0 (0.2)	0 (0.3)	1 (0.5)	1
Mexican American	0 (2.5)	7 (5.6)	9 (7.9)	16
Chicano	0 (0.6)	2 (1.4)	2 (2.0)	4
Hispanic	2 (4.3)	11 (9.5)	14 (13.2)	27
Mexicano	7 (1.4)	0 (3.2)	2 (4.4)	9
Total	9	20	28	57

Note. () = expected frequency.

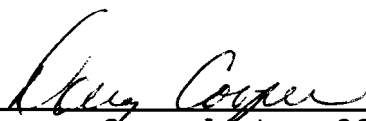
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Self Referent and Self-Esteem of Adolescents
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