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Past Peer Victimization Experiences and Current Psychological Well-being and Ethnic Identity Among South Asian College Students

Rejitha Nair
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PAST PEER VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES AND CURRENT PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND ETHNIC IDENTITY AMONG SOUTH ASIAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

REJITHA M. NAIR

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Educational Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2017
This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Educational Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Abstract

PAST PEER VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES AND CURRENT PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND ETHNIC IDENTITY AMONG SOUTH ASIAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

REJITHA M. NAIR

Advisor: Cliff Yung-Chi Chen, Ph.D.

Very little is known about the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students and the factors involved in these experiences. The present study retrospectively investigated the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students in high school, the perceived reasons for victimization, and how these experiences relate to their psychological well-being and ethnic identity as college students. Two hundred and twenty college students, who were first or second generation immigrants from South Asia (e.g., India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal) and attended high school in the United States, participated in the study.

Overall, the results revealed that there was a high peer victimization rate among South Asian immigrant students (73.6%, n = 162). Specifically, indirect bullying and verbal bullying were the most frequent types of victimization experienced by South Asian students in high school. The most frequent perceived reasons for peer victimization reported by participants were: (1) certain stereotypes associated with their culture, (2) their ethnicity or nationality, (3) their cultural beliefs, customs and traditions, (4) their way of dressing, (5) and their skin color.

Socio-demographic factors such as language fluency, religion, SES, gender, and school context were not found to be significantly related to peer victimization experiences. First generation students were not likely to experience more peer victimization than second generation
students, however, first generation students did report more ethnic victimization, being
victimized due to ethnic background, than second generation students.

Correlational analyses found that higher levels of peer victimization and ethnic
victimization were related to lower levels of acculturation to the American culture. South Asian
students who reported higher levels of victimization also reported higher levels of pressure to
acculturate and acculturative stress in high school. Furthermore, South Asian students who were
victimized in high school reported lower psychological well-being as college students.

Regression analyses indicated that peer victimization and ethnic victimization
experiences in high school significantly predicted the ethnic identity of South Asian students in
college. Lastly, hierarchical regression analyses revealed that family support moderated the
relationship between peer victimization and psychological well-being of South Asian students,
but not between peer victimization and ethnic identity. These findings and conclusions suggested
areas for future research. Educational implications were addressed.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my amazing mom. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for making me the person that I am today and for supporting me every step of the way. You have been through this entire journey with me and you never questioned my ability to finish. You always believed that I could accomplish all my goals. None of this would have been possible without you.
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Chapter I

Introduction

This chapter begins with an overview of bullying and a description of the South Asian community in the U.S. This is followed by a description of the socio-demographic factors influencing peer victimization in immigrant students, victimization and psychological well-being, the role of family support, and victimization and ethnic identity. Finally, research questions are proposed to investigate the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students.

Bullying/Peer Victimization

Bullying is a sensational topic and a major concern in recent times. The topic gained national attention because of the numerous stories reported around the country in which victims have taken their own lives as a result of bullying. Bullying is a problem of interest for many educators and psychologists, and a great deal of research has been conducted on the subject. Bullying is defined as “repeated unprovoked aggressive behavior where the perpetrators are more powerful than the person(s) being attacked” (Nguy & Hunt, 2004, p. 79). Williams and Guerra (2007) suggests that bullying may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking), non-physical (e.g. verbal threats, mimicking others), direct (e.g. name calling, teasing), or indirect (e.g. gossiping, spreading rumors). Students are often bullied in schools by their peers due to a variety of reasons including their looks, body type, dressing style, social skills, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation.

The scientific literature on aggression among peers uses various terms, including bullying, harassment, and victimization. All of these terms are used to indicate behavior that is: (1) aggressive or intended to harm; (2) carried out repeatedly over time; and (3) occurs in an interpersonal relationship where a power imbalance exists (Olweus, 1999). Peer victimization is
defined as “the experience among children of being a target of the aggressive behavior of other children” (Hawker and Boulton, 2000). Throughout this paper, the term “bullying” indicates behaviors which meet the three criteria above, and the term “peer victimization” indicates the experience of being bullied by peers. The current study retrospectively explored the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant college students in high school.

**South Asian Americans**

There has been an influx of Asian immigrants into the U.S. and the number continues to increase substantially. As of 2015, there are 17,676,507 million Asian Americans living in the United States; of that number, 4,913,130 are South Asian Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). South Asian Americans have their cultural roots in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and others. Asian Indians make up the majority of South Asians in the U.S and they are also the second largest Asian subgroup in the United States. In 2015, the Asian Indian population in the U.S. reached 3,982,398, which represents a 69.37 percent increase from 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Despite this high number, South Asians have been especially ignored in the sphere of psychology literature, and most of the research conducted on this subgroup has been anthropological or sociological in nature (Mehta, 1998).

South Asian Americans are one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the country and they are also one of the most successful, with high education attainments and high income (Cheryan & Monin, 2005). Asians, in general, are often seen as a “model minority” since most are considered to be intelligent, competitive overachievers. The model minority theory suggests that Asian Americans, as a group, are economically and occupationally successful due to a cultural emphasis on high educational achievement and a strong work ethic (Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997). As a result, Asian Americans are seen as an example for other minority groups.
to follow. Therefore, by stereotyping Asian Americans as a model minority, they are often perceived to experience few, if any, social and psychological problems in their adjustment to the United States (Leong & Lau, 2001). However, it has been reported that the generalization is not entirely true. Some studies, including Sharma’s (1984) and Mehta’s (1998) studies conducted on Asian immigrants in mid-sized cities, found evidence of unusual psychological anxieties among Asian immigrants.

**Socio-demographic Factors Influencing Victimization**

In post 9/11 America, numerous South Asian youths have encountered ethnicity-based bullying; and in many cases, the bullying involved physical harm (Inman, Yeh, Madan-Bahel, & Nath, 2007). In the name of retaliation, South Asians became targets of victimization for wearing turbans, for their religious beliefs and even for their last names. Therefore, it is important to consider the socio-demographic factors that place immigrant students at risk for when studying their victimization experiences. Some of these socio-demographic factors can be their level of acculturation, generational status, language fluency, ethnic background, religion, school context, gender, and socioeconomic status.

For immigrants, acculturation is the process of adaptation and cultural modification that happens as a result of prolonged contact between two distinct cultures (Berry, 1990). Acculturation attitude is a significant factor in understanding how immigrant groups adapt to new cultural contexts (Berry, Kim, Power, Young & Bujaki, 1989). These acculturation attitudes may largely establish how immigrants interact with the mainstream society while retaining their own culture. According to Berry (2003), the acculturation attitude of immigrants affects the acculturation strategies they choose (i.e., separation, marginalization, integration, and
assimilation). On the other hand, the attitude of the host country towards the immigrants also significantly impacts the acculturation strategies chosen by various immigrant groups.

In addition to acculturation attitude, there are several factors that influence the acculturation process of immigrants. These factors include social support, age upon arrival, length of residence in the host country, level of education and fluency in the English language, as well as gender (Choi & Thomas, 2009). Students who display low levels of acculturation to the mainstream culture can be targeted for victimization by peers (McKenney, Pepler, Craig, & Connolly, 2006). However, the influence of acculturation levels on bullying experiences of South Asian immigrant students in schools have not been examined thoroughly.

Furthermore, individuals, families, and groups experience substantial stress in the process of trying to adapt to the host culture, which is labeled as acculturative stress. Dressler and Bernal (1982) defines acculturative stress as “when an individual’s adaptive resources are insufficient to support adjustment to a new cultural environment” (Roysircai-Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000, p. 138). Acculturation can be a very stressful process for immigrants. The process of acculturation often includes adjusting to a new culture, learning a new language, leaving family and friends behind in their country of origin, loneliness or lack of support in the new culture, as well as personal and institutional discrimination (Fuertes & Westbrook, 1996).

There are two main sources of psychological stress experienced by immigrant youth: (1) the pressure from peers to reject their own cultural identity and values in order to assimilate into the mainstream culture; and (2) pressure from parents and other family members to conform to ethnic/cultural norms and traditions (Thomas & Choi, 2006). Due to being victimized by peers, immigrant students can feel the pressure to acculturate to the mainstream culture in order to avoid being bullied. Students might think that they have to get rid of their traditional ways in
order to fit in socially with their peers which can lead to experiencing higher levels of acculturative stress (Gibson, 1998). This pressure to acculturate may be felt differently by first and second generation immigrant students. First generation immigrant students are more likely to display low levels of acculturation to the majority culture and, therefore, might experience higher rates of bullying than second generation immigrant students (Nguy & Hunt, 2004).

Immigrant students, especially recent immigrants, might not be fluent in the English language; this can impact not only the acculturation process, but also how they are treated by their peers. Students can be teased or bullied by their peers because of their lack of proficiency in English, for making mistakes pronouncing or understanding words, as well as for having thick accents (Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008).

In addition to cultural and language differences, immigrant students can also be bullied due to their ethnic background. Ethnicity is classified by a person’s place of origin (Arbona, Jackson, McCoy, & Blakely, 1999; Branch, Tayal, & Triplett, 2000) or a person’s objective membership to a group based on parent’s country of origin (Phinney, 1992; Ruck & Wortley, 2002). Ethnic bullying occur when another individual’s ethnic background or cultural identity is targeted directly or indirectly (McKenney et al., 2006). Since religion is a significant part of an individual’s cultural identity, religious beliefs, customs, traditions, and way of dressing indicative of a particular religion (e.g., turban or burqa) can also place students at risk for ethnic victimization by their peers (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000).

However, the occurrences of ethnic bullying among immigrant students are often dependent on the school context. According to Hanish and Guerra (2000b), the racial and ethnic make-up of schools can play an important role in the relationship between ethnicity and victimization. Moreover, males and females might experience peer victimization in different
ways. Research has suggested that males are more likely to be physically aggressive and females are more likely to be relationally aggressive, harming others through purposeful manipulation and damaging peer relationships (Mynard & Joseph, 2000; Varjas, Henrich & Meyers, 2009). Moreover, the process of acculturation might be different for males and females in South Asian immigrants as well. Gender differences have not been fully investigated in relation to peer victimization experiences among South Asian immigrant students. This is also true for socioeconomic status (SES). Since recent or less acculturated immigrants are more likely to live in economically disadvantaged communities (Negy & Woods, 1992), it can be assumed that SES impacts their ability to socially fit in at school in acceptable ways to their peers.

**Psychological Well-being**

Victims of bullying often suffer from long-term psychosocial consequences. Students who are bullied tend to experience low psychological well-being, poor social adjustment, social distress, and physical unwellness (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Fitzpatrick, Dulin, & Piko, 2010; Hanish & Guerra, 2000a). They experience loneliness, social anxiety, lower self-esteem, and performance difficulties (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Selekman & Vessey, 2004). Victimized students are more anxious, depressed, withdrawn, passive, and insecure than non-victimized students (Klomer, Sourander, & Gould, 2010; Pontzer, 2010). In severe cases, they are at increased risk for suicidal ideation and suicide attempts (Rigby, 2003). Ethnic bullying may be associated with similar negative maladjustment as well (Pepler, McKenney, Craig, & Connolly, 2006). However, the impact of ethnic bullying on the psychological well-being of immigrant students has not been fully investigated.
Family Support

In encountering peer victimization experiences at school, family can be an important source of support for immigrant students. In the South Asian culture, families uphold collectivistic values and emphasize group norms and harmony as well as compliance with group authority (Jang, 2002). The difference in acculturation attitudes and values between parents and children can create conflicts within the family system (Kim & Cain, 2008). According to Cheryan and Monin (2005), parents’ communication barriers due to linguistic and cultural reasons and difficulty accepting Westernized ideas and practices of their children can further escalate the conflicts. Therefore, due to these conflicts within the family, South Asian immigrant students might not turn to their family for support when facing victimization experiences.

Ethnic Identity

Peer victimization may have different meanings for minority versus majority students. Evidence from Verkutyen and Thijs (2006) suggests that minority children often interpret victimization experiences as instances of ethnic discrimination. Therefore, the researchers suggest that for minority groups, what should also be considered is the way children evaluate and relate to their ethnic group in connection to their experiences with forms of peer victimization. Ethnic identity refers to one’s sense of belonging to an ethnic group, as well as one’s thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and behaviors, due to ethnic group membership (Phinney, 1990).

Relationships between peer victimization experiences and ethnic identity among immigrant students have not been explored thoroughly. Results from Verkuyten (2002) among Dutch and Turkish students in the Netherlands indicate that students felt negatively toward their own ethnic group after experiencing ethnic victimization. Conversely, Schmitt and Branscombe (2002) propose a rejection-identification model which suggests that perceived discrimination can
result in a stronger orientation and identification with one’s own ethnic group. This identification offers psychological benefits to the immigrant student to counter the harm of victimization. Following this model, the current study examined the ethnic identification of victimized immigrant students.

In conclusion, based on the above discussion, the present study seeks to examine the following research questions:

1. What are the socio-demographic factors that influence the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students?
2. Do first and second generation South Asian immigrant students experience peer victimization and ethnic victimization differently?
3. Does acculturation relate to the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students?
4. Does peer victimization relate to acculturative stress experienced by South Asian immigrant students and in the pressure to acculturate to the mainstream culture?
5. Do South Asian immigrant students utilize family support while facing peer victimization experiences?
6. Does peer victimization relate to psychological well-being in South Asian immigrant students?
7. Does peer victimization relate to ethnic identity in South Asian immigrant students?
Chapter II

Literature Review

This chapter includes nine sections. The first section begins with a definition of bullying and peer victimization, followed by the types of bullying, prevalence of bullying, and the long-term consequences of bullying. The second section provides the population characteristics of South Asian groups in the United States, followed by a review of the existing literature on the victimization experiences of Asian Americans by their peers and how their experiences of bullying are frequently related to discrimination. The third section addresses the eight possible factors which are the level of acculturation, language fluency, ethnic background, school, generational status, religion, gender, and SES that make immigrant students prone to victimization. The fourth section addresses the impact of victimization experiences on the psychological well-being of students. Additionally, the literature is reviewed on the psychological well-being of Asian Americans and the influence of acculturation on psychological well-being of immigrant students.

Section five addresses Asian Americans’ family support as they go through the acculturation process and when experiencing bullying at school. Ethnic identity is discussed in the sixth section which covers its definition, its relation to acculturation and acculturative stress, its impact on psychological well-being, as well as the impact of general and ethnic victimization experiences on ethnic identity. Finally, rationale, research questions, and hypotheses for the current study are explained in sections seven, eight, and nine respectively.

Bullying/Peer Victimization

Bullying has been conceptualized as a distinct type of aggression characterized by a repeated and systematic abuse of power (Olweus, 1993b). Bullying includes acts of direct
behaviors such as deliberate physical aggression (e.g., hitting and kicking), verbal aggression
(e.g., name calling and threats), indirect behaviors such as relational aggression (e.g., social
isolation and rumor spreading), and cyber-aggression (e.g., text messaging and e-mailing hurtful
messages or images) in the technologically progressive youth culture of today (Williams &
Guerra, 2007). Research suggests that between 10% and 30% of children and adolescents are
involved in bullying; however, prevalence rates fluctuate significantly as a function of how
bullying is assessed (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). It has been noted that bullying increases during
the middle school period as children enter adolescence (Hazler, 1996). Results from a study
conducted by Williams and Guerra (2007) revealed that 72.3% of 11th graders reported engaging
in verbal bullying, 37.8% reported engaging in physical bullying, and 9.9% reported cyber
bullying. Shellard (2003) indicated that physical abuse and aggression are more prevalent in
younger grades, while verbal and psychological bullying is more prevalent among middle and
high school students.

In recent years, bullying has been a focal point of research. One of the reasons is because
of the long-term consequences of bullying experiences for the victim. Victims of bullying often
experience long-term psychological distress, including loneliness, diminishing self-esteem,
psychosomatic complaints, and depression (e.g., Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Juvonen, Graham, &
Schuster, 2003; Kalatial-Heino, Rimpela, Rantanen, & Rimpela, 2000; Parker & Asher, 1987;
Salmon, James, & Smith, 1998). Victimization has been linked with internalizing symptoms,
emotional distress, school dysfunction, and social problems (e.g., Esbensen & Carson, 2009;
Graham, 2006; Nansel et al., 2001; Rigby, 1999; Shin, D’Antonio, Son, Kim, & Park, 2011).

Victims of bullying appear to be at a heightened risk for experiencing poor social
adjustment (Kaltila-Heino, Rimpela, Marttunen, Rimpela, & Rantenan, 1999; Nansel, Craig,
Overpeck, Sauja, & Ruan, 2004), social isolation (Juvonen & Nishina, 2000; Newman, Holden, & Delville, 2005), and social anxiety (Crick & Bigbee, 1998). They are also at a heightened risk for suicidal ideations and even suicide attempts in extreme cases (Klomek, Sourander, & Gould, 2010; Rigby & Slee, 1999). These problems are predictive of future social and psychological difficulties as children progress through adolescence and into adulthood (Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999; Hanish & Guerra, 2002).

Victims of bullying may suffer from fewer friendships, school absences, and peer rejection (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Meraviglia, Becker, Rosenbluth, Sanchez, & Robertson, 2003). Schwartz, Hopmeyer-Gorman, Nakamoto, and Toblin (2005) reported that children who are frequently bullied by peers display poorer academic functioning than do their non-victimized peers. The fear of being bullied in school also leads to victims dropping out of school, resulting in a downward spiral of adversity (Sharp, 1995).

A great deal of research has been conducted about the topic of bullying as is evident by the shift in publication trends from 1980 to 2009. A meta-analytic study by Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, and Sadek (2010) revealed that there were fewer than 190 peer-reviewed articles published on bullying during the 20-year span from 1980 to 2000, whereas there have been well over 600 articles published about bullying from 2000 to 2010. Majority of these studies conducted in the United States on bullying and victimization used a primarily White sample; little is known about the experiences of immigrant children in American schools. Moreover, Ross (2003) suggests that most research has focused on “generic” bullying where issues of “difference” have not been observed.

Most of the literature on bullying among immigrant students comes from international studies; the social and cultural differences between the United States and other countries make
the applicability of the findings difficult (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003). Furthermore, most available studies investigating the occurrences of bullying and victimization in immigrant students in the United States used African American or Hispanic samples.

There is a scarcity of literature examining the peer victimization experiences of South Asian American groups. South Asians, including individuals with ancestral roots in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, comprise one of the fastest growing groups of Asian immigrants in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015); however, studies examining peer victimization experiences in South Asian populations are underrepresented in the literature. To address the lack of studies conducted with South Asian immigrant groups, the present study utilized a South Asian sample.

**South Asian Americans**

Asian Americans are one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the United States. The number of Asian Americans almost doubled in size from 1980 to 1990 (Tewari & Alvarez, 2009). It is projected that the Asian American population will exceed 40 million by the year 2050, which is estimated to be 10% of the American population (Chae & Foley, 2010). Approximately 60% of Asian Americans were born in countries outside the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The majority of the literature portrays Asian Americans as a homogenous group (Alvarez, 2002; Liu, Iwamoto, & Chae, 2010); however, some researchers disagree with this notion and have stated that the differences between the many Asian ethnic subgroups may be as great as the differences between Asians and other ethnic minority groups (Alvarez, 2002; Tsai, Chentsova-Dutton, & Wong, 2002). In fact, Asian Americans consist of approximately 40 ethnic subgroups (Sue & Sue, 2008). Considering Asian Americans as a homogenous group leads to the stereotype that Asian Americans are all alike, which is very far from the actuality (Alvarez, 2002;
Liu et al., 2010).

The majority of South Asians in the U.S. are Asian Indians, followed by Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, and Nepalese (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). South Asians constitute diverse and distinct traditions, such as religious differences (e.g., Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, etc.) and political histories. South Asians also share some cultural values, such as collectivism, a common history of colonization in their countries of origin, and are often identified by non-South Asians as physically distinct (Cheryan & Morin, 2005).

Victimization in Asian American students. Past studies conducted on bullying and immigrant students were mainly focused on African American and Hispanic students. However, some recent research has shown that Asian American students actually experience higher levels of ethnic/race-based peer discrimination and harassment than students from other minority groups (Alvarez, Juang & Liang, 2006; Goto, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2000; Grossman & Liang, 2008; Kohatsu et al., 2000; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). In Fisher, Wallace, and Fenton’s (2000) study, Asian American students indicated consistently higher levels of distress from peer discrimination than their African American, Hispanic, and White peers. A 4-5 year longitudinal study, Way, Santos, Niwa, and Kim (2008) found that Chinese American high school students, mostly first generation immigrants, reported the highest levels of peer discrimination among Black, Latino, and Asian American students. Moreover, the Chinese American students’ perceived peer discrimination was found to be consistently high through the high school years. The forms of bullying that were reported were mostly verbal and relational aggression.

Alvarez et al. (2006) found that among Asian American college students of various national origins, 98% reported experiencing at least one racial micro-aggression such as being treated rudely in the past year. Over 80% of East and South Asian youth in the Fisher et al.’s
(2000) study reported being called names, and about 50% reported being excluded from social activities or threatened as a result of their race. Shin et al. (2011) found that among Korean-American high school students sampled in the states of New York and New Jersey, 31.5 percent reported being bullied and higher levels of depression were experienced by these students.

Although Boulton’s (1995) study conducted in Europe revealed that Asian students reported more racist name-calling in predominantly Caucasian schools, Mouttapa, Valente, Gallaher, Rohrbach, and Unger (2004) reported that Asian Americans were the most frequently victimized ethnic group regardless of a school’s racial composition in the United States.

Several studies (e.g., Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006; Louie, 2004; Rivas-Drake, Hughes & Way, 2008) have revealed that Asian Americans were frequently teased, harassed and bullied by non-Asian peers. For example, the Chinese American high school students in Way, et al.’s (2008) study reported physical as well as verbal harassment by their non-Asian peers, as opposed to the African American and Latino American students who mainly reported discrimination by their teachers and other adults. Similarly, Chinese-American middle school students in Boston, especially those who were first-generation immigrants, in Liang, Grossman, and Deguchi’s (2007) study indicated frequently experiencing race-based verbal and physical harassment by non-Asian peers.

Research has suggested that bullying against Asian-American youth is frequently related to discrimination. Minority children more often perceive victimization experiences as instances of ethnic discrimination (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2001; 2006). Verkuyten, Kinket, and Van der Wielen (1997) suggest that when students perceive they are being victimized by peers because of their race/ethnicity, they tend to interpret this as discrimination. For example, Fisher et al.’s (2002) study indicates that Asian languages or accents, school performance, and physical
appearance were usually the focus of the harassing comments received by Asian American students. Furthermore, Asian teenagers were more likely to report that they had been threatened because of their race and to consider assumptions regarding their language proficiency as signs of ethnic discrimination. Ethnographic studies (Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Way et al., 2008) consistently indicate that Chinese American adolescents are frequently teased, picked on, and called names by their peers because they are Chinese.

In addition to the psychological distress linked with being bullied in general, Asian-American adolescents are also at risk of negative outcomes associated with race-related discrimination (Shin et al., 2011). Among Asian-American adolescents, discrimination has been positively associated with distress (Liang et al., 2007), depression (Grossman, 2006) and alienation from peers (Qin, Way, & Mukherjee, 2008).

Most of these studies included primarily Chinese and Korean students, therefore, little is known about the bullying and victimization experiences of other Asian groups such as those students from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and so forth. Most of the research examining ethnic differences in bullying merges diverse groups under the general rubric of Asian-American (Alvarez, 2002). The occurrences of bullying and victimization, especially ethnic/race-based bullying, might be different for students depending on their Asian subgroup since the ethnic groups in Asia are very diverse in their physical, social, and cultural characteristics (Uba, 1994). The inter-ethnic group differences within Asian-Americans contribute considerably to the distinctive challenges of Asian-American adolescents (Tewari & Alvarez, 2009).

Even though the high prevalence of bullying and peer victimization experienced by Asian Americans has been documented in the literature as well as their social and psychological
adjustment, few studies have examined the factors and reasons for bullying and victimization. Cheryan and Monin (2005) has speculated that the underlying reasons for bullying may be different for Asian Americans, who are most likely bullied for their “perpetual foreigner” status than other ethnic groups. The present study investigated the peer victimization experiences of South Asian college students in high school while examining the underlying socio-demographic factors involved in victimization.

**Socio-demographic Factors Influencing Victimization**

There are several factors that might make immigrant students more prone to victimization such as their acculturation level, language fluency, ethnic background, school, generational status, religion, friendships, gender, and SES. The first factor explained is the level of acculturation, and this section provides the definition of acculturation, models of acculturation, as well as the changes, responses, and phases that immigrant groups go through as they assimilate into the mainstream American culture. This section also includes the acculturation process of South Asian Americans and the factors that influence acculturation such as age, length of residence, social support, cultural assimilation, and generation. Additionally, the section discusses how acculturation level can play a role in immigrant students’ victimization experiences. This is followed by a section on acculturative stress which provides the definition, challenges faced specifically by South Asians in acculturation, and the role generational status and language proficiency plays in acculturative stress. A section on the pressure to acculturate as a result of victimization experiences follows.

The second factor discussed is language fluency and how the lack of proficiency in English can make immigrant students more vulnerable to victimization. The third factor explained is ethnic background. The definition of ethnic bullying and literature on students
being victimized because of their ethnicity are presented. The fourth factor described is school which includes an overview of how the school context relates to victimization experiences and how the ‘model minority’ stereotype of Asian Americans impacts their experiences with peers in school. The fifth factor, which is generational status, is discussed with a review of victimization experiences of first and second generation immigrant students, as well students being bullied by other students within the same ethnic group. The sixth factor, religion, reviews the limited literature on bullying due to the religious factors of the immigrant student. Gender, the seventh factor, is discussed in order to provide an explanation of gender difference in victimization experiences and acculturation levels. The last factor, SES, and its role in immigrant students’ victimization experiences and level of acculturation are discussed.

**Acculturation.** This section provides the definition of acculturation, changes at the individual and group level, responses to acculturation, and phases of acculturation. It further addresses factors influencing acculturation, acculturation processes in South Asian Americans, and level of acculturation and victimization. Additionally, the section gives an overview of acculturative stress and the pressure to acculturate.

**Definition.** The U.S. is becoming increasingly diverse and there are currently 46.6 million immigrants living in the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). When immigrants enter the U.S., they bring with them a unique set of values, attitudes, socialization beliefs, and behavioral norms that is characteristic of their country of origin. However, as they start their lives in a new country, their frequent interaction with the host culture results in a gradual process of change in these values, attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral norms. This change has been referred to as acculturation, as Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) defined acculturation as “the phenomenon, which results when a group of individuals having different cultures come into
continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (p.150).

Acculturation results when two cultures are in close contact with one another, and the process has been shown to produce more changes in the cultural group (acculturating group) that must adjust to the host society (Berry, 1990). Berry (2005) defines acculturation as the dual process in which cultural and psychological change takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. The primary results of acculturation are changes in ethnic identity, personal values, ideals, and attitudes (Berry, 2003).

The traditional view of acculturation conceptualizes the process as one through which immigrants are gradually assimilated into the American culture. Earlier conceptualizations of acculturation saw it as a unidimensional process in that individuals went through a course of cultural change that ultimately resulted in full assimilation (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986). However, Rumbaut and Portes (2001) suggested that acculturation is multifaceted and individuals may never fully assimilate into the majority culture.

Moreover, every individual may experience the process of acculturation differently, and this depends on the characteristics of both the native and host cultures and each individual’s characteristics. The individualization theory suggests that the process of acculturation is an individual one with each new member both adopting new beliefs and values from the receiving culture and retaining beliefs and values from the culture of origin. Additionally, there is give-and-take with each new member impacting the receiving culture as a result of the specific mix of beliefs and values they adopt (Cote, 2006).

Changes. At the individual level, the changes experienced by the person whose group is acculturating can involve modifications in values, behavior, eating habits, language use, and
attitudes (Berry, 1997). Aspects of self-identity including, but not limited to, attitudes, behaviors, and values, are adapted in order to adjust to the new mainstream culture. The acculturation process is affected by the amount, degree, and intensity of contact with the host culture along with the acculturating individual’s personality, experience, and personal background (Phinney, 1998). At the group level, the acculturation process involves modifying heritage culture practices in order to accommodate the practices of the new mainstream culture.

According to Williams and Berry (1991), there are four main types of changes that may occur as consequences of the acculturation process. First, physical changes, such as a new place to live, novel housing situations, and varying population density, may commonly occur. Second, biological changes, such as different foods, diseases, and eating habits, may also be found. Third, cultural changes including political, economic, linguistic and social institutions are found to necessarily occur in the direction of the host culture. Last, psychological adjustment involving changes in mental health status may occur as an individual struggles to cope with a new environment.

**Responses.** According to Berry (1984), individuals who are undergoing acculturation conflicts may respond in the following manner: (1) assimilation, which an individual seeks to become part of the dominant society to the exclusion of their own cultural group; (2) separation, which a person identifies exclusively with the culture of origin and there is no interaction with the larger society; (3) integration/biculturalism, which an individual retains many values from the culture of origin but adapts to the dominant culture by learning necessary skills and values; and (4) marginalization, which a person perceives one’s own culture as negative or is not willing to maintain it but is also unable to adapt to majority culture and have little interest in interacting with members of the host society. This conceptualization of acculturation has been widely
utilized by others to study immigrant stress and coping, as well as adaptation to the host culture (Hsiao & Wittig, 2008). Integration has been considered by many researchers as the optimal outcome for immigrants (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

**Phases.** Berry et al. (1989) also reported that the process of acculturation may occur in five phases: pre-contact, contact, conflict, crisis, and adaptation. In the first phase of pre-contact, both cultural groups are seen as distinct with independent values, customs, lifestyles, and psychological characteristics. In the next phase of contact, the groups interact with one another and stressors may appear, especially for the minority group. As a result, a conflict stage may occur when tensions rise and the minority group may experience significant pressures to change its way of life. This may lead to a crisis phase in which the conflict reaches a peak and intervention may be required. Lastly, an adaptation phase may occur wherein inter-group relations may be stabilized. It is the conflict stage that is of utmost interest in the present study because of the vulnerability it might create for immigrant students which in turn may make them more prone to victimization.

**Factors influencing acculturation.** According to Deaux (2008), the factors that influence acculturation include age at initial exposure to the United States, length of residence in the United States, social support, and generation. Other factors may include socioeconomic status, gender, place of birth, ethnicity, language usage, and degree of loyalty toward the native culture (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005).

**Age.** Acculturation level can be impacted by the age of the individual undergoing acculturation, and age at immigration influences the rate of acculturation (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder, 2001). The younger the individual at the time of initial exposure to the majority culture, the greater the degree of acculturation. The younger the age at which an
individual is exposed to a particular social/cultural context, the greater the likelihood that the person will take on the beliefs, attitudes and values of that cultural milieu (Berry et al., 2006). Pawliuk et al. (1996) also suggested that age predicts the manner in which the acculturative process will proceed in younger individuals (prior to entering primary school); this process is usually smoother than for adolescents and for older individuals. Cheung, Chudek, and Heine (2011) provided evidence for a sensitive period for acculturation, that is, people are more likely to identify with the host culture the longer they are exposed to it. However, this exposure has to happen when they are relatively young.

**Length of residence.** Research tends to support a positive correlation between the length of residence in the United States and level of acculturation. The more time individuals are exposed to the U.S., the greater their degrees of acculturation to the majority group (Dion & Dion, 2001). In a study conducted by Sodowsky and Carey (1987), the Asian Indian participants who had lived in the U.S. for six or more years were significantly more acculturated than those who had lived in the country for five years or less. Trueba (2004) found that that those who had lived in the USA for a long period but stayed in touch with their homeland and their people were assimilated toward the host culture while preserving their original culture. Sue and Sue (2008) suggested that acculturation can be seen as a continuum in which the more years that one spends in another country, the further they will be along that continuum.

**Social support.** Social support has been found to have a positive impact on the acculturative process. For example, the presence of supportive family members, relatives and friends, religious communities, and one’s personal sense of connectedness has been shown to provide emotional support for immigrants in dealing with external challenges during the process of acculturation (Choi & Thomas, 2009). A sense of belonging to a strong, tightly knit ethnic
community supports the assimilation process and lessens the stress resulting from the discrimination experienced by immigrants (Noh & Kaspar, 2003). Furthermore, Rumbaut and Portes (2001) suggest that social support among the members of the ethnic community provides a supportive environment for the educational and occupational advancement of the second generation. Ethnic social support has also been shown to be a protective factor among immigrant youth from the pressure to deny their original culture (Gibson, 2001).

Among South Asian individuals, Krishnan and Berry (1992) reported that for some it was more important to maintain contact with others of similar ethnicity; on the other hand, it was more important to maintain contact with persons of the host society for others. It is common among South Asian families to maintain contact with other families of South Asian origin in order to maintain traditions and to feel a sense of belonging.

*Generation.* Sodowsky, Lai, and Plake, (1991) found that first generation Hispanic and Asian American immigrants were significantly less acculturated than later generation immigrants. The first generation immigrants had the lowest acculturation levels among first, second, third and fourth generation immigrants. Moreover, some studies (e.g., Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980; Montgomery & Orozco, 1984; Olmedo & Padilla, 1978; Padilla, Wagatsuma, & Lindholm, 1985) indicated a linear relationship between acculturation and generational status. That is, acculturation level is the lowest for the first generation, and it increases with later generations with the latest generation is expected to have the highest acculturation level. This may be because second-generation and later generation immigrants tend to feel more accepted by the host society and less like minorities than do first-generation immigrants, which causes them to attend to the culture of origin to a lesser extent.

*South Asian Americans and acculturation.* Many Asian Americans encounter the
challenge of negotiating their identity as Asians with their identity as Americans. Similar to Berry’s (1984) model, Sue and Sue (2003) argued that Asian American individuals who are undergoing acculturation conflicts may respond in the following manner: assimilation, separation, integration/biculturalism, and marginalization.

It is important to note the cultural differences between the South Asian American culture and the majority culture, especially in assessing acculturation. South Asians who come to the United States all face the challenge of choosing how much of the culture of origin to release or retain at one time or another. For instance, individuals who are least acculturated may experience problems with cultural rigidity; bicultural individuals may experience feelings of cultural marginality by not being able to identify with either South Asian or American culture; and highly assimilated individuals may experience a loss of history and connection with their roots (Sharma, 1984). It has been reported that South Asian immigrants have assimilated quite easily at a structural level (i.e., at the educational and occupational level), but cultural assimilation has been minimal and the desire to maintain cultural heritage is strong within the South Asian community in America (Cheryan & Monin, 2005).

In a study done with Asian Indian immigrants, Sodowsky and Carey (1988) identified three distinct groups among Asian Indian immigrants varying on level of acculturation. Sixty-five percent of the respondents fell into a category that was designated “mostly or very Asian Indian.” Members of this group prefer to wear Indian clothing, eat Indian food, and think mostly in an Indian language. These individuals have a strong belief that Indians should adhere closely to their traditional values, customs, religious practices, and cultural rituals.

Twenty-one percent of respondents categorized themselves as “bicultural” and had a preference for both Indian and American clothing styles, ate both Indian and American food,
thought and read in both English and an Indian language, and tended not to be extreme with
cultural attitudes. The smallest group of seven percent labeled themselves as “mostly or very
American,” and typical of this group is a preference for American food, Western styles of dress,
and the English language. Saran (1985) offered evidence to the existence of these three different
groups, of which the largest group is highly characterized by its Indian heritage, resistant to new
values, and life in a marginal status in American society. The majority of the people in this
category were recent immigrants from India.

According to Suinn, Khoo, and Ahuna (1995), an individual may be considered Asian
identified (or separated), bicultural (or integrated), or Western identified (or assimilated). An
Asian identified individual is someone who maintains ethnic beliefs, traditions, and practices but
has not been able to adjust to American culture. In first generation immigrant students, this lack
of adjustment can lead to victimization by peers, particularly concerning ethnic background. A
bicultural individual is someone who retains values and traditions of his or her own ethnic group
and integrates the values and traditions of the host culture. A Western identified individual
refuses the values and traditions of his or her Asian heritage and integrates the values, traditions,
and behaviors of the host culture. For this individual, acculturation becomes a trade-off in which
one loses their personal identity in order to gain a national identity. Many choose to be a Western
identified individual for acceptance into the mainstream society.

*Level of acculturation and victimization.* The level of acculturation of immigrant
students can play a role in their victimization experiences. However, few studies in the bullying
literature have considered this phenomenon and studies that do exist have inconsistent findings.
One study (Peguero, 2009) conducted with children of Latino immigrants showed that students
are more likely to be victimized at school as they move through the assimilation process or
become Americanized. However, another study (McKenney et al., 2006) found that among Canadian immigrant youth, first generation youth (less acculturated) are more targeted and at the highest risk for ethnic victimization. Yet a third study (Bauman & Summers, 2009) conducted with Mexican American middle school students found that acculturation level did not affect students’ victimization rates at all.

Studies conducted within ethnic groups (e.g., Holleran & Jang, 2005; Mendez, Bauman, & Guillory, 2012; Niemann, Romero, Arredondo, & Rodríguez, 1999; Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008) have noted that recent immigrants (low levels of acculturation to the mainstream American culture) are teased, harassed, and socially isolated by other students who have been in the U.S. longer (higher levels of acculturation to the mainstream American culture). Recently immigrated Chinese American students reported (Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008) that more acculturated Chinese peers would tease them because they could not speak English well and would repeatedly tell them to “go back to China” (p. 36).

Mexican immigrant students (Niemann et al., 1999) described how Mexican American peers called them “wetbacks”, pretended not to know Spanish, and treated them worse than how they were treated by their White peers. Newly arrived Mexican immigrants were frequent targets of victimization by their more acculturated classmates in Mendez et al.’s (2012) qualitative study. For example, sometimes more acculturated students call newer arrivals “FOB”, which stands for “Fresh off the Boat.” The present study hypothesizes that immigrant students with low acculturation levels are likely to have been bullied by their peers than students with high acculturation levels.

**Acculturative Stress.** This section addresses the definition of acculturative stress, acculturative stress in South Asians, and the role of generational status and language proficiency
on acculturative stress.

*Definition.* The process of acculturation has been seen as a potential source of conflict and stress and linked to experiencing stressful life events (Ying & Han, 2008). Therefore, immigrant students undergoing the process of acculturation might experience acculturative stress. Acculturative stress is the emotional burden of adapting to a new culture (Thomas & Choi, 2006). It is a reduction in mental health and wellbeing of ethnic minorities that occurs during the process of adaptation to a new culture (Lueck & Wilson, 2010). By definition, acculturative stress refers to the undesirable “side effects” of acculturation and includes language issues, perceived cultural incompatibilities, and cultural self-consciousness (Wang, Schwartz, & Zamboanga, 2010).

While sometimes related to the experience of discrimination, acculturative stress is distinct, involving challenges of limited English proficiency, concerns about immigration or legal status, and feelings of guilt for leaving one’s country of origin (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004; Gee, Spencer, Chen, Yip, & Takeuchi, 2007). The variation and intensity of this stress is based heavily on the similarities or dissimilarities between the host culture and the home culture (Berry, 1997).

Researchers have found that less acculturated individuals tend to display less happiness, less satisfaction with life, and higher levels of alienation (Wang & Malinckrodt, 2006). One common view holds that levels of psychological distress tend to be much higher for individuals who are least acculturated to the dominant culture. Padilla, Alvarez, and Lindholm (1986) extracted four basic themes associated with stress and the process of acculturation. They hypothesized that acculturative stress occurs in four broad areas: (1) the quality of immigrants' social life in the new culture; (2) immigrants' attitudes toward their former culture and country of
origin; (3) immigrants' relations with family in the new culture, particularly with parents; and (4) the quality of the environment in the new culture.

According to Berry and Kim (1988), the variables that influence the level of acculturative stress include nature of the dominant society, nature of the acculturating group, and mode of acculturation adaptation chosen. The nature of the dominant society refers to how the values of the dominant society affect the acceptance or rejection of minority groups. For example, acculturative stress is less predominant in multicultural societies while more prevalent in unicultural societies. The nature of the acculturating group refers to the willingness, movement toward integration, and permanence of contact that the minority group has with the dominant group. The mode of acculturation adaptation chosen refers to minority groups choosing assimilation, integration, rejection or deculturation.

Some of the factors that impact the acculturation-stress relationship include age, gender, level of education, language proficiency, cognitive styles, and prior intercultural experiences (Lueck & Wilson, 2010). Berry et al. (1987) assert that those who can integrate (i.e. bicultural and bilingual or multilingual) have significantly lower stress levels than those who are separated from the new culture or their ethnic culture. Berry et al. (1987) and Krishnan and Berry (1992) found that separation and marginalization (based on discrimination, prejudice etc.) were positively associated with high stress levels. Krishnan and Berry (1992) further indicated that acculturation stress was negatively correlated with integration.

Berry and Kostovcik’s (1983) study found factors such as previous contact with the host country, multilingualism, and the prior experience of an urban, culturally pluralistic setting were correlated with lower acculturative stress. The pre-immigration context of the participants is important to consider because it might contribute to how they cope with acculturative stress
while adapting to a new cultural environment (Inman & Tummala-Narra, 2010; Tewari, Inman, & Sandhu, 2003). Exposure to Western culture and the level of English proficiency before immigration might alleviate acculturative stress that occurs due to culture shock.

Acculturative stress has been found to have a persistent, long-term influence on the psychological adjustment for many minorities, such as for Hispanic immigrants (Smart & Smart, 1995) and for Central American immigrants (Hovey, 2000). Acculturative stress has been linked with depression, anxiety, and substance abuse among various groups of immigrants in the U.S. (Ortega, Rosenheck, Algeria, & Desai, 2000; Tummala-Narra, Algeria, & Chen, 2012; Constantine, Okazaki, & Utsey, 2004). Shin (1994) identified acculturative stress as one of the many social predictors of depressive symptoms in Korean American women in New York. Acculturative stress has resulted in alcoholism in Mexican-American men and eating disorders in African-American and Native-American women (Roysircar-Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000).

**South Asians and acculturative stress.** South Asian immigrants, similar to other immigrants, face numerous challenges in the U.S., including feelings of loss, separation, alienation, and anxiety about the new cultural environment (Tummala-Narra, 2009; Tummala-Narra et al., 2012). A study by Sodowsky and Lai (1997) found that Asian immigrants with low levels of acculturation had higher levels of acculturative stress. The results indicated that traditional Asian cultural orientation, young age such as adolescence, immigration at an older age, social network that excludes White Americans, limited family kinship, low income, and higher levels of perceived prejudice lead to higher levels of acculturative stress, suggesting that an array of social and demographic factors can impact the acculturation-stress relationship. Some immigrants utilize coping strategies that permit more successful acculturation, whereas others face difficulties and high levels of acculturative stress (Xu & Chi, 2012).
Mehta (1998) reported that those Asian Indians in the U.S. who exhibited greater integration between their native and the host culture displayed less acculturative stress, and those Asian Indians who reported feeling accepted and being involved with American culture had more positive mental health. Additionally, the results indicated that Asian Indians prefer integration as the most preferred acculturation style. Hwang and Ting (2008) found that acculturative stress is linked to mental health problems, even when accounting for general perceived stress in Asian Americans; however, this study did not include South Asian participants. A recent study (Tummala-Narra et al., 2012) including South Asians revealed that South Asians reported higher levels of acculturative stress than other Asian groups and that perceived discrimination was positively associated with depression for South Asians.

**Generational status.** Generational status plays a role in acculturative stress. Studies conducted by Mena, Padilla, and Maldonado (1987) and Padilla et al. (1986) divided the participants into four generational groups: early immigrants (immigrated before age 12), late immigrants (immigrated after 12), second generation, and third generation. The results reported that first-generation individuals scored significantly higher on stress than second and third generation individuals. However, late immigrants (immigrated after 12) experienced the most stress and scored the lowest on self-esteem compared with all the other groups.

There have been several waves of immigration by South Asian groups and they face different circumstances and social pressures which have important implications for adjusting to a new cultural environment. Sodowsky et al. (1991) conducted research using diverse groups of Asians to study the various levels of acculturative stress. The results indicated that first generation Asian immigrants experienced more difficulty in adapting to the dominant society than second and third generation immigrants. As a result of this difficulty, first generation
immigrants reported having more stress and lower self-esteem than second and third generation immigrants. Additionally, second generation immigrants experienced stress due to the conflict between the cultural value of their parents and those of the dominant society. Yu (1984) suggested that American-born Asians may experience stress due to a loss of group identity and having to face double rejection, that is, rejection by White Americans due to discrimination and rejection by immigrant Asians due to perceived differences. In sum, generational status and level of acculturation may be predictors of acculturative stress.

Overall, research (e.g., Abe & Zane, 1990; Mena et al., 1987; Padilla et al., 1985; Sodowsky et al., 1991; Yu, 1984) has suggested that first-generation Asian Americans experience significantly more acculturative stress and higher levels of adaptation difficulties than second or later generations. Since the first generation immigrants are likely to be low in acculturation, their greater experience of stress may be due to difficulties in interpersonal relationships as well as in their tendency to segregate themselves from the mainstream society.

Language proficiency. Language proficiency is a strong predictor of acculturative stress. High native and English language proficiencies have been shown to be predictors of low acculturative stress, and native language attrition as a predictor of high acculturative stress (Oh, Koeske & Sales, 2002). The inability to speak English can negatively affect the adjustment of Asian immigrants, which leads to higher levels of acculturative stress. In a study conducted by Lueck and Wilson (2010) with Asian immigrants, it was found that 70% of participants experienced acculturative stress. Furthermore, the results showed that high levels of English and native language proficiencies, a bilingual language preference and high levels of family cohesion were predictive of low acculturative stress. Most importantly, language proficiency constructs were found to have the largest effects on acculturative stress. Interestingly, not only English
skills, but also native language skills and bilingual language preferences, decreased the likelihood of acculturative stress. Therefore, linguistic integration, rather than solely assimilation, should be considered while assessing acculturative stress. That is, native language skills and bilingual language preferences should also be measured, in addition to English language proficiency.

**Pressure to Acculturate.** Immigrants who are undergoing the process of acculturation might feel pressure to acculturate to the mainstream culture, especially if they are being victimized for the lack of acculturation. For first generation immigrant students, cultural adjustment is a key factor in bullying and victimization, and it has been reported that immigrant students learn from their peers and teachers that they should get rid of their “foreign ways” to fit in socially at school (Gibson, 1998).

Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996) emphasized that the pressure to assimilate is a significant theme throughout the literature on ethnic minority students at predominantly White college and universities. Research (e.g., Duster, 1991; Feagin & Vera, 1995; Thomas, 1991) notes that ethnic minority students feel they are required to “blend in” on predominantly White campuses. However, at the same time, academic and behavioral stereotypes about their ethnic minority background highlight their group characteristics and differences.

While ethnic minority students experience pressures from Whites to be “representatives” of their racial/ethnic groups, they also experience pressures to assimilate into the mainstream, or the dominant White, culture. For example, in an interview conducted with an ethnic minority student by Lewis, Chesler, and Forman (2000), a student stated, “people tell me, ‘You’re American! Speak English, damn it!’” (p. 79). This reflects two sides of the same coin. Minority students feel that they are expected to be different from Whites in certain ways and at the same
time they feel that they must pursue some resemblance with Whites. Lewis et al. (2000) suggest that these expectations create conflict, which in turn, causes high levels of confusion, frustration, and pain for those who are experiencing it. The authors further contend that minority students face direct or implicit insults and demands (e.g., to assimilate, to act out cultural stereotypes, to explain) creating daily stressors about whether to oppose or comply internally, in terms of identity, and externally, in terms of behavior.

A report on bullying among refugee and immigrant youth by the Bridging Refugee Youth and Children’s Services (BRYCS) in 2010 indicated that many immigrant youth try to acculturate as quickly as possible to “fit in” with their peers and to avoid being bullied. The report further contends that many youth do not mean to reject their native culture, but find it important to dress or act “American” for these reasons. Therefore, being victimized at school can possibly lead to acculturative stress, and first generation immigrant students might feel the need to acculturate to the mainstream culture by changing their beliefs, values, and lifestyle to escape victimization.

**Conclusions.** Based on the literature on acculturation and acculturative stress, the acculturation level of immigrant students needs to be considered when examining victimization experiences because it can be a factor which can make them more prone to victimization and impact subsequent acculturation experiences. The present study hypothesizes that those students who are least acculturated are more likely to have experienced peer victimization. It further hypothesizes that those students who are victimized might have felt the pressure to assimilate to the mainstream culture due to the victimization.

Additionally, victimization may heighten acculturative stress which can impact their psychological well-being and ethnic identity. Not much is known about the acculturative stress
experiences of South Asian Americans and the contribution of negative peer experiences to acculturative stress. Therefore, the present study hypothesizes that those students who report being victimized by their peers might have experienced more acculturative stress as an immigrant than those who are not victimized. Those who are victimized might have experienced higher levels of acculturative stress if the victimization is due to language proficiency, immigrant status, or ethnicity.

**Ethnic background.** In addition to general victimization that immigrant students face in schools because of language or cultural differences, they might also be subjected to ethnic bullying. According to McKenney et al. (2006), ethnic bullying targets another’s ethnic background or cultural identity in any way and may include “direct forms of aggression, such as racial taunts and slurs, derogatory references to culturally specific customs, foods, and costumes, as well as indirect forms of aggression, such as exclusion from a mainstream group of peers because of ethnic differences” (p. 242). While instances where negative peer experiences are connected to individual characteristics are referred to as personal victimization, ethnic victimization refers to instances where negative peer experiences are connected to group membership such as race or ethnicity (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2001).

However, the majority of research on peer victimization conducted in the U.S. typically does not consider situations where children are treated negatively because of their ethnic background (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Among research from other countries regarding ethnic bullying, ethnic name-calling is more frequently reported than ethnic exclusion from group. In one group of 13- to 17-year olds in Besag’s (1989) study, over half of the name-calling that occurred referred to racist names and over 60 different abusive racial terms were used.

Verkuyten and Thijs (2002) reported in their study of ethnic victimization among middle
school-aged children, that as many as 42% of Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese minority students reported having experienced racial name-calling compared with 21% of Dutch majority students. Furthermore, up to 30% of minority participants reported having been socially excluded by their peers in comparison to 21% of their majority classmates. Other studies on victimization (e.g., Borg, 1999; Smith & Shu, 2000) have found that name-calling incidents were more common than social exclusion. Rigby (2002) also indicated teasing as a result of race in a survey of children in Australian schools. In a sample of school students in London (Mooney, Creeser, & Blatchford, 1991), more than half of the students reported believing that “racial teasing” occurred in schools. McKenney et al. (2006) suggest that since peer victimization is most likely to occur when there is an imbalance of power between aggressors and victims; it is likely that the ethnic makeup within a setting can indicate an imbalance of power and therefore can function as a context for victimization. The authors further contend that in terms of numbers, it could be assumed that students whose ethnic group is the statistical minority in an ethnically diverse school setting might be more susceptible to harassment. Additionally, it could also be assumed that the statistical majority group has more perpetrators and less victims of peer harassment, especially based on ethnicity.

In a critical study done by Pepler, Connolly, and Craig (1999), the bullying and victimization experiences of immigrant and ethnic minority and majority youth in late elementary and high school years in Canada were investigated. Furthermore, behavior problems associated with the experiences of bullying and victimization in relation to ethnicity were also examined. Out of the 331 elementary school students and 762 high school students in the study, 17% of all elementary students and 17% of all high school students reported that they had
experienced ethnic victimization in response to the question inquiring whether they had been bullied by a student from another ethnic group because of their ethnicity. Boys were more likely to report experiencing ethnic victimization than girls in high school and elementary school. Pepler et al.’s (1999) study also found that children who experience ethnic victimization reported more internalizing problems, such as anxiety and depression, than bullies, and girls reported more internalizing problems than boys.

In a study conducted in a large urban district in California, Lai and Tov (2004) found that 22% of Asian students reported that they had been bullied because of race, ethnicity, or national origin. Maharaj, Tie, and Ryba (2000) found a large proportion (76%) of ethnic minority students in New Zealand reported being bullied because of their ethnicity. Wolke, Woods, Stanford, and Schulz (2001) found that ethnic minority students in England and Germany were likely to become victims of bullying; however, they were not more likely to victimize others. Siann, Callaghan, Glissov, Lockhart, and Rawson (1994) reported significant differences in perceptions of bullying frequency between ethnic minority and majority secondary students in London and Glasgow. Specifically, there were considerably more ethnic minorities who believed that ethnic minority students were more likely to experience bullying.

Similar to personal victimization, ethnic victimization can affect an individual’s self-esteem and lead to adjustment difficulties. Verkuyten and Thijs (2001) found that Turkish children in Netherlands with either high or low personal or ethnic self-esteem felt more negative about themselves after indicating experiences with peer victimization. Moreover, peer victimization based on ethnic group membership had a somewhat stronger negative effect on self-feelings than victimization based on personal characteristics. The reason for this stronger effect for ethnic victimization could be the comparatively high level of ethnic identification that
is seen in Turkish children in the Netherlands. Thus, it can be assumed that a relationship exists between a strong ethnic identity and the subsequent effects of ethnic victimization on self-esteem. Therefore, it is integral to examine victimization due to ethnic background to understand the factors that make students susceptible to harassment, as well as the impact it has on psychological well-being and ethnic identity.

**Generational Status.** Generation is defined according to one’s country of birth or one’s parents’ country of birth (Roysircar-Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000). First generation is defined as foreign-born U.S. immigrants; second generation is defined as U.S.-born offspring of first-generation immigrant parent(s); and third generation is defined as offspring of second-generation U.S.-born parent(s).

Nguy and Hunt (2004) found that students can be victimized due to their immigrant status and first generation immigrant students are more often exposed to this victimization than second generation immigrant students. Scherr and Larson (2010) defined immigrant bullying as “bullying that targets another’s immigrant status or family history of immigration in the forms of taunts and slurs, derogatory references to the immigration process, physical aggression, social manipulation, or exclusion because of immigration status” (p. 225). Since generational status is related to different acculturation preferences and psychosocial outcomes, it can be assumed that first and second generation immigrants will be perceived and responded to differently by the majority, for example, the mainstream American culture (Rothe, Pumariega, & Sabbagh, 2016 ). Second generation immigrant students are usually fluent in English and will most likely adopt similar clothing and food preferences to the majority. Consequently, the majority observes less cultural distance between themselves and second generation immigrants than for first generation immigrants (Matera, Stefanile, & Brown, 2011).
For first generation immigrant students, there are many barriers to academic achievement as well as to establish social networks. Immigrant students who are new to the U.S. may be prone to victimization through several mediating factors, including: low academic achievement possibly due to lack of English proficiency, low level of acculturation, lack of knowledge of customs, low SES level, and poor social networks (Yang, Noels, & Saumure, 2006). Pepler et al. (2006), showed that that high school students who were not born in Canada (1st generation) experienced significantly more victimization related to their ethnic background than those born in Canada (2nd generation).

On the other hand, it should be noted that often immigrant students are victimized by peers from the same ethnic background. Even though racial and ethnic bullying seems to occur typically between bullies and victims of different racial and ethnic groups, examples of ethnic bullying within the same ethnic group have been reported (e.g., Elsea & Mukhtar, 2000). It is possible that less acculturated immigrant students (first generation) are bullied by more acculturated immigrant students (second generation) from the same ethnic background.

Romero and Roberts (2003) indicate that as a result of intergenerational differences within an ethnic group, the process of acculturation may lead to groups of individuals who share a cultural background but vary on levels of acculturation to the mainstream culture. Additionally, cultural conflicts can produce stress within an ethnic group due to the different levels of acculturation. Due to these conflicts, within-group discrimination and peer pressure to conform to one’s ethnic and cultural norms can surface. Frequent clashes can occur between more and less acculturated groups as prejudice and stereotypes are often present between these two groups (Holleran & Jang, 2005). Other studies have reported specific cultural conflicts and discrimination within ethnic groups due to differences in acculturation and moving away from
one’s ethnic norms among Mexican immigrants (Holleran & Jang, 2005; Niemann et al., 1999), Chinese immigrants (Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008), and West Indian immigrants (Waters, 1991).

In a longitudinal study among first-and second-generation Chinese American students in New York and Boston, Qin, Way, and Rana (2008) found that conflicts resulting from generational (e.g., first vs. second generation), regional (e.g., Cantonese vs. Fujianese, or Hong Kong vs. Mainland China), linguistic (e.g., different Chinese dialects) differences within the Chinese American community are increasingly becoming salient as more diverse groups from China are immigrating to the United States in recent years. These differences cause a divide between students from the same ethnic background in schools, which can contribute to high levels of negative peer experiences. Additionally, it makes coping more difficult because of the lack of a potential support system from fellow peers of the same ethnic background.

Similarly, a study conducted by Mendez et al. (2012) among Mexican immigrant and Mexican American students in Washington also indicated that Mexican immigrant students were consistently bullied by their Mexican American peers, and relational bullying seemed to the most common type of bullying. Both Mexican American students and recently immigrated Mexican students believed that the recently immigrated students were bullied because of language barriers; that is, they were ridiculed for not speaking English well. Mexican American students feeling superior to Mexican immigrant students because they were born in the U.S. and had legal American citizenship was another reason cited by both groups for bullying the recently immigrated students.

Additionally, Mexican American students in Mendez et al.’s (2012) study thought that the recently immigrant students were bullied because of: (1) bullying cycle; that is, Mexican American students bullied Mexican immigrant students because Mexican Americans themselves
were bullied at a younger age; (2) isolation, not being able to make friends with the majority of the student population; (3) alienation, not fitting in with everyone else because of their way of dressing (not wearing name-brand clothes or dressing fashionably) or being left out of social cliques; and (4) school factors, such as placement in ESL classes, social cliques, lack of support or awareness by school personnel.

Based on the literature, the present study hypothesized that first generation immigrant students are more likely to be victimized than second generation immigrant students and first generation immigrant students are more likely to experience ethnic victimization than second generation immigrant students.

**Religion.** Religion is a significant factor to consider in immigrant bullying. In recent times after 9/11, there have been numerous incidents of victimization reported against Muslims and Sikhs; however, there is little research on their experiences in schools. In a survey assessing anti-Arab, Muslim, and South Asian discrimination by the New York City Commission on Human Rights (2003), sixty-nine percent of survey respondents reported one or more incidents of bias-related harassment, which included physical harassment, as well as ethnic and religious insults in a wide variety of settings. Similarly, Inman, Yeh, Madan-Bahel, and Nath (2007) found that nearly half of their South Asian participants faced prejudicial experiences (e.g., stereotyping, verbal insults) after September 11th.

A study conducted by Eslea and Mukhtar (2000) in Britain using a survey of bullying experiences of teenage Hindu, Indian Muslim, and Pakistani youth revealed significant interactions between ethnicity, religious affiliation, and bullying. All three groups were bullied by White students at equivalent levels; however, participants reported higher rates of bullying by other Asian students of different religious or ethnic backgrounds from the victims. Hindu youth
reported being victimized by Pakistani youth, and Indian Muslim and Pakistani youth reported victimization by Hindu youth.

Moreover, Pakistani boys reported that they were most frequently victimized by Indian Muslim youth. There were also significant interactions between victim ethnicity and foci of bullying, including name, skin color, language, god(s), places of worship, religious festivals, food, and clothing. Specifically, Hindu youth reported victimization related to gods, name, and places of worship, and Muslim youth reported bullying related to their clothing. Pakistani youth reported bullying associated with language, food, and clothing. Hassouneh and Kulwicki (2007) found that among Muslim immigrants in the U.S., females tend to be readily targeted in terms of discriminatory acts due to their way of dressing such as the wearing of a hijab, which makes them more identifiable as a target.

These findings further provide evidence that ethnic bullying can take place within racially similar groups, as well as between racially and ethnically diverse groups. It is also possible that immigrant students are victimized because they are perceived to be of a particular religious faith through the way they dress, for example wearing a burqa or a turban, or their customs and traditions. Therefore, religion becomes an important aspect to investigate in relation to the peer victimization experiences of immigrant students.

**Language fluency.** The language differences that exist between immigrant students and non-immigrant students play a major role in bullying and peer victimization (Yu, Huang, Schwalberg, Overpeck, & Kogan, 2003). In a study (Ross, 2003) conducted by the New England Equity Assistance Center, students and staff in a medium-sized Massachusetts school district were observed to assess the frequency of victimization behaviors among English language learners (ELLs) and non-English language learners. In regards to physical bullying, 28% of
middle school ELLs, compared to 13% of non-ELLs, reported that they always, often, or sometimes worry about someone hitting, kicking, or punching them even when they haven’t done anything to her or him. In response to the item assessing verbal bullying, 49% of middle school ELLs responded that students always, often, or sometimes make fun of others who have accents, compared to 21% of non-ELLs. The author suggests that the reasons for the higher incidence of bullying in immigrant children are related to language and culture/national origin issues, as well as a climate of anti-immigrant attitudes.

One of the other few studies (Yu et al., 2003) examining this topic conducted an analysis of the American data from the World Health Organization study of Health Behavior in School Children. The data were from a nationally representative sample of 15,220 students in sixth through tenth grade, and language spoken at home was used as a proxy measure of immigration status and acculturation. The results suggested that youth who did not speak English at home (i.e., had a lower level of acculturation) were 2.0 to 4.5 times more likely to be bullied than were youth who only spoke English at home. Additionally, it has been reported that Hispanic adolescents who were not fluent in English and spoke Spanish at home were likely to be bullied more than their English speaking counterparts (Hanish & Guerra, 2000b).

For immigrant students, linguistic acculturation, or the ability to speak English proficiently, may be an indicator of overall level of cultural acclimation (Yu, Huang, Schwalberg, Overpeck, & Kogan, 2002). English language learners might have trouble understanding what is being said or have not yet acquired the fluency to respond to others. During the interviews with Chinese immigrant students conducted by Qin, Way, and Rana (2008), first-generation immigrant students talked about three main factors that often led to peer prejudice and bullying: (1) speaking Chinese; (2) their English accent; and (3) their immigrant status (i.e., being in bilingual
classes). The first-generation students reported being teased by their non-Chinese peers for their lack of English proficiency, having accents, or making mistakes while speaking English.

In a study conducted by Yu et al. (2002) examining the association between language spoken at home and school and health risks and behaviors of Asian American adolescents, adolescents who did not usually speak English at home were more likely to report being bullied. These adolescents felt that teachers expect too much of them at school, felt that they do not belong at their school, had difficulty making new friends, and did not feel safe at school. The results from the study also suggest that many youth who are different from the majority population in terms of language fluency are at high risk of experiencing bullying. Therefore, it is important that language proficiency in English and language spoken at home be assessed in order to understand victimization of South Asian immigrant students.

**School.** This section addresses the “model minority” stereotype of Asian Americans in schools and its relation to peer victimization experiences. Additionally, the importance of school context in assessing victimization among ethnic minority groups is discussed.

**Model minority.** Immigrant students often negotiate between two cultural systems, between school/peers and community/family. However, the majority of Asian immigrant students appear to adapt reasonably well to the demands of the academic institution (Shin et al., 2011). Therefore, Asian American adolescents are frequently seen as a “model minority”. Compared to other minority groups, they engage in fewer problematic behaviors and they tend to have high academic achievement and career successes (Lorenzo, Frost, & Reinherz, 2000). However, these students are likely to experience certain problems which include the pressures of acculturation, discriminatory experiences, and decreased access to their existing support system (Cheryan & Monin, 2005). Additionally, there might be less awareness and availability of help
resources for immigrant students in the school systems (Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008).

Participant observation and interviews conducted by Rosenbloom and Way (2004) indicated numerous incidences of physical harassment of the Asian American students by the non-Asian American students in school. Students reported random “slappings” by male and female peers as they walked through the hallways. Asian American students described them as unnerving, randomly occurring, and humiliating violations that are especially tormenting for the boys when girls slap them. Additionally, Asian American students reported being pushed, punched, teased, and mocked by their non-Asian American peers. The racial slur “chino” or “geek” was often heard as Asian American students passed by. The physical and verbal harassment of the Asian American students in school happened regardless whether adults were present or not. Furthermore, Asian American students described incidents of having money, jewelry, and jackets stolen as typical events when discussing how they were victimized for being Asian American in school.

Regarding the “model minority” stereotype, about 15% of respondents in interviews conducted by Qin, Way, and Rana (2008) with Chinese American students talked about being treated poorly or bullied for “getting good grades,” “being too smart,” being “geeks,” “nerdy,” “studying too much,” and “not having fun.” These students felt ostracized socially by their non-Chinese peers due to their academic achievements. Additionally, students talked about the resentment other students felt against the Chinese American students regarding academics.

In many classes, non-Chinese and Chinese students discussed the obvious preference that many of the teachers had for the Chinese American students and how both the Chinese and non-Chinese students thought it was unfair to the other students. The explicit preferences by teachers made many of the non-Chinese students frustrated and angry, and they vented their anger on the
Chinese American students themselves. Therefore, the model minority myth may serve some Chinese American students well by encouraging the teachers to have high expectations of them. However, this myth may also lead to non-Asian peers to resent and harass them for the preferential treatment they received from the teachers.

School context. School context is an important aspect to consider in studying peer victimization since it can determine which groups of children might be victimized. The ethnic composition of a school class may moderate the relationship between ethnicity and victimization. Across multiple studies (e.g., Graham & Juvonen, 2002; Hanish & Guerra, 2000b; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002), the racial and ethnic make-up of the schools the students attended played a part in differences in bullying experiences. In these studies, results indicated that students whose race or ethnic background was a numerical minority within their school most frequently experienced bullying, especially ethnic bullying. The “misfit” theory suggests that children who are victimized are often children who do not fit in some way with rest and deviate from the group norm (Nadeem & Graham, 2005). Ethnicity is a characteristic that can be used to identify children who do not fit in with the general school class (Jackson, Barth, Powell, & Lochman, 2006).

Furthermore, immigrant students from particular ethnic groups may be more victimized than others, depending on the school environment. An “in group bias”, the tendency to prefer members of one’s own group to other groups, might have an influence on which particular groups are at risk for victimization (Hanish & Guerra, 2000b). When there is a larger group of individuals of one ethnic group than another in a school, it is more likely that members of the smaller group will experience peer victimization. Hanish and Guerra (2000b) and Dake et al. (2003) showed that White children in the United States were more victimized in schools with
low proportions of White children than in schools with high proportions of White children. Similarly, Verkuyten and Thijs (2002) found that native Dutch children were more often victimized in school classes with low proportions of Dutch children than in classes with high proportions of native Dutch children in the Netherlands.

According to Coenders, Gijsberts, Hagendoorn, and Scheepers’s (2004) ethnic competition theory, ethnic majority students feel more threatened by high proportions of ethnic minorities, ensuing in more negative attitudes toward minorities. Vervoort, Scholte, and Scheepers (2011) found that ethnic majority adolescents in school classes with high percentages of ethnic minorities reported more negative attitudes toward ethnic minorities than adolescents in classes with low percentages of ethnic minorities. Additionally, ethnic majority adolescents might perform more bullying behaviors in order to lessen social threat or gain social dominance.

Furthermore, ethnic disparities in the numerical sense are likely to intensify perceptions of “us” versus “them” and ingroup/outgroup differences that are known to be precursors of interpersonal conflict (Graham & Juvonen, 2002). When students interact primarily with members of their own group, they create an “us” group which might socially exclude others and can lead to conflicts between groups. If the differences between groups are apparently creating an imbalance of power, the resulting environment can make students more susceptible to victimization and this is more likely to occur in an ethnically heterogeneous classroom than in an ethnically homogenous classroom.

However, Mouttapa et al. (2004) found that Asian-American students reported more bullying regardless of whether they attended a school where Asian-Americans were an ethnic majority or minority. Research conducted in the Netherlands revealed that victimization was more prevalent in ethnically heterogeneous classes and that ethnic minority students bully others
more in ethnically heterogeneous classes (Vervoort, Scholte, & Overbeek, 2010). Verkuyten and Thijs (2002) found that ethnic bullying of three minority groups, Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese, increased in schools with higher percentages of native Dutch students. Therefore, the authors suggest that ethnic background of students and the ethnic composition of school classes should be taken into account in order to understand bullying and victimization in ethnically diverse cultures.

Gender. Gender may play an important role in experiences of victimization. Boys more often participate in bullying behavior and are more often victimized than girls (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005; Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2000; Ma, 2002; Vervoort et al., 2010). Research (Ma, 2002; Mynard & Joseph, 2000; Olweus, 1993b; Ostrov, Woods, Jansen, Casas, & Crick, 2004; Seals & Young, 2003; Varjas, Henrich, & Meyers, 2009) has reported that boys are more physically aggressive and more likely to be the victims of physical aggression than girls. Girls were found to be more indirectly or relationally aggressive than boys and they were likely to be victims of relational bullying more often than boys (Harris & Petrie, 2002; Mynard & Joseph, 2000; Varjas et al., 2009). Hoover and Oliver (1996) reported that psychological and verbal aggression and social exclusion are more likely to be used among girls.

The relationships between ethnicity and victimization might be different for boys and girls. Different sex roles can exist in different ethnic groups; therefore, gender in one ethnic group might have other effects on bullying and victimization than in other groups (Vervoort, et al., 2010). Very few studies have devoted attention to possible interaction effects between gender and ethnicity in victimization experiences. Verkuyten and Thijs (2002) found that Turkish boys and girls, part of an ethnic minority in Netherlands, displayed equal levels of victimization. It has
not been thoroughly investigated if the same holds true for Asian American students and if there are gender differences in their ethnic victimization experiences.

In terms of acculturation and gender, the findings are inconclusive. Studies (Oh, Koeske, & Sales, 2002; Sodowsky et al., 1991; Yeh, 2003) have found that gender has no impact on the level of acculturation among Chinese, Japanese, and Korean immigrants. Other studies have reported that women tend to be more acculturated than men (Dion & Dion, 2001; Sam, 2000; Sodowsky & Carey, 1987). In addition, Asian males in particular seem to have a harder time with the acculturative process than Asian females (Gibson, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2003). For example, among immigrant youth, Gibson (1997) indicated that boys may have a harder time than girls in accommodating themselves to school rules while concurrently seeking to oppose the forces of assimilation and to secure and sustain their reputation within peer networks. Waters (1996) suggests that girls may find the boundaries between their different cultural worlds more pervious than boys.

Even though it is not entirely clear how gender role influences acculturation levels, it can be assumed that the experience of peer victimization in relation to acculturation levels might be different in males and females. Since gender has not been investigated thoroughly in relation to victimization and acculturation in South Asian American students, the present study explores the gender differences in experiences of victimization, acculturative stress, ethnic identity, and psychological well-being.

**Socioeconomic status (SES).** The socioeconomic context and its relationship to acculturation are relevant to the experiences of victimization in immigrant students. Socioeconomic status, one’s position in society’s ranking system as represented especially by criteria such as educational level and occupation, has been found to correlate positively with
acculturation (Choi & Thomas, 2009). Negy & Woods (1992) found a significant positive relationship between acculturation and SES even when SES was assessed using different indicators, suggesting that students living in low SES backgrounds tend to display lower levels of acculturation. Research has found that children who attend schools in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods are at particularly high risk of exposure to violence at school (Menacker, Weldon, & Hurwitz, 1990). Since it is more likely for recent immigrant students to live in economically disadvantaged communities, the SES level may be an important moderator of the relation between immigrant status and peer victimization.

Mendez et al. (2012) indicated that recently immigrated Mexican students were bullied because they could not afford to buy brand-name clothes to dress fashionably and thus did not fit in with the rest of the students. Therefore, it is possible that immigrant students from low SES backgrounds are victimized to a higher degree since they are more likely to seem different than the majority group. They might be more prone to victimization because of low acculturation levels that are characteristic of students from low SES backgrounds. Therefore, the present study aims to examine if SES plays a role in immigrant students’ victimization experiences.

**Psychological Well-being**

This section addresses peer victimization and psychological well-being, psychological well-being in Asian Americans, and the relationship between acculturation and psychological well-being.

**Peer victimization and psychological well-being.** Peer victimization is linked to a range of negative psychosocial consequences. Students who are bullied by their peers frequently experience loneliness and social anxiety (Juvonen & Graham, 2001). Studies have reported that victims of bullying suffer a wide array of internalized and externalized maladjustments;
victimized students tend to have lower self-esteem, difficulty in adjusting to the school setting, performance difficulties, illnesses, are more anxious, depressed, and withdrawn, and exhibit higher rates of avoidance behaviors than non-victimized students (e.g., Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Fitzpatrick, Dulin, & Piko, 2010; Hanish & Guerra, 2000a; Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1997; Selekman & Vessey, 2004). Other research (e.g., Klomek et al., 2010; O’Moore, 2000) has reported that victims of bullying tend to be vulnerable, insecure, feel socially isolated, and have difficulty asserting themselves among peers. Victims of bullying can also experience feelings of rejection, and in extreme cases, are at increased risk for suicidal ideation and suicide attempts (Hanish & Guerra, 2002).

Rigby (2003) categorized the consequences of bullying victimization into four types: (1) low psychological functioning, (2) poor social adjustment, (3) psychological distress, and (4) physical unwellness. Longitudinal and retrospective research documents emotional consequences for victims of bullying, including low self-esteem, anxiety and passivity, academic problems, and social deficits and difficulties with women during adulthood for male victims (Pontzer, 2010). These unfavorable outcomes often persist into adulthood and affect the victims’ abilities to have healthy psychosocial outcomes (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Eisenberg & Aalsma, 2005; Newman et al., 2005). Schafer et al. (2004) found that victims who are bullied during school often continue to be bullied in the workplace. Students who experience peer victimization as a stable experience are likely to be at greater risk of negative outcomes than are students who experience it as a more short-lived experience (Hanish & Guerra, 2000a).

Some studies have suggested that immigrant students of all racial and ethnic groups experience higher rates of depression and alienation and lower feelings of “self efficacy” than do native-born children of native-born parents (Kao, 2000; Pepler et al., 2006). However, the
consequences of being victimized because of one’s ethnic background or cultural identity have not been investigated thoroughly. Some studies indicate that ethnic bullying may be associated with similar negative maladjustment (Pepler et al., 2006; Stevens, Vollebergh, Pels, & Crijnen; 2005, Oppedal, Roysamb, & Heyerdahl, 2005). Ethnic/race-based peer discrimination and harassment have been connected to increases in depression and declines in self-esteem among youths and adolescents. McKenney et al. (2006) found an association between ethnic victimization and greater anxiety, depression, and delinquent behavior in Canadian immigrant youth. These studies suggest that the relationship between peer victimization and psychosocial difficulties may be stronger for immigrant students compared to non-immigrant students.

**Asian Americans and psychological well-being.** Researchers have found that Asian-American adolescents exhibit higher levels of depression, are more withdrawn, and report less satisfaction with social support compared to Caucasian-American students (Alvarez & Helms, 2001; Green et al., 2006; Grossman & Liang, 2008; Lee, 2003; Qin, Way, & Mukherjee, 2008; Rivas-Drake et al., 2008). In addition, Asian-American adolescents have been found to display higher levels of emotional distress compared to other adolescent ethnic groups (Lorenzo et al., 2000), as well as higher feelings of isolation and anxiety (Lorenzo, Pakiz, Reinherz, & Frost, 1995). Moreover, Asian-American adolescents are less likely to look for and utilize mental health assistance due to a strong stigma attached to having mental health issues and seeking help from mental health professionals in the Asian culture (Janzen & Harris, 1997).

In a study conducted with Asian Americans, the extent to which students experienced racial or ethnic discrimination by their peers was more significant in their prediction of psychological functioning than peer support (Greene et al., 2006). Additionally, the study indicated that experiences of discrimination and negative appraisals about one’s ethnic group are
often internalized in their sense of self and may reduce feelings of control and foster feelings of helplessness, frustration, and depressive moods over time. Since these studies did not utilize South Asian participants, the present study hypothesizes that South Asian Americans will indicate lower levels of psychological well-being if they have experienced ethnic victimization.

**Acculturation and psychological well-being.** Research in acculturation has demonstrated that there is a relationship between acculturation status and positive psychological functioning (Baker, Soto, Perez, & Lee, 2012; Xu & Chi, 2012). A meta-analysis on acculturation, ethnic identity, and acculturative stress (Royisircai-Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000) reported that studies conducted with Asian American participants have shown that Asian Americans who hold a bicultural orientation are more likely to be psychologically healthy than those who hold a separated or assimilated orientation. Bicultural participants showed higher levels of self-esteem and self-concept, less acculturative stress, and fewer problems than participants with other orientations.

In contrast, greater psychological problems are experienced by U.S.-born Asian Americans who are highly acculturated or assimilated, who have low acculturation, or who are separated from the White American society. This review of studies also suggests that first-generation Asian Americans tend to report greater stress than second-generation Asian Americans. However, American-born Asians are not free of acculturative stressors either. While the stress of first-generation immigrants stems from struggling with acculturation issues, the stress of second-generation individuals stems from having to adapt to two worlds concurrently.

In Hovey’s (1998) study, immigrant students who rated higher levels of acculturative stress showed higher risk for depression and suicidal ideation. Investigations have found that students who preserved strong adherence to Asian cultural values were more likely to have lower
self-esteem, and suffer from anxiety and depression (Hovey, Kim, & Seligman, 2006; Kim & Cain, 2008). The authors indicated that the stress of balancing traditional values with more individualistic Western values generates emotional distress. A study of Asian-Indian immigrants by Mehta (1998) revealed that feeling accepted by the dominant society (having lower levels of perceived prejudice), longer U.S. residence, higher educational accomplishments and family income, higher level of pre-immigration adjustment, and being a part of U.S. culture were related to better mental health.

The psychological adjustment problems and acculturative stresses are most likely to be seen in immigrant students with limited English proficiency or those who are not fully bicultural (Yu et al., 2003). Facing added stressors that non-immigrant students do not face such as acculturation, discrimination, language barriers, and separation from close family members and social networks might make immigrant students more susceptible to the associated negative mental health outcomes (Shin et al., 2011; Sue, 1996).

Furthermore, Asian American students might experience stress because they fear academic failure since academic achievement is highly valued in the Asian culture. Sue and Sue (2003) stated, “There is great pressure for children to succeed academically and to have a successful career since both would be indicative of a good family upbringing” (p.335). Asian Americans spend twice as much time each week on academics than their non-Asian counterparts (Eaton & Dembo, 1997). In addition, Asian Americans reported feeling isolated, depressed, and anxious and indicated receiving little praise from their parents for their accomplishments (Lorenzo et al., 1995).

Students who are from a racially diverse school and who are part of a numerical minority ethnic group are more susceptible to be victims of harassment, and are more likely to experience
rejection and loneliness (Graham, 2003). Rejection felt by the immigrant student from the mainstream culture might perpetuate negative self-perceptions which can increase the risk for suffering depression (Pumariega, Rogers, & Rothe, 2005). Victimization due to one’s ethnic identity is related to internalizing difficulties and these detrimental effects remain stable over time (McKenney et al., 2006).

There are relatively few studies on peer victimization, especially ethnic victimization, and its relationship to psychological well-being among immigrant students. There is definitely a need for examining different ethnic groups to understand the long-term consequences of being victimized by peers in school. Consistent with previous research and utilizing the retrospective method, the present study hypothesized that those South Asian American students who have experienced peer victimization as high school students will report poor psychological well-being as college students.

The present study also hypothesized that those who experienced high levels of acculturative stress in high school will report poor psychological well-being as college students. In addition, this relationship between acculturative stress and psychological well-being will be different for first generation and second generation immigrants, with first generation immigrants reporting more acculturative stressors and cultural adjustment difficulties leading to negative psychological outcomes.

**Family Support**

The role of family support, especially the emphasis on family and collectivism within various Asian communities, in the face of victimization and acculturative stress has been indicated in recent research with Asian Americans. In Asian Americans, family cohesion has been linked with lower acculturative stress and greater psychological well-being (Tummala-
Lack of support from extending family has been linked with psychological distress (Masood, Okazaki, & Takeuchi, 2009).

In regard to acculturation, separation and integration/biculturalism are commonly seen in South Asian parents; however, assimilation and integration/biculturalism can be usually seen in children (Sue & Sue, 2003). The parent-child relationship in the Indian family, for example, reflects a generational gap that is characterized by the unwillingness of Indian parents in America to let their children fully adapt to the American culture (Dasgupta, 1998). It is possible that this happens because of the attitudes of immigrant parents and the need that they feel to uphold traditional values which is an integral part of their personal identity. Many Indian immigrant parents feel that if they become fully assimilated, they lose values and traditions that are essentially a part of themselves (Mehta, 1998).

Asian Indian immigrant parents and their children may experience more extensive value conflicts than parents and children reared in the same culture (Desai & Coelho, 1980). The conflict is created by the notion that children with parents of Asian origin have to conform to a set of cultural expectations that differ from those of the culture in which the child is being raised. South Asian immigrant parents want to maintain their traditional values by transmitting them to their children. However, children demand more freedom and equality than most Indian parents allow because of the influence of peer groups and their extensive exposure to American society. As a result, tension and conflict may rise within the family.

The conflict that arises within ethnic families is often a result of different levels of acculturation between first generation parents and second-generation children. American-born children of immigrants tend to be more assimilated into American cultural values than their parents (Sodowsky & Carey, 1987). Asian American families are influenced by two cultural
values (Asian culture and American culture) and adolescents generally acculturate to the majority culture at a faster rate than their parents, which is referred to as the acculturation gap (Choi, 1997). This situation creates intergenerational acculturation conflicts in families and threatens the traditional hierarchical relationships between parents and adolescents (Kim & Cain, 2008).

Sue and Sue (2003) indicate that the issue of being different than their peers and being considered “too Americanized” by their parents is common among second generation South Asian Americans. Additionally, second generation South Asian Americans considering their parents “too Asianized” or “too traditional” is also common among Indian families, and children are often ashamed of their parents because of their lack of fluency in English, not knowing American customs and traditions, and their accent or the way they dress.

Sodowsky, Kwan, and Pannu (1995) stated that among Asian Americans, first generation individuals are more likely to sacrifice their own needs in order to preserve their family’s heritage, traditions and identity. The authors further indicate that second generation individuals strive for independence and acculturation into the dominant society and feel pressure and conflict as a result of the expectations that the family imposes. This can result in family dysfunction as the children of immigrant parents are not fulfilling their ethnic roles and placing more value on the dominant society. Additionally, it can create emotional distress and confusion for the second generation individuals due to the lack of acceptance of their identity by their family and dominant society (Sodwsksy & Lai, 1997). Greenberg and Chen’s (1996) comparative study on familial conflict among Asian Americans and White college students revealed that Asian Americans reported higher levels of depressive symptoms, a less favorable view of the family dynamics and relationships, and less maternal warmth than White college students.

Jang (2002) indicated that Asian American parents in the United States were more likely
to encourage their children to follow group norms, fulfill obligations, obey group authority, and strengthen group harmony, rather than displaying individual autonomy, which reflects differences in cultural values and socialization practices. Given that fulfilling obligations is important in collectivistic cultures, Asian American parents believe that providing clothes, housing, food, and education is the best means of expressing love for their adolescents (Oak & Martin, 2000). However, adolescents who are growing up in the expressive, individualistic American society want to have parents who show more physical and verbal signs of affection (Kim & Cain, 2008).

Kim and Cain (2008) found that Korean American adolescents are less likely to find a source of support in their parents. The researchers contend that since normally accepted behaviors and norms in the American school setting are not favorable or accepted at home, this would cause conflict, resulting in elevated depressive symptoms in Korean American adolescents. Immigrant parents may experience cultural and linguistic barriers themselves, making communication with their children difficult, especially in communicating with second generation children. Immigrant students may experience conflicts if they are surrounded by different cultures and expectations at home than what they encounter at school. Parents may also have difficulty communicating with teachers and school officials, for both linguistic and cultural reasons, which may result in greater feelings of separation from the mainstream culture in immigrant students (Yu et al., 2002). As a result, experiences of vulnerability and victimization in immigrant students may lead to loneliness and depressive feelings (Ross, 2003).

To conclude, most South Asian parents have a traditional background that makes it difficult for them to accept the more Westernized ideas and practices of their children (Cheryan & Monin, 2005). The parents might expect their children to dress or speak a certain way at
school that might not fit in with the “in” crowds, which could make the children more prone to victimization. As a result, recent or first generation immigrant students who are being victimized at school, due to their language fluency, ethnicity or way of dressing, might be reluctant to talk to or seek support from their parents because they might feel that their parents might not be able to understand their problems at school. Therefore, the present study hypothesizes that the first generation South Asian immigrant students are less likely to utilize family support when facing victimization experiences and acculturative stressors.

**Ethnic Identity**

This section addresses the definition of ethnic identity, models of ethnic identity development, the relationship between acculturation and ethnic identity, the relationship between acculturative stress and ethnic identity, and the effects of victimization on ethnic identity.

**Definition.** Phinney (1990) defines ethnic identity as “…the psychological relationship of ethnic and racial minority group members with their own group” (p. 499). Ethnic identity is regarded as a multidimensional construct, consisting of ethnic group behaviors, knowledge and awareness of cultural beliefs, and traditions of one’s ethnic group (Lee, 2003; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Moreover, ethnic identity is a dynamic construct that changes over time and context through a process of exploration and commitment. According to Phinney (1992), higher ethnic identity development is associated with higher levels of quality of life and satisfaction with life.

**Models of ethnic identity development.** Four models of ethnic identity development and ethnic identity retention are explained. Smith’s (1991) ethnic identity model focuses on the status inequality that exists between majority and minority members which affects the movement towards ethnic identity formation. Four phases of ethnic identity development are described. The first phase, which is preservation of ethnic self-identity, is when an individual’s ethnic self-
equilibrium is challenged by positive or negative contact experience with an outside group. The next phase, preoccupation with the ethnic conflict, is when individuals who have significant contact with an out-group experience strong feelings that encourage them to seek safety and support from their own in-group. The subsequent phase, resolution of conflict, the individual re-establishes his or her ethnic self-equilibrium by looking for a solution to the ethnic identity conflict. The last phase is integration in which the individual incorporates current and previous experiences and events into his or her life.

Sodowsky et al.’s (1995) multidimensional ethnic identity retention model proposes that the ethnic identity process is bi-directional, involving two orthogonal dimensions. These two dimensions are the degree of adoption of Whiteness and degree of retention of one’s Asianness which results in four ethnic identity orientations. The first, bicultural identity, characterizes individuals who identify with both groups. The second, strong ethnic identity, occurs when the individual values maintaining one’s ethnic identity over White identity. The third, strong US White identity, occurs when the individual is not ethnically identified. The fourth, identity of cultural marginalization, characterizes individuals who do not identify with either cultural group.

Isajiw’s (1990) ethnic identity retention model defines ethnic identity retention as the extent to which characteristics of an ethnic group are present among second or subsequent generations. This model suggests that ethnic identity is composed of internal, psychological aspects and external social aspects. The internal aspects include: 1) moral, which is sense of obligation to one’s ethnic group; 2) cognitive, which represents ethnic self-image and self-cultural knowledge; and 3) affective, which is the sense of belonging or attachment and comfort with one’s ethnic group. The external aspects include sociocultural behaviors, such as having ethnic group friendships, speaking the ethnic language, and taking part in ethnic traditions and
festivals, etc.

Phinney’s (1993) ethnic identity development model suggests that there are three stages of ethnic identity development. The first stage, unexamined ethnic identity, is the lack of exploration of ethnicity due to a lack of interest or the perception that ethnicity is based on the opinions of others. The second stage, ethnic identity search, is active exploration to seek understanding of what ethnicity means within a given context. The final stage, achieved ethnic identity, is a clear and confident sense of what ethnicity means in one’s life. The current study utilizes Phinney’s (1993) model to assess ethnic identity.

**Ethnic identity and acculturation.** The terms acculturation and ethnic identity have been used in research interchangeably; however, both are related but independent concepts. Acculturation reflects the changes in cultural attitudes, values, and behaviors that result from contact between two distinct cultures (Berry et al., 1986). The focus of ethnic identity is on how the individual relates to their own group as a subgroup of the larger society (Phinney, 1990) and it can be thought of as a facet of acculturation. Sodowsky and Lai (1997) differentiate between the two constructs, stating that “acculturation adaptation is a response to the dominant group and ethnic identity is a response to one’s ethnic group” (p. 212).

In a study conducted with first and second generation Puerto Rican and Chinese-American college students in New York City, Velez (1995) found that second-generation subjects had higher acculturation scores than the first generation; however, ethnic identity was not inversely correlated with level of acculturation. Bufka (1998) reported that first-generation Asian Indian adolescents were less acculturated than their second-generation peers. Additionally, they felt more prejudice and used an Indian language more than their second-generation peers. Nevertheless, the two generations did not indicate any differences in various components of
ethnic identity.

In a sample of Mexican-American freshmen college students, Cuellar, Roberts, Nyberg, and Maldonado (1997) found that those students who were classified as high-bicultural acculturative type scored higher on a measure of ethnic identity than those students classified as low-bicultural acculturative type. Ting-Toomey (1981) found that first-generation Chinese Americans mainly identified themselves with the Chinese culture and the second and third-generation groups mainly identified themselves as bicultural (i.e., both American and Chinese).

In a study conducted by Rosenthal and Feldman (1992) among Chinese-American and Chinese-Australian youths regarding ethnic identity retention, first and second generation Chinese adolescents differed significantly on the ethnic behavior and knowledge components of ethnic identity, but not in their sense of value in preserving ethnic practices and their positive evaluation of their ethnic group. The researchers reasoned that the external aspects of ethnic identity may be more readily renounced as immigrant groups acculturate to the mainstream society; however, the internal aspects are less resistant to change over time. Accordingly, both acculturation and ethnic identity can be seen as relatively independent phenomena that are experienced by ethnic minorities.

**Ethnic identity and acculturative stress.** Cultural adjustment difficulties of Asian Americans, especially first generation immigrants, have been mainly studied within an acculturation framework (Roysircai-Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000). However, ethnic identity studies on later generation ethnic minorities have been focused on specific sources of acculturative stress associated with ethnic identity formation such as cultural alienation, cultural confusion, cultural conflict, and bicultural identity conflict (Kwan & Sodowsky, 1997; Sodowsky & Lai, 1997).
Kiefer (1974) identified three types of bicultural conflict experienced by later generation Asian Americans: (1) cultural alienation, (2) cultural confusion, and (3) cultural conflict. Cultural alienation is a sense of personal discontinuity that arises across time due to the interruption of cultural patterns. Cultural alienation experienced by Asian Americans is exacerbated by racial and ethnic stereotypes that deter one’s individuality. Cultural confusion results from being faced with a variety of norms and the lack of ability to identify with a specific norm within a certain setting or context. For example, a member of a minority group is conflicted between the norms of the dominant society and his or her own group. Cultural conflict happens when one’s learned values and beliefs are seen as discordant with the larger mainstream society.

Wong (1995) suggests that cultural conflict leads to an identity crisis which further leads to psychological stress. The author implies that the identity crisis happens because even when Asians try to be White identified or fully assimilated with the White culture, they cannot fully get rid of their Asian physical characteristics and their core Asian values. As a result, the marginal person, an individual living “between the margins of two different cultural traditions,” is created (Sue & Sue, 1990, p. 202). Bicultural conflict involves two dimensions: the interpersonal and the intrapersonal (Sodowsky & Lai, 1997). The interpersonal dimension refers to cultural conflicts with one’s own ethnic group and/or with members of the dominant culture, and the intrapersonal dimension refers to the identity crisis. Additionally, extreme bicultural conflict makes the individual susceptible to experiences of bicultural stress, exhibited by feelings of emotional turmoil and alienation (Sue & Sue, 1990), depression (Draguns, 1996), and anxiety (Sue, 1996).

Roysircai-Sodowsky and Meaestas (2000) described the interplay between acculturation and ethnic identity as a “push-and-pull phenomenon” (p. 134) such that an individual from a minority group might feel pushed to become acculturated into the dominant group within a
society and pulled by the influence of the ethnic group. Rudmin (2003) argued that bicultural individuals, those who identify with both the heritage and the host culture, are also subjected to higher levels of pressure from both the heritage and host cultures. Therefore, stressors connected to the pushes and pulls of acculturation might even be experienced by bicultural individuals. In this push-and-pull phenomenon, ethnic identity can act as a buffer against acculturative stress, meaning that one’s sense of belongingness to an ethnic group can be protective against the side effects of the process of acculturation (Roysirci-Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000). Thus, the present study hypothesized that those who experienced higher levels of acculturative stress will display higher levels of ethnic identity.

**Ethnic identity and victimization.** The results are mixed as to the relationship between experiencing ethnic victimization and its influence on identification with one’s ethnic group. Few studies have explored the relationship between experiencing ethnic victimization and attachment towards one’s own ethnic group. In a study conducted by Verkuyten (2002) among Dutch and Turkish early adolescents in the Netherlands, a significant negative association was found between experiencing ethnic victimization and the evaluation of one’s own ethnic group. Turkish students who encountered more ethnic victimization held a less positive attitude toward peers of their own group. The results indicated that the devaluation communicated in name-calling and social exclusion (the most frequent forms of ethnic victimization reported by students) because of their ethnic group membership leads to a distancing from one’s own ethnic group. Therefore, it is possible that ethnic minority students who are victimized might not even turn to their own ethnic group for identification and support. The evaluation of one’s own ethnic group may also be affected, depending on if the students were victimized by students from their own ethnic group or other ethnic groups.
However, the rejection-identification model proposed by Schmitt and Branscombe (2002) indicates that perceived discrimination can result in a stronger orientation and identification with one’s ethnic group. The model implies that the psychological functioning of minority group members can be harmed as result of experiencing discrimination. Thus, in response to discrimination, minority group members progressively identify with their ethnic group in order to lessen some of these detrimental consequences.

When threats are made to a person’s ingroup, they are motivated to identify with their own group (Turner, Hogg, Turner, & Smith, 1984). Responding to the threat by identifying with their own group tends to offer psychological benefits to counter the harm. According to Schmitt and Branscombe (2002), minority group identification is associated with less depression, more positive self-esteem, and other measures of psychological adjustment. Ethnic identification with one’s own group can act as a psychological buffer against discriminatory threats. In accordance with the rejection-identification model, the present study hypotheses that students who experience ethnic victimization are more likely to identity with their own ethnic group.

Conclusions

Research with immigrant students suggests that they can be victimized in schools due to their perceived differences. However, little is known about the peer experiences of Asian American students, especially South Asian American students in schools. Similar to other immigrant groups, South Asian students might experience peer victimization at school which can have a detrimental impact on their psychological well-being. Students who are less acculturated to the mainstream culture, evident through their way of dressing, knowledge of American culture, traditions, and customs, accent, socialization practices, and students who have limited fluency in English might be at a higher risk for victimization.
Ethnic background, generational status, religion, gender, SES and the school context are all important factors that relate to the experiences of victimization. Experiencing victimization as an immigrant student can lead to acculturative stress, which in turn can have an impact on psychological well-being. These students are likely to display poorer psychological well-being than those students who were not victimized. Victimized students are likely to have felt more pressure to assimilate to the American culture as a result of the bullying. Asian American students who are less likely to utilize family support might experience a higher degree of acculturative stress. Ethnic victimization experiences may relate to ethnic identity in that it can cause a stronger orientation and identification with one’s own ethnic group.

**Rationale for the Current Study**

Bullying can be a traumatizing experience for a student that can have a lasting impact. Students are frequently bullied in schools because they are different in some manner. It may be because of physical appearance, way of dressing, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. They can be bullied physically or verbally, directly or indirectly, in person or online. Most of the research on peer victimization experiences among ethnic minority students has been conducted with African American and Hispanic American populations. The studies conducted among Asian Americans have used primarily Chinese or Korean American students. However, little is known about victimization experiences among other Asian groups, including South Asians. Therefore, the current study utilizes a South Asian sample to explore their peer victimization experiences.

Research has suggested that Asian students are frequently harassed, teased, and bullied by their non-Asian peers (Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006; Louie, 2004; Rivas-Drake et al., 2008). Even though it is known that Asian students are bullied in schools, there is not a clear understanding of why they are bullied. The current study investigates the factors that might play a role in peer
victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students.

The level of acculturation is affected by the immigrants’ attitude towards acculturation, age, length of residence in the host country, level of education, social support, fluency in the English language, and gender (Choi & Thomas, 2009). However, inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between acculturation level and victimization experiences have been reported. Recent immigrant or first generation immigrant students are more likely to display lower acculturation levels than second generation immigrant students (Sodowsky et al., 1991). Research among other immigrant groups have suggested that first generation immigrant students are more likely to be bullied than second generation immigrant students (McKenney et al., 2006; Peguero, 2009). Examining the level of acculturation may help to understand the higher rates of bullying in first generation immigrant students. Additionally, being bullied might heighten the acculturative stress that immigrants experience as they attempt to assimilate into the mainstream culture. Students who are bullied might feel pressure to acculturate to the mainstream culture in order to escape victimization and reduce stress.

Language fluency is another factor that can play a role in the victimization experiences of immigrant students. Students who have problems communicating in the English language might be teased and harassed more than students who are fluent in the language (Yu et al., 2003). They can be ridiculed for not speaking English well, not understanding others correctly, wrong pronunciation of words, and accents. In addition to personal victimization experiences, immigrant students can also experience ethnic victimization (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2001). Asian students can be bullied through racial taunts and slurs due to their ethnic background. These taunts and slurs can also occur due to the student’s religious background (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000). Furthermore, the way an immigrant dresses which can signify their religion, for example,
a burqa or turban, might make them more prone to victimization (Hassouneh & Kulwicki, 2007).

In school, Asian Americans are often seen as a “model minority” because of their academic and occupational successes (Lorenzo et al., 2000). However, this “model minority” stereotype can lead other students to bully Asian students because of their academic achievements and the favorable attention they receive from teachers (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). Additionally, context is an important factor to consider while investigating peer victimization experiences at school. Asian American students have indicated they are bullied regardless of their ethnic majority or minority status at school (Mouttappa et al., 2004). However, it is possible that students who are the numerical minority at a school are more likely to be victims of bullying, especially ethnic bullying.

The victimization experiences of immigrant students can also vary depending on the gender. Some studies have suggested that females are more likely to experience relational bullying, whereas males are more likely to experience physical bullying (Ostrov et al., 2004; Seals & Young, 2003). SES can also impact the acculturation level of immigrant students, which in turn can influence victimization experiences. For example, those students who live in low income backgrounds might dress in a way that does not fit in with the “in” crowds at school, placing them at risk for victimization (Mendez et al., 2012).

These socio-demographic factors (i.e., level of acculturation, generational status, language fluency, ethnic background, school context, religion, gender, and SES), which have been addressed among other ethnic minority groups, were further examined to investigate their influence on South Asian immigrant students’ peer victimization experiences in this study.

Being a victim of bullying can have long-term consequences. Victimization of bullying often results in long-term social, emotional, and psychological effects (Parker & Asher, 1987;
Sharp, 1995). Olweus (1993b) reported that boys who were victims of bullying at school between ages 13 and 16 were more likely to show depressive tendencies and continued to have poor self-esteem at age 23. Jantzer, Hoover, and Narloch (2006) found that rates of reported victimization at school were positively correlated with adult levels of shyness and were negatively correlated with present friendship quality and trust. In Schafer et al.’s (2004) retrospective study of adults and past peer victimization experiences, victims scored lower on general self-esteem and higher on emotional loneliness, and reported more difficulties in sustaining friendships, than non-victims. Additionally, victims had a lower self-esteem in relation to the opposite sex and more often displayed fearful attachment.

These consequences of bullying have not been thoroughly investigated among immigrant populations. Additionally, psychological maladjustment as a result of ethnic victimization has not been well examined among Asian American populations. For immigrant students, lower levels of acculturation and the stressors associated with acculturation can impact psychological functioning as well (Hovey et al., 2006).

For immigrant students, family plays an important role in dealing with the stress resulting from the challenges of the acculturation process and victimization experiences. The differences in acculturation style of parents and children can lead to Asian American students utilizing less family support as they face these challenges. Higher levels of conflicts have been reported in families where parents had a separated or marginalized style of acculturation than those parents who had an integrated or assimilated acculturation style (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002).

Ethnic identity has been identified as a strong buffer for immigrant students facing negative circumstances (Turner et al., 1984). Few studies have investigated the relationship between experiencing ethnic victimization and attachment toward one’s own ethnic group. The
model developed by Schmitt and Branscombe (2002) suggests that perceived discrimination can lead to a stronger orientation and identification with one’s ethnic group.

In order to address the significant lack of studies on peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students, the current study examines their experiences as high school students in the U.S. The overview of the study variables and their relationships being investigated is presented in Figure 1.

*Figure 1. Overview of the study variables and their relationships in the current study.*

The socio-demographic factors influencing victimization such as level of acculturation, generational status, language fluency, ethnic background, school context, religion, gender, and SES were investigated. Acculturative stress and the pressure to acculturate due to victimization experiences are also examined. Furthermore, the study investigated the relationship between past peer victimization and current psychological well-being as college students. The role of family support in dealing with victimization experiences was studied. Finally, the relationship between peer victimization experiences and ethnic identity, an understudied topic, was investigated.

The current study used self-report retrospective assessment to gain knowledge about the past peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students in high school to better
understand the lingering influences of these experiences on their current psychological well-
being and ethnic identity in college. Although such retrospective studies do rely on self-reports 
of former victims, they can provide a unique account of how young adults view the whole of 
their school experience (Schafer et al., 2004). The cultural and psychological changes associated 
with acculturation come about through a long-term process (Berry, 2005) and as a result, the 
pressure to acculturate and acculturative stress might not be immediately observed. By using the 
retrospective method to understand the whole of immigrant students’ school experience, the 
study can examine the contribution of peer victimization experiences to the process of feeling the 
pressure to acculturate and experiencing acculturative stress.

The impact of past peer victimization experiences on current psychological well-being 
can also be assessed to observe long-term outcomes of being bullied. Additionally, the formation 
of ethnic identity is also a process which happens over time (Phinney, 1990) and the effects of 
peer victimization experiences on ethnic identity might not be immediately seen. Therefore, the 
retrospective method can be used to examine the relationship between past peer victimization 
experiences, especially ethnic victimization, and present ethnic identity.

Research in the field of bullying behavior in schools has also relied heavily upon 
retrospective self-reports (often requiring children to reflect upon their experiences across a 
particular time scale, ranging from one school term to one academic year) (Rivers, 2001). The 
lack of reliability of autobiographical reports has been overestimated and when reporting facts 
from childhood, most adults are reasonably accurate and stable in their recollections. Reports 
were especially likely to be reliable for highly salient and emotionally charged events, such as 
experiences of victimization (Brewin, Andrews, & Gotlib, 1993; Rivers, 2001). Brewin et al., 
(1993) indicate that experiences of peer victimization are particularly prominent and easily
remembered because they are unique and unexpected, emotion-provoking episodes that are of great personal consequence to the victim.

Olewus (1993a) found that former victims were accurate in their estimates of the severity of such behavior up to seven years later. Olweus found that participants’ retrospective self-reports of bullying at age 23 (N = 71) and actual victim/non-victim status at age 16 (Grade 9) correlated significantly ($r = .42$). Furthermore, when their self-reports at age 23 were compared with peer nomination data gathered in Grade 9, in which students were asked to identify peers who had been victims of bullying, the coefficient rose to .58, suggesting that accuracy of recall for these particular types of negative events was not affected by the passage of time.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the socio-demographic factors that influence the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students?

2. Do first and second generation South Asian immigrant students experience peer victimization and ethnic victimization differently?

3. Does acculturation relate to the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students?

4. Does peer victimization relate to acculturative stress experienced by South Asian immigrant students and in the pressure to acculturate to the mainstream culture?

5. Do South Asian immigrant students utilize family support while facing peer victimization experiences?

6. Does peer victimization relate to psychological well-being in South Asian immigrant students?

7. Does peer victimization relate to ethnic identity in South Asian immigrant students?
Research Hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1 - South Asian students’ language fluency, religion, gender, previous SES, and school context, influenced their peer victimization experiences in high school.
- Hypothesis 2 - First generation students will be more likely to report experiencing peer victimization and ethnic victimization than second generation students in high school.
- Hypothesis 3 - South Asian students with lower levels of acculturation to the American mainstream culture in high school were more likely to have experienced peer victimization.
- Hypothesis 4 - South Asian students who experienced peer victimization are more likely to have felt the pressure to acculturate into the mainstream American culture.
- Hypothesis 5 - South Asian students who experienced peer victimization were more likely to have experienced higher levels of acculturative stress.
- Hypothesis 6 - South Asian students who experienced peer victimization in high school are not likely to have utilized family support.
- Hypothesis 7 - South Asian students who have experienced peer victimization in high school are more likely to display lower levels of current psychological well-being.
- Hypothesis 8 - South Asian students who have experienced peer victimization, especially ethnic victimization, in high school are likely to identify with their own ethnic group rather than the mainstream American identity.
Chapter III

Method

This chapter describes the methodology of this study that examined whether peer victimization experiences of South Asian college students in high school are associated with their psychological well-being and ethnic identity in college. This chapter begins with a description of the participants. This is followed by a description of the instruments that were used and the procedures for conducting the study.

Participants

College students who are first generation (students who were born outside the U.S.) or second generation (students who have at least one parent that were born outside the U.S.) immigrants from South Asia, including individuals with ancestral roots in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, and those who attended high school in the United States were recruited to participate in this study. A total number of 220 college students participated in the study. Demographic variables for the participants are presented in Table 1.

The average age of the sample in the study was 22.54, SD = 3.34, with a range of 18 to 31 years. There were 81 males (36.8%) and 136 females (61.8%) in the study; 3 participants (1.4%) did not indicate their gender. In regards to generational status, 52.3% (n = 115) of the sample was first generation and 47.7% (n = 105) was second generation. Most of the participants born outside of the U.S. were born in India (n = 67, 30.5%), followed by Bangladesh (n = 17, 7.7%), Pakistan (n = 11, 5.0%), Sri Lanka (n = 1, 0.5%), Afghanistan (n = 1, 0.5%), and Nepal (n =1, 0.5%). The rest of the participants indicated USA (n = 105, 47.7%) and other (n = 17; 7.7%) as their country of birth which included countries such as the United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Fiji, Canada, and Thailand.
Table 1

*Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Sample*

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<td>Jain</td>
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<td>First Generation: Age of arrival in the U.S.</td>
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<td>Mean = 8.57, SD = 5.45</td>
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<td>8 months – 3 years old</td>
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<td>29.6</td>
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<td>4 – 7 years old</td>
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<td>Pre-K – 1st grade</td>
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<td>2nd grade – 5th grade</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th grade – 8th grade</td>
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<td>9th grade – 12th grade</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>Missing</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
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<td>First Generation: Years lived in the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean = 14.70, SD = 5.73</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20 years</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31.3</td>
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<td>21 – 27 years</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.3</td>
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</table>

School Composition

| I was part of the ethnic majority in school.         | 11 | 5.0 |
| I was part of the ethnic minority in school.        | 135| 61.4|
| Neither, my school was very diverse.                 | 65 | 29.5|
| I don’t know/I don’t remember.                      | 9  | 4.1 |

Regarding the religion of the participants, 35.5% (n = 78) of the sample was Hindu, 26.4% (n = 58) was Muslim, 20% (n = 44) was Christian, 11.4% (n = 25) was Sikh, 0.9% (n=2) was Jain and 0.5% (n =1) was Buddhist. A small proportion of the participants reported none (n = 3, 1.4%) and other (n = 6, 2.7%), while three participants (1.4%) did not answer the religion question. For first generation students, the age of arrival in the U.S. ranged from 8 months old to
18 years old, M = 8.57, SD = 5.45, and years lived in the U.S ranged from 1 year to 17 years, M = 14.70, SD = 5.73. Additionally, for the first generation students, 38.3% (n = 44) reported that they were “not at all” exposed to the western culture prior to arriving in the U.S., 43.5% (n = 50) reported that they were “occasionally” exposed, and 18.3% (n = 21) reported that they were “frequently” exposed. In regards to the ethnic composition of high schools the students attended, 11 students (5.0%) were part of the ethnic majority in school, more than half of the students in the sample (n = 135, 61.4%) were part of the ethnic minority in school, 65 students (29.5%) went to a school that was very diverse, and nine students (4.1%) did not know or did not remember the ethnic composition of their school.

**Instruments**

The questionnaire used for this study included eight instruments: (1) a demographic questionnaire; (2) Retrospective Bullying Questionnaire; (3) Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale; (4) Pressure to Acculturate Scale; (5) Social, Attitudinal, Familial and Environmental Acculturative Stress Scale; (6) Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support Family subscale; (7) Short Depression Happiness Scale; (8) and the Multigroup Multiethnic Identity Measure.

**Demographic questionnaire.** A 15-item questionnaire was developed for the present study to request information about each participant’s age, gender, country of birth, and religious affiliation, as well as their parents’ country of birth and socioeconomic status of the family. Additionally, questions about length of residence, country where the participant was previously educated, the age and grade level upon arriving in the U.S., the ethnic composition of schools attended, and language fluency are included (Appendix A).

**Retrospective Bullying Questionnaire (RBQ).** A 22-item adapted version of the
original 44-item RBQ (Schafer et al., 2004) was developed by the researcher to assess the experience of being victimized, ethnic victimization, and perceived reasons for victimization. Since questions about intrusive and recurrent recollections of victimization, suicidal ideation, as well as workplace and college bullying, are not pertinent to the research questions of the study, those questions were omitted from the original version. This 22-item measure was used to assess peer victimization and ethnic victimization experiences from their responses about frequency, intensity, and duration of reported physical, verbal, and indirect bullying. (Appendix B).

The measure begins with a definition of bullying and the first item measures if students are bullied in high school with the choices of “I have never been bullied” or “Yes, I have been bullied.” Four types of victimization (physical, verbal, indirect, another way) and corresponding frequency are measured by 8 items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (constantly). Perceived seriousness for these four types of victimization is measured by 4 items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (I wasn’t bullied) to 5 (extremely serious). Duration of bullying for these four types of victimization is measured by 4 items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (I wasn’t bullied) to 5 (a year or more).

In the original version of RBQ, questions are asked about bullying in elementary school first and then for middle/high school. In the current version of RBQ, participants were asked to respond based on their past experiences while attending high school only.

The original RBQ did not have any questions pertaining to ethnic victimization, therefore, 5 items (18-22) were added to assess ethnic victimization. Participants were asked to report if they were bullied when they first started school as an immigrant, if they think they were bullied because they were a recent immigrant at the time, if they think they were bullied because of their ethnicity/nationality, and if they were bullied by students of the same ethnic group or
students from other ethnic groups. Perceived reasons for bullying were measured using one item consisting of a checklist, and participants can choose multiple responses.

Item scores for 21 items of the RBQ (checklist excluded) were summed up to obtain a total score for past peer victimization experiences in high school, total scores ranging from 24 to 90. Higher scores indicate higher frequency, intensity, and duration of past peer victimization experiences in high school. Item scores for 4 items of the RBQ measuring ethnic victimization were summed up to obtain a total score for ethnic victimization experiences in high school, total scores ranging from 4 to 15. Higher scores indicate experiencing higher levels of ethnic victimization in high school.

The original RBQ has been found to have good test-retest reliability, with $r = .88$ for elementary school victimization and $r = .87$ for middle/high school victimization (Schafer et al., 2004). The pilot study using the 21-item modified RBQ with a sample of 42 immigrant students yielded a good internal consistency reliability alpha of .88. In the current study, a good internal consistency reliability alpha (.87) was obtained for the 21-item RBQ measure. A good internal consistency reliability alpha (.83) was obtained for the 4 items measuring ethnic victimization.

Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AAMAS; Chung, Kim, & Abreu, 2004). AAMAS is a 15-item orthogonal measure that assesses acculturation to three different cultural dimensions: Culture of Origin (AAMAS-CO), Asian American culture (AAMAS-AA), and European American Culture (AAMAS-EA) (Appendix C). Since the AAMAS-AA dimension is not of interest to the current study; it is left out by eliminating option “b” under each item as suggested by the authors of AAMAS (Chung et al., 2004). Within each dimension, there are four specific domains of acculturation being assessed: language, food consumption, cultural knowledge, and cultural identity.
Participants were asked to respond to each item on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not very well) to 6 (very well), representing their view as an immigrant student. The items were reworded to the past tense in order to match the retrospective nature of the current study. There are four items that pertain to language, two items to food consumption, three items to cultural knowledge, and six items to cultural identity.

Items scores were summed up to obtain a total score for each cultural dimension ranging from 15 to 90. Higher AAMAS-EA scale scores indicate higher levels of acculturation to the American culture, and higher AAMAS-CO scale scores indicate higher levels of acculturation to their culture of origin.

Chung, Kim, and Abreu (2004) reported an internal consistency reliability range of .87 to .91 for the AAMAS-CO scale and an internal consistency reliability range of .76 to .81 for the AAMAS-EA scale. For the current study, an internal consistency reliability alpha of .88 was obtained for the AAMAS-CO scale and an internal consistency reliability alpha of .90 was obtained for the AAMAS-EA scale, indicating good reliabilities for these two scales.

**Pressure to Acculturate Scale.** A 7-item scale was developed for the current study to assess the pressure felt by immigrant students to acculturate to the mainstream culture when they experienced bullying. Since there are no scales assessing pressure to acculturate as a result of bullying specifically available in the literature, the items of this scale were developed by the researcher for the pilot study based on items from other scales assessing pressure to acculturate as a result of acculturative stress, such as the Multidimensional Acculturative Stress Scale (Jibeen & Khalid, 2010); Social, Attitudinal, Familial, and Environmental Acculturative Stress Scale (Mena et al., 1987); and Multidimensional Acculturative Stress Inventory (Rodriguez, Myers, Mira, Flores, & Garcia-Hernandez, 2002).
The items measure the pressure to adapt to the American culture (e.g., “I felt the need to adapt to the American culture because of the bullying”), to learn English (e.g., “I felt the need to learn English because of the bullying”), and its impact on bullying (e.g., “I felt that the bullying would stop if I adapted into the American culture”).

Participants were asked to indicate agreement with the statements on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Summary scores range from 7 to 35, with higher scores representing more pressure to acculturate. The pilot study indicated good internal consistency reliability (coefficient alpha = .90) for the scale. The present study obtained an internal consistency reliability alpha of .88 for the 7-item Pressure to Acculturate Scale (Appendix D).

Social, Attitudinal, Familial, and Environmental Acculturative Stress Scale (SAFE; Nho, 2000). The SAFE was originally developed as a 60-item scale by Padilla et al. (1985), and it was later shortened by Mena et al. (1987) to 24 items. It was further shortened to 16 items by Nho (2000) and used to assess Korean American and Korean immigrants’ acculturative stress. The 16-item version of SAFE was used in this study to assess experienced acculturative stress. The items were reworded to the past tense in order to match the retrospective nature of the current study (Appendix E).

SAFE measures acculturative stress in four domains: familial (e.g., “My family members and I had different expectations about my future”), attitudinal (e.g., “It bothered me when I thought of my limited English skills”), social (e.g., “People looked down upon me when I practiced my ethnic customs”) and environmental (“e.g., “I got pressure from others to become a part of the American culture”).

Participants were asked to rate their perception of cultural stress as an immigrant student
on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Summary scores range from 16 to 64, with higher scores indicating higher acculturative stress. Hovey and King (1996) reported an internal consistency reliability of .89 based on the 24-item SAFE scale. For the 16-item version of SAFE, the alpha coefficient of .76 was reported by Nho (2000). For the current study, a good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .88$) was obtained for the 16-item version of SAFE.

**The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support Family subscale (MSPSS; Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988).** MSPSS is a scale that measures perceived support from three sources: family, friends, and significant others. Since the current study focuses on family support, the 4 items from MSPSS Family subscale were used to assess family support in this study. The items were reworded to the past tense in order to match the retrospective nature of the study (e.g., “My family was willing to help me make decisions”) (Appendix F).

Participants were asked about the family support they received in high school. Items are rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*very strongly disagree*) to 7 (*very strongly agree*). Possible total scores range from 4 to 28, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived social support.

The MSPSS has excellent psychometric properties as it demonstrates strong internal reliability, factorial validity, construct validity, and test-retest reliability (Zimet, Powell, Farley, Werkman, & Berkoff, 1990). Zimet et al., (1990) indicated high internal reliability for the MSPSS with a coefficient alpha of .88 for the total scale and a coefficient alpha of .87 for the Family subscale. A test-retest reliability of .85 for the full scale was also obtained. Zimet et al. (1998) established construct validity for the scale by finding an inverse correlation with depression, anxiety, and stress scores.
In studies using South Asian samples (Akhtar et al., 2010; Tonsing, Zimet, & Tse, 2012), the coefficient alphas ranging from .90 to .93 for the total scale and .86 to .91 for the Family subscale have been reported. According to Canty-Mitchell and Zimet (2000), the MSPSS can be used across a wide range of populations that vary on the basis of age, race, socioeconomic status, gender, and/or nationality. For the present study, an internal consistency reliability alpha of .89 was obtained for the 4-item Family subscale of the MSPSS.

The Short Depression-Happiness Scale (SDHS; Joseph, Linley, Harwood, Lewis & McCollam, 2004). The 6-item short version of Depression-Happiness Scale (SDHS; Joseph et al., 2004) was used to measure participants’ psychological well-being. There are three items that measure positive indexes of well-being and three items that measure negative thoughts and feelings. Participants were asked to rate their positive and negative feelings during the past month on a 4-point scale, ranging from 0 (never) to 3 (often). The six items are summed to obtain a range of summary scores from 0-18, with higher scores indicating greater well-being.

This measure was chosen because it has been shown to be valid and reliable in studies that included Asian American participants and the items are cross-culturally appropriate (Chae & Foley, 2010; McGreal & Joseph, 1993; Walsh, Joseph, & Lewis, 1995). A number of studies have supported the convergent validity of the original 25-item Depression-Happiness Scale (DHS), reporting positive correlations with positive affect (Lewis, McCollam, & Joseph, 2000), internal locus of control and self-esteem (Cammock, Joseph, & Lewis, 1994), happiness, and life satisfaction (Joseph & Lewis, 1998). The DHS has also been found to be negatively correlated with depression, as measured by the Beck Depression Inventory (Joseph, Lewis, & Olsen, 1996) and the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (Joseph & Lewis, 1998).

The internal consistency reliability, coefficient alpha, for the modified 6-item measure, as
reported by Joseph et al. (2004), ranges from .77 to .92. Chae and Foley (2010) demonstrated adequate internal consistency coefficients, with alphas ranging from .80 to .94 with Chinese American, Korean American, and Japanese American samples. For the present study, an internal consistency reliability alpha of .84 was obtained for the 6-item SDHS (Appendix G).

**Multigroup Multiethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992).** MEIM is a 12-item measure that assesses ethnic identity. Three general aspects of ethnic identity are assessed, including positive ethnic attitudes and sense of belonging, ethnic identity achievement, and ethnic behaviors or practices. These aspects allow the measure to be used across ethnic groups. Subscales include affirmation and belonging, ethnic identity achievement, and ethnic behaviors.

The measure can be thought of as consisting two factors: (1) the exploration factor which is a search for ethnic identity (a developmental and cognitive component), and (2) the commitment factor which is affirmation, belonging, and commitment (an affective component). The exploration factor comprises items dealing with efforts to learn more about one’s group and participation in ethnic cultural practices. The commitment factor comprises items reflecting both a positive affirmation of one’s group and a clear sense of commitment.

Respondents were asked about their feelings or reactions towards their ethnicity or ethnic group. The items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 *(strongly disagree)* to 4 *(strongly agree)*. The overall ethnic identity score is represented by summing the 12 item scores, resulting in a range of scale scores between 12 and 48, with higher scores indicating a stronger sense of identity in their own ethnic group.

Phinney (1992) reported appropriate internal consistency reliability, with coefficient alphas ranging between .74 and .90 for the subscales range for a college sample. MEIM is one of the most widely used ethnic identity measures on culturally diverse samples. It has consistently
shown good reliability, typically with alphas above .80 across a wide range of ethnic groups (Phinney, 1992; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Roberts et al., 1999). For the current study, a high internal consistency reliability alpha of .92 was obtained for the MEIM (Appendix H).

The summary of the measures used in this study and their properties and features is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*List of Instruments for the Current Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Type of Scale</th>
<th>Range of Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RBQ</td>
<td>Past victimization</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5-point Likert scale</td>
<td>24-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnic victimization</td>
<td></td>
<td>Checklist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAMAS (EA and CO)</td>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5-point Likert scale</td>
<td>15-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to Acculturate Scale</td>
<td>Pressure to acculturate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5-point Likert scale</td>
<td>7-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAFE</td>
<td>Acculturative stress</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4-point Likert scale</td>
<td>16-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSPSS-FS</td>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7-point Likert scale</td>
<td>4-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDHS</td>
<td>Psychological well-being</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4-point Likert scale</td>
<td>0-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEIM</td>
<td>Ethnic identity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4-point Likert scale</td>
<td>12-48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Procedures**

The study was conducted based on the procedures and protocols approved by the CUNY IRB. Participants were recruited from colleges in the U.S. through South Asian clubs and organizations, personal contacts, and social media.

I emailed the primary contacts for South Asian clubs and organizations at local college campuses in New York City. The email addresses for South Asian clubs and organizations were found on the college websites. Then, I performed a google search for the universities with high South Asian student populations. I was unable to find anything specific to South Asian students but I did find this list of Colleges with the Highest Percentage of Asian Students
I browsed the college websites on the list to find South Asian student organizations, South Asian sororities and fraternities, and South Asian religious organizations on their campuses. Once I found the contact information for the organizations, I sent them a recruitment email message (Appendix I). The email message included the recruitment message and a link to the anonymous survey on SurveyMonkey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SouthAsians).

Email messages were sent to around 50 South Asian student organizations, around 15 South Asian sororities and fraternities and around 20 religious organizations on various college campuses to pass on the survey link to the members of the organization. Email messages were also sent to around 10 South Asian community organizations which were found through a Google search.

The organizations included Indian Students Association, Pakistani Students Association, Bangladeshi Students Association, Sri Lankan Students Association, Nepalese Students Association, South Asian Students Association, Desi Students Association, Hindu Students Association, Muslim Students Association, South Asian Youth Action (SAYA), South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) and South Asian fraternities and sororities.

Additionally, personal contacts were emailed, which included faculty and staff, to pass on the link to their students. The recruitment message and the link (Appendix J) were also posted on Facebook and LinkedIn on my page, friends’ pages, and on pages for South Asian student and community organizations. Flyers (Appendix K) were also handed out to South Asian organizations and placed on their bulletin boards at Hunter College CUNY after obtaining institutional permission. The link for the survey in the recruitment email, post, and flyer directed
the participants to the questionnaire. A page break was inserted before the questionnaire and by clicking the *continue* button after reading the informed consent page (Appendix L), participants gave their informed consent.

After clicking the *continue* button, the first page had four qualifying questions for the participation criteria which were: (1) Age (you can only participate in the study if you are 18 or older); (2) Are you a first generation or second generation immigrant? (3) Are you South Asian? (4) Did you attend at least some high school in the United States? If the participants answered with a number higher or equal to 18 for the age and if they answered yes to the other three questions, they could continue to the next page and complete the survey. If any of the criteria was not met, participants were taken to the disqualification page.

If participants met the criteria, they were asked to complete a questionnaire that includes eight instruments (Table 3): a demographic questionnaire (Appendix A), RBQ (Appendix B), AAMAS (Appendix C), Pressure to Acculturate Scale (Appendix D), SAFE (Appendix E), Family subscale of MSPSS (Appendix F), SDHS (Appendix G), and MEIM (Appendix H). The measures were administered online to the participants using SurveyMonkey if they met the criteria for participation in the study.

Participants did not have to provide any identifying information for the survey. The survey took 20-25 minutes to complete. Participants did not receive any incentives for participation. At the end of the survey, participants were asked to contact the researcher for a referral to a counselor if they experienced any unmanageable psychological distress as result of answering the survey questions about victimization.

There was a total of 350 participants who agreed to the informed consent and started the survey. Of these 350 potential participants, 46 were disqualified because they did not meet the
criteria for the study and 84 were excluded because they did not complete the whole survey. This resulted in a total of 220 participants. This sample of 220 participants was used to conduct all statistical analyses.
Chapter IV

Results

The focus of this chapter is to present the statistical results of the study. Descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, analyses of variance, multiple analysis of variance, correlational analyses, multiple regressions, and hierarchical regressions were used to test the different research questions and hypotheses. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

This chapter begins with descriptive information about the continuous main variables. The results of preliminary analyses that explored the relationships between demographic factors (i.e., gender, country of birth, religion, socioeconomic status) and the main variables of this study (i.e., peer victimization, ethnic victimization, acculturation, acculturative stress, pressure to acculturate, family support, psychological well-being, and ethnic identity) are then presented.

Frequencies and percentage summaries of types of peer victimization and perceived reasons for victimization are presented next. Chi-square test results for relationships between types of bullying and demographic factors are presented next. This is followed by the results of the ANOVA, correlation analyses, multiple linear regression analyses, and hierarchical linear regression analyses.

Descriptive statistics and Intercorrelations among Main Study Variables

Descriptive information, means, standard deviations, and ranges for the continuous main variables used in this study is presented in Table 3.
Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Main Variables of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>33.96</td>
<td>13.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Victimization</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.47</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (American)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>65.99</td>
<td>13.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (Asian)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>69.23</td>
<td>12.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to Acculturate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17.16</td>
<td>7.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturative Stress</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>40.85</td>
<td>8.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Well-being</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.83</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>37.35</td>
<td>6.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Maximum possible ranges of total scores – Peer Victimization: 24 to 90; Ethnic Victimization: 4 to 15; Acculturation (American): 15 to 90; Acculturation (Asian): 15 to 90; Pressure to Acculturate: 7 to 35; Acculturative Stress: 16 to 64; Family Support: 4 to 28; Psychological Well-Being: 0 to 18; Ethnic Identity: 12 to 48

Higher scores on the retrospective peer victimization measure indicated experiencing higher levels of victimization by peers. Ethnic victimization refers to instances where individuals are victimized due to their ethnic background. Higher scores on the ethnic victimization variable indicated experiencing higher levels of ethnic victimization by peers.

Higher scores on the scales of the acculturation measure, American and Asian, indicate higher levels of acculturation to the American culture and to the culture of origin (Asian culture) respectively. Higher scores on the pressure to acculturate measure indicated experiencing more pressure to acculturate as a result of the victimization.

Higher scores on the acculturative stress measure indicated experiencing more acculturative stress as an immigrant student. Higher scores on the family support measure indicated higher levels of support from family members.
Higher scores on the psychological well-being measure indicated being happier. Higher scores on the ethnic identity measure indicated a stronger sense of ethnic identity in their own ethnic group.

Table 4 presents Pearson’s correlations between all of the major continuous variables in the study which are peer victimization, ethnic victimization, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, acculturative stress, family support, psychological well-being, and ethnic identity.

Table 4

Intercorrelations among Main Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Var</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.526***</td>
<td>-.213**</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.329***</td>
<td>.414***</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>-.239***</td>
<td>.975***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.391***</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.487***</td>
<td>.436***</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>-.148*</td>
<td>.636***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.406***</td>
<td>-.321***</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>.180**</td>
<td>-.263***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.237***</td>
<td>.248***</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>-.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.511***</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>-.130</td>
<td>.386***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>-.404***</td>
<td>.452***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.226**</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.235***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Peer victimization scores were positively correlated with ethnic victimization, $r = .526, p < .001$, pressure to acculturate, $r = .329, p < .001$, acculturative stress $r = .414, p < .001$, and ethnic identity, $r = .975, p < .001$, and negatively correlated with acculturation (American), $r = -.213, p = .001$, and psychological well-being, $r = -.239, p < .001$. Participants who reported being victimized by peers in high school also reported higher levels of ethnic victimization, higher levels of pressure to acculturate, higher levels of ethnic identity, higher levels of acculturative
stress, low levels of acculturation to the American culture, and low levels of psychological well-being.

Ethnic victimization scores were positively correlated with pressure to acculturate, $r = .487, p < .001$, acculturative stress, $r = .436, p < .001$, and ethnic identity, $r = .636, p < .001$, and negatively correlated with acculturation (American), $r = -.391, p < .001$, and psychological well-being, $r = -.148, p = .028$. Participants who reported higher levels of ethnic victimization in high school also reported higher levels of pressure to acculturate, higher levels of acculturative stress, higher levels of ethnic identity, lower levels of acculturation to the American culture, and lower levels of psychological well-being.

Pressure to acculturate scale scores were negatively related with acculturation (American) scale scores, $r = -.406, p < .001$. Participants who reported higher levels of acculturation to the American culture reported lower pressure to acculturate to the mainstream American culture.

Acculturative stress scores were positively associated with acculturation (Asian), $r = -.238, p < .001$, and pressure to acculturate, $r = -.507, p < .001$, and negatively associated with acculturation (American) scores, $r = .319, p < .001$. Participants who reported higher levels of acculturative stress reported higher levels of acculturation to their culture of origin, higher levels of pressure to acculturate, and lower levels of acculturation to the American culture.

Family support scores significantly correlated with acculturation (Asian) scores $r = .248, p < .001$. Participants who reported higher levels of acculturation to their culture of origin reported higher levels of support from their family members.

Psychological well-being was positively associated with acculturation (American), $r = .180, p = .007$, and family support, $r = .226, p = .001$, and negatively associated with acculturative stress, $r = -.404, p < .001$. Participants who reported higher levels of acculturation
to the American culture and higher levels of family support in high school reported higher levels of psychological well-being as college students. Participants who reported higher levels of acculturative stress in high school reported lower levels of psychological well-being as college students.

Ethnic identity was positively correlated with pressure to acculturate, \( r = .386, p < .001 \), and acculturative stress, \( r = .452, p < .001 \), and negatively correlated with acculturation (American), \( r = -.263, p < .001 \), and psychological well-being, \( r = -.235, p < .001 \). Participants who reported higher levels of ethnic identity reported higher levels of pressure to acculturate, higher levels of acculturative stress, lower levels of acculturation to the American culture, and lower levels of psychological well-being.

**Relationship between demographic factors and main variables of the study.**

**Age.** Pearson’s correlations were calculated to examine the relationships between age and the variables of peer victimization, ethnic victimization, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, acculturative stress, family support, psychological well-being and ethnic identity (Table 5).

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PV</th>
<th>EV</th>
<th>A-Am</th>
<th>A-As</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>FS</th>
<th>PW-B</th>
<th>EI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.157*</td>
<td>-.095</td>
<td>-.075</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>-.046</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Results indicated that there was a significant correlation between age and ethnic victimization, \( r = .157, p = .020 \). Older participants reported experiencing higher levels of ethnic victimization.
victimization in high school. There were no significant correlations between age and any of the other main variables of the study.

**Gender.** A MANOVA test (Table 6) was first calculated to examine the relationships between gender and the variables of peer victimization, ethnic victimization, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, acculturative stress, family support, psychological well-being and ethnic identity. The results indicated no significant relationships between gender and scores of these variables.

Table 6

**MANOVA Results of Relationships between Demographic Variables and Main Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Main Variable</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>139.621</td>
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<td>.371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnic Victimization</td>
<td>10.620</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.620</td>
<td>1.507</td>
<td>.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acculturation (American)</td>
<td>32.750</td>
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<td>32.750</td>
<td>0.240</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acculturation (Asian)</td>
<td>64.798</td>
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<td>0.379</td>
<td>.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press. to acculturate</td>
<td>59.871</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>59.871</td>
<td>1.209</td>
<td>.273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Acculturative stress</td>
<td>117.457</td>
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<td>117.457</td>
<td>1.883</td>
<td>.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family support</td>
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<td>.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psych. Well-being</td>
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<td>0.016</td>
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<td>Religion</td>
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<td>10.748</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Acculturation (American)</td>
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<td>50.676</td>
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<td>.918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acculturation (Asian)</td>
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<td>272.997</td>
<td>1.596</td>
<td>.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press. to acculturate</td>
<td>214.269</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.610</td>
<td>0.618</td>
<td>.741</td>
</tr>
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<td>Acculturative stress</td>
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<td>.475</td>
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<td>.500</td>
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<td>1729.269</td>
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<td>1.067</td>
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Table 6 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Main Variable</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country of birth</td>
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<td>22.091</td>
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<td>680.008</td>
<td>4.982</td>
<td>.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>24.410</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>.982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Press. to acculturate</td>
<td>167.174</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.435</td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td>.643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acculturative stress</td>
<td>563.163</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>112.633</td>
<td>1.806</td>
<td>.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>91.752</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.350</td>
<td>0.557</td>
<td>.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psych. Well-being</td>
<td>108.522</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21.704</td>
<td>1.899</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnic identity</td>
<td>897.095</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>179.419</td>
<td>0.775</td>
<td>.569</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Psych. Well-being = Psychological Well-being; Press. to acculturate = Pressure to Acculturate

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

**Religion.** There were no significant relationships found between the participants’ religion and scores of the main variables as indicated by the MANOVA test results (Table 6).

**Current SES.** There were no significant relationships found between participants’ current socioeconomic status (SES) and scores of the main variables as indicated by the MANOVA test results (Table 6).

**Country of birth.** The MANOVA test results (Table 6) indicated a significant relationship between the participants’ country of birth and their scores on ethnic victimization, $F$.
(1, 209) = 3.135, \( p = .016 \), acculturation (American), \( F (1, 209) = 4.982, \ p = .001 \), and pressure to acculturate, \( F (1, 209) = 4.518, \ p = .002 \). There were no significant relationships between the participants’ country of birth and scores of the other main variables. A one-way ANOVA (Table 7) was conducted to further assess the effects of country of birth on the participants’ ethnic victimization experiences, their level of acculturation to the American culture, and the pressure to acculturate in high school.

Table 7

One-Way ANOVA Table of Effects of Country of Birth on Main Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Variable</th>
<th>Sum Of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>( F )</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic victimization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>124.86</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31.21</td>
<td>4.346</td>
<td>.002**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>1544.32</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1669.18</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (American)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>4339.293</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1084.82</td>
<td>8.072</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>28895.88</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>134.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33235.17</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to Acculturate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>1216.45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>932.08</td>
<td>18.408</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>10753.66</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>50.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11970.11</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < .05 \); ** \( p < .01 \); *** \( p < .001 \)

Consistent with the MANOVA results, differences based on country of birth were found on ethnic victimization scores, \( F (4, 215) = 4.346, \ p = .002 \). Specifically, participants born in Pakistan reported higher ethnic victimization experiences, \( M = 8.82, \ SD = 2.75 \), followed by participants born in India, \( M = 8.63, \ SD = 2.81 \), participants born in Bangladesh \( M = 8.53, \ SD = 2.87 \), participants in Other countries, which includes Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Afghanistan, \( M = 8.35, \ SD = 3.28 \), and those born in the USA, \( M = 7.09, \ SD = 2.42 \), reported the least ethnic victimization experiences.

Differences based on country of birth were also found for acculturation to the American culture, \( F (4, 215) = 6.080, \ p < .001 \). Specifically, participants born in USA reported higher
levels of acculturation to the American culture, $M = 73.50$, $SD = 9.33$, followed by participants born in Bangladesh, $M = 66.35$, $SD = 13.40$, participants born in India, $M = 66.12$, $SD = 13.85$, participants in Other countries, which includes Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Afghanistan, $M = 65.90$, $SD = 10.23$, and those born in Pakistan, $M = 57.91$, $SD = 15.28$, reported the least levels of acculturation to the American culture.

On the measure of pressure to acculturate, differences based on country of birth were found, $F(4, 215) = 8.072, p < .001$. Specifically, participants born in Pakistan reported higher levels of pressure to acculturate, $M = 22.00$, $SD = 7.31$, followed by participants born in Bangladesh, $M = 21.82$, $SD = 8.51$, participants in Other countries, including Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Afghanistan, $M = 18.50$, $SD = 6.86$, and participants born in India, $M = 18.16$, $SD = 7.60$. Participants born in the USA, $M = 15.01$, $SD = 6.47$, reported the least levels of pressure to acculturate to the mainstream American culture.

**Peer Victimization Experiences Among South Asian College Students**

*Types of bullying.* One of the main purposes of this study was to investigate the rates of bullying among South Asian immigrant college students as well as the different types of bullying experienced. In examining the rates of bullying, out of 220 participants, $73.6\%$ ($n = 162$) indicated that they had experienced bullying in high school.

The type of bullying is measured by a sub score on the RBQ measuring frequency, intensity, and duration for each of the types of bullying (i.e., physical, verbal, indirect, another way). Higher scores for the types of bullying indicate higher levels of frequency, intensity, and duration of the type of victimization experienced by participants. Descriptive statistics for the types of bullying are presented in Table 8. Participants reported indirect bullying as their highest rate of victimization, $M = 10.10$, $SD = 3.16$, followed by verbal bullying, $M = 9.79$, $SD = 2.91$,
physical bullying, $M = 9.18$, $SD = 2.66$, and then bullied in another way, $M = 6.39$, $SD = 2.68$.

### Table 8

**Descriptive Statistics for Types of Bullying**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Bullying</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9.18</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Bullying</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Bullying</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10.10</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullied in another way</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Maximum possible ranges of total scores – Physical Bullying: 5 to 19; Verbal Bullying: 5 to 19; Indirect Bullying: 5 to 19; Bullied in another way: 4 to 17.*

In order to compare the means of each of the four forms of bullying, paired-samples $t$-tests were conducted (Table 9). There were significant differences between physical and verbal, $t(199) = -4.26, p < .001$; physical and indirect, $t(203) = -4.70, p < .001$; physical and another way, $t(193) = 14.48, p < .001$; verbal and indirect, $t(203) = -4.58, p < .001$; verbal and another way, $t(190) = 18.78, p < .001$; and indirect and another way, $t(196) = 18.77, p < .001$. In general, participants reported experiencing indirect bullying as the most frequent type of victimization and bullied in another way as the least frequent type of victimization.

### Table 9

**Paired Sample $t$-tests Results for Types of Bullying**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PB-VB</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>-4.26</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB-IB</td>
<td>-0.89</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>-4.70</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB-AWB</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>14.48</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VB-IB</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>-4.58</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VB-AWB</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>18.78</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB-AWB</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>18.77</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. PB = Physical Bullying. VB = Verbal Bullying. IB = Indirect Bullying. AWB = Bullied in another way.*

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$
In order to examine the types of bullying specifically, frequencies and percentages were calculated for the items in each type of bullying. Table 10 summarizes the results. For questions about physical bullying, 17.3% (n = 38) reported that they were “hit or punched” and 20.5% (n = 45) reported that they had “been stolen from” in high school. For questions about verbal bullying, 56.8% (n = 125) of the participants indicated that they were “called names” and 16.8% (n = 37) had been verbally “threatened”.

In regards to indirect bullying, 42.3% (n = 93) had lies told about them and 49.1% (n = 108) had been excluded. Forty-three participants (19.5%) reported being bullied in another way in high school. Specifically, the results indicate that “being called names,” “being excluded,” and “having lies told about them” were the most frequent types of peer victimization reported by South Asian students.

Table 10

*Percentage Summaries of Types of Bullying*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Bullying</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Bullying</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit/Punched</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen from</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal Bullying</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called names</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Bullying</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had lies told about you</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullied in another way</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender and types of bullying.** Multiple chi-square tests of independence were performed to examine the relations between gender and types of bullying (Table 11).
Table 11

*Crosstabulations between Gender and Types of Bullying*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Bullying</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit/punched</td>
<td>21 (26.3%)</td>
<td>16 (11.9%)</td>
<td>7.31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.007**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen from</td>
<td>24 (30.0%)</td>
<td>19 (14.4%)</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.006**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called names</td>
<td>50 (61.7%)</td>
<td>73 (54.1%)</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened</td>
<td>19 (24.4%)</td>
<td>17 (13.2%)</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.040*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had lies told about you</td>
<td>33 (41.3%)</td>
<td>58 (43.3%)</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>35 (43.2%)</td>
<td>71 (53.4%)</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullied in another way</td>
<td>19 (23.5%)</td>
<td>23 (18.0%)</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Column percentages are in parenthesis*

* *p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

The chi-square results indicated that there were significant relationships between gender and physical bullying, for both “hit/punched,” χ² (1, N = 80) = 7.31, p = .007, and “stolen from,” χ² (1, N = 80) = 7.50, p = .006. Male participants were more likely to have been hit or punched than female participants. Male participants were more likely to have had items stolen from them than female participants.

For verbal bullying, the relationship between gender and “being called names” was not significant, χ² (1, N = 159) = 1.21, p = .271; however, the relationship between gender and “being threatened” was found to be significant, χ² (1, N = 159) = 4.23, p = .040. Male participants were more likely to have been verbally threatened than female participants.

The relationships between gender and indirect bullying, for both “had lies told about you,” χ² (1, N =197) = 0.09, p = .771, and “excluded,” χ² (1, N = 197) = 2.08, p = .149, were found to be not significant. The relationship was also not found to be significant between gender and “bullied in another way,” χ² (1, N = 42) = 0.93, p = .335.
**Generational status and types of bullying.** Multiple chi-square tests of independence were performed to examine the relations between generational status and types of bullying (Table 12).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Bullying</th>
<th>Generational Status</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit/punched</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>23 (20.4%)</td>
<td>15 (14.3%)</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen from</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>28 (25.5%)</td>
<td>17 (16.2%)</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called names</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>61 (53.5%)</td>
<td>64 (61.0%)</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>22 (20.2%)</td>
<td>15 (14.9%)</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had lies told about you</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>44 (39.3%)</td>
<td>49 (46.7%)</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>59 (52.7%)</td>
<td>49 (46.7%)</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullied in another way</td>
<td></td>
<td>27 (24.8%)</td>
<td>16 (15.7%)</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Column percentages are in parenthesis*

\* \( p < .05 \); \** \( p < .01 \); \*** \( p < .001 \)

The chi-square results indicated that for physical bullying, the relationship between generational status and “hit/punched” was not significant, \( \chi^2 (1, N = 83) = 1.39, p = .238 \); however, the relationship between generational status and “stolen from” was found to be significant, \( \chi^2 (1, N = 83) = 2.79, p = .043 \). First generation participants were more likely to have had items stolen from them than second generation participants.

The relationships between generational status and verbal bullying, for both “being called names,” \( \chi^2 (1, N = 162) = 1.24, p = .266 \), and “threatened,” \( \chi^2 (1, N = 162) = 1.03, p = .311 \), were found to be not significant. The relationships between generational status and indirect bullying, for both “had lies told about you,” \( \chi^2 (1, N = 201) = 1.21, p = .272 \), and “excluded,” \( \chi^2 (1, N = 201) = 0.78, p = .376 \), were also found to be not significant. The relationship was also not found
to be significant between generational status and “bullied in another way,” $\chi^2 (1, N = 43) = 2.68, p = .102$.

**Ethnic group bullying and types of bullying.** Multiple chi-square tests of independence were performed to examine the relations between types of bullying and whom the students were bullied by, students from their own ethnic group, students from other ethnic groups, or students from both their own ethnic group and other ethnic groups (Table 13).

Table 13

*Crosstabulations between Ethnic Group Bullying and Types of Bullying*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Bullying</th>
<th>Bullied by</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Own group</td>
<td>Other groups</td>
<td>Both own and other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit/punched</td>
<td>2 (14.3%)</td>
<td>24 (24.5%)</td>
<td>10 (28.6%)</td>
<td>11.65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.009**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen from</td>
<td>4 (30.8%)</td>
<td>27 (27.8%)</td>
<td>12 (35.3%)</td>
<td>17.59</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called names</td>
<td>11 (73.3%)</td>
<td>72 (72.7%)</td>
<td>29 (82.9%)</td>
<td>64.26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened</td>
<td>3 (21.4%)</td>
<td>22 (23.9%)</td>
<td>9 (26.5%)</td>
<td>10.32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.016*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect bullying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had lies told about you</td>
<td>9 (60.0%)</td>
<td>48 (49.0%)</td>
<td>24 (68.6%)</td>
<td>30.06</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>7 (50.0%)</td>
<td>54 (54.5%)</td>
<td>29 (82.9%)</td>
<td>37.28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullied in another way</td>
<td>3 (20.0%)</td>
<td>26 (26.8%)</td>
<td>11 (31.4%)</td>
<td>15.25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.002**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Column percentages are in parenthesis

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

The chi-square results indicated that for physical bullying, the relationships between physical bullying and ethnic group bullying were significant for both “hit/punched,” $\chi^2 (2, N = 79) = 11.66, p = .009$ and for “stolen from,” $\chi^2 (2, N = 79) = 17.59, p = .001$. Among the three options, participants were most likely to report being hit or punched and to have had items stolen by students from both their own ethnic group and other ethnic groups, followed by students from other ethnic groups, and lastly by students from their own ethnic group.
For verbal bullying and ethnic group bullying, the relationships were found to be significant for both “being called names,” \( \chi^2 (2, \text{N} = 146) = 64.26, p = .000 \), and “threatened,” \( \chi^2 (2, \text{N} = 146) = 10.32, p = .016 \). Among the three options, participants were most likely to report being called names and verbally threatened by students from both their own ethnic group and other ethnic groups, followed by students from other ethnic groups, and lastly by students from their own ethnic group.

For indirect bullying and ethnic group bullying, relationships were found to be significant for ‘had lies told about you’, \( \chi^2 (2, \text{N} = 171) = 30.06, p = .000 \), and ‘being excluded’ \( \chi^2 (2, \text{N} = 171) = 37.28, p = .000 \). Among the three options, participants were most likely to report having lies told about them and being excluded by students from both their own ethnic group and other ethnic groups, followed by students from other ethnic groups, and lastly by students from their own ethnic group.

The relationship between ‘bullied in another way’ and ethnic group bullying was also found to be significant, \( \chi^2 (2, \text{N} = 40) = 15.25, p = .002 \). Among the three options, participants were most likely to report being bullied in another way by students from both their own ethnic group and other ethnic groups, followed by students from other ethnic groups, and lastly by students from their own ethnic group.

**Relationships between Different Types of Bullying and Main Variables**

Pearson correlation tests were conducted to examine the relationships between types of bullying (i.e., physical, verbal, indirect bullying, and bullied in another way) and the main variables of the study (Table 14).
Table 14

**Correlations between Types of Bullying and Main Variables of Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A-Am</th>
<th>A-As</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>FS</th>
<th>PW-B</th>
<th>EI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PB</td>
<td>-.247**</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.344**</td>
<td>.304**</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>-.205**</td>
<td>.772**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VB</td>
<td>-.231**</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.349**</td>
<td>.422**</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>-.195**</td>
<td>.868**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>-.200**</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.244**</td>
<td>.397**</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>-.284**</td>
<td>.802**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWB</td>
<td>-.122</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.261**</td>
<td>.331**</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>-.178**</td>
<td>.710**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

The results indicate that physical bullying was negatively correlated with acculturation (American), $r = -.247$, $p < .001$, and psychological well-being, $r = -.205$, $p = .003$, and positively correlated with pressure to acculturate, $r = .344$, $p < .001$, acculturative stress, $r = .304$, $p < .001$, and ethnic identity, $r = .772$, $p < .001$. Participants who reported higher levels of physical bullying in high school also reported lower levels of acculturation to the American culture in high school, lower levels of current psychological well-being, higher levels of pressure to acculturate and acculturative stress in high school, and higher levels of ethnic identity presently.

Verbal bullying was negatively correlated with acculturation (American), $r = -.231$, $p = .001$, and psychological well-being, $r = -.195$, $p = .005$, and positively correlated with pressure to acculturate, $r = .349$, $p < .001$, acculturative stress, $r = .422$, $p < .001$, and ethnic identity, $r = .868$, $p < .001$. Participants who reported higher levels of verbal bullying in high school also reported lower levels of acculturation to the American culture in high school, lower levels of current psychological well-being, higher levels of pressure to acculturate and acculturative stress in high school, and higher levels of ethnic identity presently.

Indirect bullying was negatively correlated with acculturation (American), $r = -.200$, $p = .003$, and psychological well-being, $r = -.284$, $p < .001$, and positively correlated with pressure to
acculturate, $r = .244, p < .001$, acculturative stress, $r = .397, p < .001$, and ethnic identity, $r = .802, p < .001$. Participants who reported higher levels of indirect bullying in high school also reported lower levels of acculturation to the American culture in high school, lower levels of current psychological well-being, higher levels of pressure to acculturate and acculturative stress in high school, and higher levels of ethnic identity presently.

Bullied in another way was negatively correlated with psychological well-being, $r = - .178, p < .001$, and positively correlated with pressure to acculturate, $r = .261, p < .001$, acculturative stress, $r = .331, p < .001$, and ethnic identity, $r = .710, p < .001$. Participants who reported higher levels of being bullied in another way in high school also reported lower levels of current psychological well-being, higher levels of pressure to acculturate and acculturative stress in high school, and higher levels of ethnic identity presently.

South Asian College Students’ Perceived Reasons for Bullying

The most frequent perceived reasons for bullying reported by participants are: (1) certain stereotypes associated with their culture (39.1%, $n = 86$), (2) their ethnicity or nationality (38.6%, $n = 85$), (3) their cultural beliefs, customs and traditions (37.7%, $n = 83$), (4) their way of dressing (33.6%, $n = 74$), (5) and their skin color (31.4%, $n = 69$). The least frequent perceived reasons indicated by students are: (1) personal hygiene (16.8%, $n = 37$), (2) lack of fluency in English (14.5%, $n = 32$), and (3) their friends (9.1%, $n = 20$). Frequency and percentage summaries for the perceived reasons for being bullied reported by South Asian college students are presented in Table 15.
### Table 15

**Percentage Summaries of Perceived Reasons for Bullying**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural beliefs, customs and traditions</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant status</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ immigrant status</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of fluency in English</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of dressing</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal hygiene</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin color</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious beliefs</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge about American culture and people</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge about American values, customs and traditions</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certain stereotypes associated with my culture</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/nationality</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good grades</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Reasons for bullying measured by a checklist where participants can choose multiple options thus the percentages do not add up to 100.*

The most frequent perceived reasons for bullying reported by first generation participants are: (1) way of dressing ($n = 51$) (2) cultural beliefs, customs, and traditions ($n = 50$) (3) their ethnicity or nationality ($n = 50$) (4) certain stereotypes associated with my culture ($n = 49$) (5) immigrant status ($n = 47$) and (6) lack of knowledge about American culture and people ($n = 40$).

The most frequent perceived reasons for bullying reported by second generation participants are: (1) certain stereotypes associated with my culture ($n = 37$) (2) ethnicity or nationality ($n = 35$) (3) skin color ($n = 35$) (4) cultural beliefs, customs, and traditions ($n = 33$) (5) parents’ immigrant status ($n = 25$) and (6) good grades ($n = 25$). Frequency and percentage summaries for the perceived reasons for being bullied reported by first generation and second generation students are presented in Table 16.
Table 16

Percentage Summaries of Perceived Reasons for Bullying for 1st and 2nd generation students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>1st Generation Frequency (%)</th>
<th>2nd generation Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural beliefs, customs and traditions</td>
<td>50 (60)</td>
<td>33 (39.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant status</td>
<td>47 (87)</td>
<td>7 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ immigrant status</td>
<td>22 (46.8)</td>
<td>25 (53.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>37 (86)</td>
<td>6 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of fluency in English</td>
<td>28 (87.5)</td>
<td>4 (12.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of dressing</td>
<td>51 (68.9)</td>
<td>23 (13.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal hygiene</td>
<td>28 (75.7)</td>
<td>9 (24.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin color</td>
<td>34 (49.3)</td>
<td>35 (50.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious beliefs</td>
<td>32 (57.1)</td>
<td>24 (42.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>17 (85)</td>
<td>3 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge about American culture and people</td>
<td>43 (75.4)</td>
<td>14 (24.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge about American values, customs and traditions</td>
<td>40 (76.9)</td>
<td>12 (23.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certain stereotypes associated with my culture</td>
<td>49 (57)</td>
<td>37 (43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/nationality</td>
<td>50 (58.8)</td>
<td>35 (41.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good grades</td>
<td>35 (58.3)</td>
<td>25 (41.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Reasons for bullying measured by a checklist where participants can choose multiple options thus the percentages do not add up to 100.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

**Socio-demographic factors and peer victimization experiences.** The first research question addressed in this study asks if the socio-demographic factors of language fluency, religion, gender, previous SES, and school context have an influence on the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students.

It was hypothesized that South Asian immigrant students’ language fluency, religion, gender, previous SES, and school context influenced their peer victimization experiences in high school (Hypothesis 1).

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the effects of the socio-demographic factors of language fluency, religion, gender, previous SES, and school context, on
the dependent variable of peer victimization experiences of South Asian college students. The results are presented in Table 17 and 18.

First, Levene's test of equality of error variances of peer victimization experiences on the different groups of each of the independent variables of language fluency, religion, gender, previous SES, and school context were conducted. This is a required assumption of the ANOVA analysis. The results of the Levene’s test showed that the error variances of peer victimization experiences on the different groups of each of the independent variables of language fluency, religion, gender, previous SES, and school context were homogeneous or equal, \( F(189, 16) = 1.04, p = .50 \), since the p-value was greater than the level of significance of 0.05. The ANOVA test can be conducted since the assumption was not violated.

Table 17

**Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances of Peer Victimization Experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

Table 17 shows the ANOVA results of the effects of socio-demographic factors on peer victimization experiences. Based on the ANOVA results, none of the socio-demographic factors of language fluency in English, \( F(9, 189) = 1.70, p = .10 \); language fluency in their native language, \( F(15, 189) = 1.07, p = .39 \); religion, \( F(7, 189) = 1.53, p = .16 \); gender, \( F(1, 189) = 1.40, p = .24 \); previous SES, \( F(5, 189) = .98, p = .43 \); or school context, \( F(3, 189) = .77, p = .52 \), had a significant effect on the peer victimization experiences of South Asian college students in high school. Therefore, the results did not support Hypothesis 1. The peer victimization experiences of South Asian college students were not influenced by language fluency in English, language fluency in their native language, gender, their SES in high school or school context.
Table 18

ANOVA Results of Effects of Socio-Demographic Factors on Peer Victimization Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>8328.51</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>208.21</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>14312.72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14312.72</td>
<td>86.78</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language fluency (English)</td>
<td>2522.76</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>280.31</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language fluency (Native Language)</td>
<td>2648.53</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>176.57</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>1765.71</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>252.24</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>230.90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>230.90</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous SES</td>
<td>804.90</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>160.98</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Composition</td>
<td>378.99</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>126.10</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>27213.42</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>164.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>273950.00</td>
<td>206</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>35541.92</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- R Squared = 0.16 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.05)
- Dependent Variable: Peer Victimization Experiences

**Language fluency and main variables.** Pearson correlations were conducted to examine the relationships between language fluency in English and language fluency in native language and the following variables: ethnic victimization, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, acculturative stress, family support, psychological well-being, and ethnic identity. The results are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19

Correlations between Language Fluency and Main Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PV</th>
<th>EV</th>
<th>A-Am</th>
<th>A-As</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>FS</th>
<th>PW-B</th>
<th>EI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LF-EN</td>
<td>-.098</td>
<td>-.214**</td>
<td>.610***</td>
<td>-.161*</td>
<td>-.335***</td>
<td>-.233**</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.139*</td>
<td>-.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF-NL</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>-.147*</td>
<td>.746***</td>
<td>.192**</td>
<td>.205**</td>
<td>.195**</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>.151*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Results indicated that language fluency in English was negatively correlated to ethnic
victimization, \( r = -.214, p = .001 \), acculturation (Asian), \( r = -.161, p = .017 \), pressure to acculturate, \( r = -.335, p < .001 \), and acculturative stress, \( r = -.233, p = .001 \). Participants who reported higher levels of fluency in English also reported lower levels of ethnic victimization experiences, lower levels of acculturation to the Asian culture, lower levels of pressure to acculturate and lower levels of acculturative stress.

Language fluency in English was positively correlated to acculturation (American), \( r = .610, p < .001 \) and psychological well-being, \( r = .139, p = .039 \). Participants who reported higher levels of fluency in English also reported higher levels of acculturation to the American culture and higher levels of current psychological well-being.

Language fluency in native language was negatively correlated to acculturation (American), \( r = -.147, p = .029 \). Participants who reported higher levels of fluency in their native language also reported lower levels of acculturation to the American culture. Language fluency in native language was positively correlated to acculturation (Asian), \( r = .746, p < .001 \), pressure to acculturate, \( r = .192, p = .004 \), acculturative stress, \( r = .205, p = .002 \), family support, \( r = .195, p = .004 \), and ethnic identity, \( r = .151, p = .026 \). Participants who reported higher levels of fluency in their native language also reported higher levels of acculturation to the Asian culture, higher levels of pressure to acculturate, and higher levels of acculturative stress. They also reported higher levels of receiving family support and stronger levels of ethnic identity in their own ethnic group.

**Generational status and victimization experiences.** The second research question addressed in this study asks if there is a relationship between the generational status of the participants and experiencing peer victimization and ethnic victimization in high school. It was hypothesized that first generation students were more likely to report experiencing peer
victimization and ethnic victimization than second generation students in high school.

In order to investigate Hypothesis 2, one-way ANOVA tests (Table 20) were conducted to compare the peer victimization experiences and ethnic victimization experiences in high school for first generation and second generation immigrant students.

Table 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Variable</th>
<th>Sum Of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peer victimization</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>330.60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>330.60</td>
<td>1.893</td>
<td>.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>38068.03</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>174.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38398.63</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic victimization</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>122.98</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>122.98</td>
<td>17.340</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>1546.19</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>7.09</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1669.18</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acculturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(American)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>3667.49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3667.49</td>
<td>27.040</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>29567.69</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>135.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33235.18</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Asian)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>1532.74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1532.74</td>
<td>8.976</td>
<td>.003**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>37227.25</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>170.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38759.98</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pressure to Acculturate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>932.08</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>932.08</td>
<td>18.408</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>11038.03</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>50.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11970.11</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acculturative Stress</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>766.69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>766.92</td>
<td>11.912</td>
<td>.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>14030.75</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>64.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14797.44</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>.661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>7016.78</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>32.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7023.00</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological Well-being</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>65.89</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65.89</td>
<td>5.634</td>
<td>.018*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>2549.55</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>11.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2615.44</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between</td>
<td>1102.16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1102.16</td>
<td>4.769</td>
<td>.030*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within</td>
<td>50386.22</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>231.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51488.32</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

There was no significant difference in past peer victimization scores for first generation and second generation participants, $F(1, 218) = 1.893, p = .170$. The results show that first
generation South Asian immigrant students, $M = 35.13$, $SD = 15.11$, were not more likely to report experiencing peer victimization than second generation South Asian immigrant students, $M = 32.68$, $SD = 10.77$, in high school.

However, the results indicated that there was a significant difference in the ethnic victimization scores for first generation and second generation students, $F (1, 218) = 17.340, p < .001$. First generation immigrant students, $M = 8.58$, $SD = 2.86$, reported having experienced more victimization due to their ethnic background than second generation immigrant students, $M = 7.09$, $SD = 2.42$, in high school. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. The results indicate that there are differences between first generation and second generation South Asian immigrant students in their ethnic victimization experiences, but not necessarily in their peer victimization experiences.

**Generational Status and the other main variables.** One-way ANOVA tests (Table 20) were conducted to compare acculturation, pressure to acculturate, acculturative stress, psychological well-being, and ethnic identity for first generation and second generation immigrant students.

Generational differences were found for acculturation to the American culture, $F (1, 218) = 27.040, p < .001$. First generation participants, $M = 65.33$, $SD = 13.42$, reported a lower level of acculturation to the American culture than second generation participants, $M = 73.50$, $SD = 9.33$. Generational differences were also found for acculturation to the Asian culture, $F (1, 218) = 8.976, p = .003$. First generation participants, $M = 68.51$, $SD = 14.10$, reported a higher level of acculturation to the Asian culture than second generation participants, $M = 63.23$, $SD = 11.83$.

There was a significant difference in the pressure to acculturate scores for first generation and second generation students, $F (1, 218) = 18.408, p < .001$. First generation students, $M =$
19.13, SD = 7.66, experienced higher levels of pressure to acculturate than second generation students, M = 15.01, SD = 6.47, in high school.

Additionally, there was a significant difference in the acculturative stress scores for first generation and second generation students, F (1,218) = 11.912, p = .001. First generation students, M = 40.96, SD = 8.56, reported more acculturative stress in high school than second generation students, M = 37.21, SD = 7.38.

Differences between first generation and second generation participants were also found on the measure of psychological well-being, F (1,218) = 5.634, p = .018. First generation students, M = 11.30, SD = 3.50, reported lower levels of current psychological well-being than second generation students, M = 12.40, SD = 3.34.

Differences between first generation and second generation participants were also found on the measure for ethnic identity, F (1, 218) = 4.769, p = .030. First generation students, M = 44.35, SD =17.26, reported a higher sense of ethnic identity presently in their own ethnic group than second generation students, M = 39.87, SD = 12.57.

**Peer victimization experiences and other variables.** Pearson correlation tests were conducted to examine the relationships between participants’ peer victimization experiences, measured by past victimization experiences in high school and their acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, acculturative stress, psychological well-being, and ethnic identity. Results are presented in Table 21.
Table 21

*Correlations between Peer Victimization Experiences and Other Main Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A-Am</th>
<th>A-As</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>FS</th>
<th>PW-B</th>
<th>EI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PV</td>
<td>-.213**</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.329***</td>
<td>.414***</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>-.239***</td>
<td>.975***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

**Peer victimization and acculturation.** The third research question addressed in the study asks if participants’ peer victimization experiences was related to their level of acculturation in high school. It was hypothesized that South Asian immigrant students with lower levels of acculturation to the American mainstream culture in high school were more likely to have experienced peer victimization (Hypothesis 3).

The results (Table 21) indicated that there was no significant correlation between participants’ peer victimization experiences and their level of acculturation (Asian) in high school, $r = .031, p = .652$. The peer victimization experiences of South Asian students were negatively correlated with their level of acculturation (American) in high school, $r = -.213, p = .001$. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported by the results. South Asian students who reported lower levels of acculturation to the American culture reported experiencing higher levels of peer victimization in high school.

**Factors influencing acculturation.** Pearson correlation tests (Table 22) were conducted to examine the relationships between factors influencing acculturation which are age upon arrival, years spent in the country, SES, family support measured by the MSPSS-Family Subscale, and the participants’ acculturation, American and Asian.
Table 22

**Correlations between Factors Influencing Acculturation and Acculturation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age-Arrival</th>
<th>Years Spent</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Family Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-AM</td>
<td>-.215*</td>
<td>.211*</td>
<td>.135*</td>
<td>.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-As</td>
<td>.240*</td>
<td>-.332***</td>
<td>-.210**</td>
<td>.248***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. A-Am = Acculturation (American). A-As = Acculturation (Asian).*

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

**Age upon arrival.** Results indicated that there was a significant negative correlation between age upon arrival to the U.S. and acculturation (American), $r = -.215$, $p = .026$. The younger the participants were when arriving in the country, the higher the level of their acculturation to the American culture. There was also a significant positive correlation between age upon arrival to the U.S. and acculturation (Asian), $r = -.240$, $p = .013$. The older the participants were when arriving in the country, the higher the level of their acculturation to the Asian culture.

**Years spent in the country.** Results indicated that there was a significant negative correlation between years spent in the U.S. and acculturation (American), $r = .211$, $p = .018$. The longer participants have spent in the U.S., the higher their level of acculturation to the American culture. There was also a significant negative correlation between years spent in the U.S. and acculturation (Asian), $r = -.332$, $p < .001$. The less years participants have spent in the U.S., the higher their level of acculturation to the Asian culture.

**Socioeconomic status (SES).** Results indicated that the correlation between SES in high school and acculturation (American) was significant, $r = .135$, $p = .049$. The lower the SES, the lower their level of acculturation to the American culture. There was a significant negative correlation between SES in high school and acculturation (Asian), $r = -.210$, $p = .001$. The higher the SES, the lower their level of acculturation to their culture of origin.
**Family support.** Results indicated that the correlation between family support and acculturation (American) was not significant, $r = .075, p = .265$. There was a significant positive correlation between family support and acculturation (Asian), $r = .248, p < .001$. The higher the level of family support participants’ received, the greater the level of acculturation to the Asian culture.

**Peer victimization experiences and pressure to acculturate.** The fourth research question addressed in the study asks if the peer victimization experiences of participants is related to the pressure to acculturate to the mainstream American culture in high school. It was hypothesized that South Asian students who experienced peer victimization are more likely to have felt the pressure to acculturate into the mainstream American culture (Hypothesis 4).

The results of the correlation analysis (Table 21) indicated that the peer victimization experiences of South Asian college students in high school was significantly positively related with the pressure to acculturate to the mainstream American culture, $r = .329, p < .001$. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is supported by the results. South Asian students reported feeling the pressure to acculturate to the mainstream American culture when they experienced peer victimization in high school.

**Peer victimization experiences and acculturative stress.** The fifth research question addressed in the study asks if the participants’ peer victimization experiences are related to acculturative stress. It was hypothesized that South Asian immigrant students who have experienced peer victimization were more likely to have experienced higher levels of acculturative stress (Hypothesis 5).

The results of the correlation analysis (Table 21) showed that that peer victimization experiences of South Asian students in high school was significantly positively related with
acculturative stress, $r = .414, p < .001$. Thus, Hypothesis 5 is supported by the results. South Asian students who reported being victimized by peers in high school also reported higher levels of acculturative stress.

**Peer victimization experiences and family support.** The sixth research question addressed in this study asks if participants’ peer victimization experiences are related to family support. It was hypothesized that South Asian immigrant students who have experienced peer victimization in high school are not likely to have utilized family support (Hypothesis 6).

The results of the correlation analysis (Table 21) indicated that the peer victimization experiences of South Asian students in high school was not significantly related with family support, $r = .060, p = .372$. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was not supported by the results.

**Peer victimization experiences and psychological well-being.** The seventh research question addressed in this study asks if participants’ peer victimization experiences in high school are related to their current psychological well-being. It was hypothesized that South Asian immigrant students who have experienced peer victimization in high school are more likely to display lower levels of current psychological well-being (Hypothesis 7).

The results of the correlation analysis (Table 21) showed that the peer victimization experiences of South Asian students in high school was significantly negatively related with current levels of psychological well-being, $r = -.239, p < .001$. Thus, Hypothesis 7 was supported by the results. South Asian students who reported being victimized by their peers in high school reported lower levels of psychological well-being as college students.

**Peer victimization experiences and ethnic identity.** Table 23 presents the frequencies and percentages of the participants’ self-identification answer to the item, “In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be ______.”
Table 23

*Frequency and Percentage Summaries of Ethnic Group Identification*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian American</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepalese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lankan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asian American</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The eighth research question addressed in this study asks if participants’ peer victimization experiences, especially their ethnic victimization experiences, in high school are related to their current ethnic identity. It was hypothesized that South Asian immigrant students who have experienced peer victimization, especially ethnic victimization, in high school are likely to identify with their own ethnic group rather than the mainstream American identity (Hypothesis 8).

The results of the correlational analysis (Table 21) showed that the peer victimization experiences of South Asian students in high school was significantly positively related with their current ethnic identity, \( r = .975, p < .001 \). South Asian immigrant students who reported experiencing peer victimization in high school retained a strong sense of ethnic identity in their own ethnic group rather than the mainstream American identity, as current college students.
Pearson correlation tests were conducted to examine the relationship between ethnic victimization experiences in high school and current ethnic identity. The results (Table 24) indicated that the ethnic victimization experiences of South Asian students in high school was significantly positively related with their current ethnic identity, $r = .636, p < .001$. South Asian immigrant students who reported experiencing peer victimization because of their ethnic background also reported a strong sense of ethnic identity in their own ethnic group rather than the mainstream American identity, as current college students.

Therefore, Hypothesis 8 was supported by the results. South Asian students who reported experiencing peer victimization and victimization due to their ethnic background in high school identify with their own ethnic group rather than with the mainstream American identity as current college students.

**Ethnic victimization experiences and other variables.** In order to examine the relationships between ethnic victimization experiences of South Asian college students and the following variables: acculturation, pressure to acculturate, acculturative stress, and psychological well-being, Pearson correlation tests were conducted. The results of the correlation tests are summarized in Table 24.

Table 24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A-Am</th>
<th>A-As</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>AS</th>
<th>FS</th>
<th>PW-B</th>
<th>EI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EV</td>
<td>-.391***</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.487***</td>
<td>.436***</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>-.148*</td>
<td>.636***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001
The results of the correlational analysis indicated that ethnic victimization experiences were not significantly correlated with their level of acculturation to the Asian culture in high school, \( r = .010, p = .884 \).

Ethnic victimization experiences were significantly negatively related with their level of acculturation to the American culture in high school, \( r = -.391, p < .001 \). South Asian students who perceived that they were victimized due to their ethnic background displayed lower levels of acculturation to the American culture during high school.

Ethnic victimization experiences were significantly positively related with the pressure to acculturate to the American culture, \( r = .487, p < .001 \). South Asian students who perceived that they were victimized due to their ethnic background felt the pressure to acculturate to the American culture while being victimized during high school.

Ethnic victimization experiences were significantly positively related with acculturative stress, \( r = .436, p < .001 \). South Asian students who perceived that they were victimized due to their ethnic background experienced higher levels of acculturative stress during high school.

Ethnic victimization experiences were not significantly correlated with family support, \( r = -.054, p = .425 \).

Ethnic victimization experiences were significantly negatively related with their current psychological well-being, \( r = -.148, p = .028 \). South Asian students who perceived that they were victimized due to their ethnic background in high school reported lower levels of psychological well-being as current college students.

**Predicting Psychological Well-Being Using Main Variables**

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the significance of the influences of peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation
(American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress on the psychological well-being of South Asian college students. Table 25 summarizes the results of the regression analysis.

Table 25

Regression Results for Predicting Psychological Well-Being Using Main Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>14.23</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>-.096</td>
<td>-1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Victimization</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>-0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (American)</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (Asian)</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.220</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to acculturate</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturative stress</td>
<td>-.211</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>-.493</td>
<td>-6.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. F (6, 213) = 10.347, p < .001, R² = .242, N = 219
*p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

The results of the regression analysis indicated that the peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress variables accounted for 24.2% of the variance (R² = .242) in the prediction of psychological well-being, F (6, 213) = 10.347, p < .001.

In terms of the significance of the individual effects of the predictor variables, the regression results showed that acculturation (Asian), t(213) = 3.39, p < .001, β = .220, significantly predicted the psychological well-being of South Asian students. Participants who reported higher levels of acculturation to the Asian culture were predicted to have higher scores on the psychological well-being scale in college, indicating more happiness.

Additionally, acculturative stress significantly predicted the psychological well-being of South Asian students, t(213) = -6.27, p < .001, β = -.493. Participants who reported higher levels
of acculturative stress in high school were predicted to have lower scores on the psychological well-being scale in college, indicating less happiness.

On the other hand, peer victimization experiences, $t(213) = -1.31, p = .193$, ethnic victimization experiences, $t(213) = -0.90, p = .370$, acculturation (American), $t(213) = 1.10, p = .273$, or pressure to acculturate, $t(213) = 1.36, p = .177$, did not significantly predict the psychological well-being of South Asian students.

**First generation students.** A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the significance of the influences of peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress on the psychological well-being of first generation South Asian students. Table 26 summarizes the results of the regression analysis.

Table 26

*Regression Results for Predicting Psychological Well-Being Using Main Variables for First Generation Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>Std. Error $b$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>14.27</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
<td>.562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Victimization</td>
<td>-.268</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>-2.24</td>
<td>.027*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (American)</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (Asian)</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to acculturate</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturative stress</td>
<td>-.252</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>-6.29</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $F (6, 102) = 9.186, p < .001, R^2 = .351, N = 108$

*p $< .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

For the first generation students, the results of the regression analysis indicated that the peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress variables accounted for
35.1% of the variance ($R^2 = .351$) in the prediction of psychological well-being, $F(6, 102) = 9.186, p < .001$.

In terms of the significance of the individual effects of the predictor variables, the results showed that ethnic victimization experiences, $t(102) = -2.24, p = .027, \beta = -.220$, significantly predicted the psychological well-being of first generation students. First generation students who reported higher levels of ethnic victimization experiences in high school were predicted to have lower scores on the psychological well-being scale in college, indicating less happiness.

Level of acculturation (Asian), $t(102) = 3.55, p = .001, \beta = .283$, significantly predicted the psychological well-being of first generation students. First generation students who reported higher levels of acculturation to the Asian culture in high school were predicted to have higher scores on the psychological well-being scale in college, indicating more happiness.

Additionally, acculturative stress, $t(102) = -6.29, p < .001, \beta = -.618$, significantly predicted the psychological well-being of first generation students. First generation students who reported higher levels of acculturative stress in high school were predicted to have lower scores on the psychological well-being scale in college, indicating less happiness.

On the other hand, peer victimization experiences, $t(102) = -0.58, p = .562$, acculturation (American), $t(102) = -0.64, p = .525$, or pressure to acculturate, $t(102) = -0.20, p = .841$, did not significantly predict the psychological well-being of first generation students.

**Second generation students.** A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the significance of the influences of peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress on the psychological well-being of second generation South Asian students. Table 27 summarizes the results of the regression analysis.
Table 27

Regression Results for Predicting Psychological Well-Being Using Main Variables for Second Generation Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( b )</td>
<td>( \text{Std. Error} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>11.98</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>-.041</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Victimization</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (American)</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (Asian)</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to acculturate</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturative stress</td>
<td>-.144</td>
<td>.050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( F(6, 98) = 2.765, p < .05, R^2 = .145, N = 104 \)

*\( p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 \)

For the second generation students, the results of the regression analysis indicated that the peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress variables accounted for 14.5% of the variance \( (R^2 = .145) \) in the prediction of psychological well-being, \( F(6, 98) = 2.765, p < .05 \).

In terms of the significance of the individual effects of the predictor variables, the results showed that acculturation (Asian), \( t(98) = 2.08, p = .040, \beta = .205 \), significantly predicted the psychological well-being of second generation students. Second generation students who reported higher levels of acculturation to the Asian culture were predicted to have higher scores on the psychological well-being scale in college, indicating more happiness.

Pressure to acculturate, \( t(98) = 2.33, p = .022, \beta = .271 \), significantly predicted the psychological well-being of second generation students. Second generation students who reported higher levels of pressure to acculturate in high school were predicted to have higher scores on the psychological well-being scale in college, indicating more happiness.
Additionally, acculturative stress, \( t(98) = -2.86, p = .005, \beta = -.319 \), significantly predicted the psychological well-being of second generation students. Second generation students who reported higher levels of acculturative stress in high school were predicted to have lower scores on the psychological well-being scale in college, indicating less happiness.

On the other hand, peer victimization experiences, \( t(98) = -1.19, p = .237 \), ethnic victimization experiences, \( t(98) = .04, p = .971 \), or acculturation (American), \( t(98) = -.45, p = .651 \), did not significantly predict the psychological well-being of second generation South Asian students.

**Predicting Ethnic Identity Using Main Variables**

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the significance of the influences of peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress on the psychological well-being of South Asian college students. Table 28 summarizes the results of the regression analysis.

**Table 28**

*Regression Results for Predicting Ethnic Identity Using Main Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( b )</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>-.331</td>
<td>1.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>1.020</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Victimization</td>
<td>.900</td>
<td>.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (American)</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (Asian)</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to acculturate</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturative stress</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( F (6, 213) = 1210.409, p < .001, R^2 = .972, N = 219 \)

*\( p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 \)
The results of the regression analysis indicated that the peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress variables accounted for 97.2% of the variance ($R^2 = .972$) in the prediction of ethnic identity, $F(6, 213) = 1210.409, p < .001$.

In terms of the significance of the individual effects of the predictor variables, the regression results showed that peer victimization experiences, $t(213) = 62.80, p < .001, \beta = .881$, significantly predicted the ethnic identity of South Asian college students. Participants who reported higher levels of peer victimization experiences in high school were predicted to have higher scores on the ethnic identity scale, indicating a stronger sense of identity in their own ethnic group.

Ethnic victimization experiences, $t(213) = 10.59, p < .001, \beta = .162$, significantly predicted the ethnic identity of South Asian college students. Participants who reported higher levels of ethnic victimization experiences in high school were predicted to have higher scores on the ethnic identity scale, indicating a stronger sense of identity in their own ethnic group.

On the other hand, acculturation (American), $t(213) = -0.33, p = .739$, acculturation (Asian), $t(213) = 0.16, p = .877$, pressure to acculturate, $t(213) = 0.76, p = .449$, or acculturative stress, $t(213) = 0.60, p = .548$, did not significantly predict the ethnic identity of South Asian college students.

**First generation students.** A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the significance of the influences of peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress on the psychological well-being of first generation South Asian students. Table 29 summarizes the results of the regression analysis.
Table 29

Multiple Regression for Predicting Ethnic Identity Using Main Variables for First Generation Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.982</td>
<td>2.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>1.026</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Victimization</td>
<td>.887</td>
<td>.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (American)</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (Asian)</td>
<td>-.007</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to acculturate</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturative stress</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \(F(6, 108) = 896.621, p < .001, R^2 = .980, N = 114\)

*\(p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001\)

For first generation students, the results of the regression analysis indicated that the peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress variables accounted for 98.0\% of the variance \((R^2 = .980)\) in the prediction of ethnic identity, \(F(6, 108) = 896.621, p < .001\).

In terms of the significance of the individual effects of the predictor variables, the regression results showed that peer victimization experiences, \(t(108) = 52.97, p < .001, \beta = .898\), significantly predicted the ethnic identity of first generation students. First generation students who reported higher levels of peer victimization experiences in high school were predicted to have higher scores on the ethnic identity scale in college, indicating a stronger sense of identity in their own ethnic group.

Ethnic victimization experiences, \(t(108) = 8.51, p < .001, \beta = .147\), significantly predicted the ethnic identity of first generation students. First generation students who reported higher levels of ethnic victimization experiences in high school were predicted to have higher scores on...
the ethnic identity scale in college, indicating a stronger sense of identity in their own ethnic group.

On the other hand, acculturation (American), \( t(108) = -0.92, p = .361 \), acculturation (Asian), \( t(108) = -0.42, p = .673 \), pressure to acculturate, \( t(108) = 0.47, p = .639 \), or acculturative stress, \( t(108) = -0.02, p = .986 \), did not significantly predict the ethnic identity of first generation students.

**Second generation students.** A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the significance of the influences of peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress on the psychological well-being of second generation South Asian students. Table 30 summarizes the results of the regression analysis.

Table 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-4.938</td>
<td>3.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>1.016</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Victimization</td>
<td>.915</td>
<td>.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (American)</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation (Asian)</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to acculturate</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturative stress</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( b )</td>
<td>( \text{Std. Error} )</td>
<td>( \text{t} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1.42</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td>33.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.870</td>
<td>3.167</td>
<td>6.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.995</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.996</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.997</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( F(6, 98) = 334.668, p < .001, R^2 = .953, N = 104 \)

*\( p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001 \)

For second generation students, the results of the regression analysis indicated that the peer victimization experiences, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation (American), acculturation (Asian), pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress variables accounted for
95.3% of the variance ($R^2 = .953$) in the prediction of ethnic identity, $F(6, 98) = 334.668, p < .001$.

In terms of the significance of the individual effects of the predictor variables, the regression results showed that peer victimization experiences, $t(98) = 33.32, p < .001, \beta = .870$, significantly predicted the ethnic identity of second generation students. Second generation students who reported higher levels of peer victimization experiences in high school were predicted to have higher scores on the ethnic identity scale in college, indicating a stronger sense of identity in their own ethnic group.

Ethnic victimization experiences, $t(98) = 6.10, p < .001, \beta = .176$, significantly predicted the ethnic identity of second generation students. Second generation students who reported higher levels of ethnic victimization experiences in high school were predicted to have higher scores on the ethnic identity scale in college, indicating a stronger sense of identity in their own ethnic group.

On the other hand, acculturation (American), $t(98) = 1.22, p = .227$, acculturation (Asian), $t(98) = 0.20, p = .842$, pressure to acculturate, $t(98) = 0.77, p = .446$, or acculturative stress, $t(98) = 0.66, p = .512$, did not significantly predict the ethnic identity of second generation students.

**Family Support and the Relationship of Peer Victimization and Psychological Well-being**

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine whether family support possibly moderates the relationship between peer victimization experiences in high school and psychological well-being in college for South Asian students.

First, the hierarchical regression determined if peer victimization experiences significantly predicted psychological well-being. Then it was investigated if family support
showed a significant interaction with peer victimization experiences in predicting psychological well-being. For the hierarchical regression model, block one included the individual variable of peer victimization experiences. Block two included the individual variable of family support. Block three included the interaction term of peer victimization experiences and family support.

There was a significant increase in proportion of explained variance in psychological well-being scores when adding the interaction term between peer victimization and family support, $\Delta R^2 = .023$, $F$ Change $(1, 216) = 5.777$, $p = .017$. Thus, family support is a significant moderator of the relationship between peer victimization experiences in high school and psychological well-being in college for South Asian students. Specifically, for those participants who reported higher levels of peer victimization experiences in high school were predicted to have higher scores of psychological well-being in college, indicating more happiness, when they perceived greater family support, $t(216) = 2.40$, $p = .017$, $\beta = .671$.

Peer victimization experiences, $t(218) = -3.63$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.239$, was a significant predictor of psychological well-being. The greater the peer victimization in high school, the lesser the psychological well-being in college, indicating less happiness. Family support, $t(217) = 3.78$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .242$, was a significant predictor of psychological well-being. The greater the family support in high school, the greater the psychological well-being in college, indicating more happiness.

Table 31 shows the hierarchical regression results of whether family support moderates the relationship between peer victimization experiences and psychological well-being for South Asian students.
Table 31

*Hierarchical Regression Results of Family Support and the Relationship between Peer Victimization and Psychological Well-Being*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>13.941</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td>22.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>-.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>11.270</td>
<td>.932</td>
<td>12.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>-.253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>.147</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>6.826</td>
<td>2.066</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>.370</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Victimization X</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Model 1**

*Note.* F (1, 218) = 13.153, p < .001, $R^2 = .057$, $\Delta R^2 = .057$, F Change (1, 218) = 13.153, $p < .001$, N = 219

**Model 2**

*Note.* F (2, 217) = 14.107, p < .001, $R^2 = .115$, $\Delta R^2 = .058$, F Change (1, 217) = 14.260, $p < .001$, N = 219

**Model 3**

*Note.* F (3, 216) = 11.537, p < .001, $R^2 = .138$, $\Delta R^2 = .023$, F Change (1, 216) = 5.777, $p = .017$, N = 219

*p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

**Family Support and the Relationship of Peer Victimization and Ethnic Identity**

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine whether family support possibly moderates the relationship between peer victimization experiences in high school and ethnic identity in college for South Asian students.

First, the hierarchical regression determined if peer victimization experiences significantly predicted ethnic identity. Then investigated if family support showed a significant interaction with peer victimization experiences in predicting ethnic identity. For the hierarchical regression model, block one included the individual variable of peer victimization experiences, with ethnic identity entered as the dependent variable. Block two included the individual variable...
of family support. Block three included the interaction term of peer victimization experiences and family support.

Table 32 shows the hierarchical regression results of whether family support moderates the relationship between peer victimization experiences and ethnic identity.

Table 32

Hierarchical Regression Results of Family Support and the Relationship between Peer Victimization and Ethnic Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>3.881</td>
<td>.639</td>
<td>6.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>1.129</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>9.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>3.869</td>
<td>.983</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>1.129</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>9.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.464</td>
<td>2.193</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Victimization</td>
<td>1.233</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>1.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer Victimization X</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>-1.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model 1
Note. F (1, 218) = 4143.298, p < .001, R² = .950, ∆R² = .950, F Change (1, 218) = 4143.298, p < .001, N = 219

Model 2
Note. F (2, 217) = 2062.149, p < .001, R² = .950, ∆R² = .000, F Change (1, 217) = 0.000, p = .988, N = 219

Model 3
Note. F (3, 216) = 1388.518, p < .001, R² = .951, ∆R² = .001, F Change (1, 216) = 3.012, p = .084, N = 219

*p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Results showed no significant increase in proportion of explained variance in ethnic identity when adding the interaction term between peer victimization experiences and family support, ∆R² = .001, F Change (1, 216) = 3.012, p = .084. Thus, family support is not a
significant moderator of the relationship between peer victimization experiences in high school and ethnic identity in college for South Asian students.

Although family support was not a significant moderator, peer victimization experiences was a significant predictor of ethnic identity, $t(218) = 64.37, p < .001, \beta = .975$. The higher the peer victimization experiences in high school, the higher the level of ethnic identity in college for South Asian immigrant students, indicating a stronger sense of identity in their own ethnic group. Family support was not a significant predictor of ethnic identity $t(217) = .02, p = .988, \beta = .000$. 
Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter begins with a summary of findings obtained from the statistical analyses in the present study, then the key findings are discussed. It is followed by the educational implications of the findings, limitations of the current study, and directions for future research.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students in high school and its relations to their psychological well-being and ethnic identity in college. The results indicate that there is a high peer victimization rate among South Asian immigrant students. Specifically, indirect bullying and verbal bullying are the most frequent types of victimization experienced by South Asian college students in high school.

Participants who reported higher levels of physical, verbal, and indirect bullying also reported lower levels of acculturation to the American culture, higher levels of pressure to acculturate and acculturative stress in high school, lower levels of psychological well-being and higher levels of ethnic identity currently.

South Asian students were victimized by students from both their own ethnic group and other ethnic groups. The most frequent perceived reasons for being victimized as stated by South Asian students are certain stereotypes associated with their culture, their ethnicity or nationality, their cultural beliefs, customs and traditions, their way of dressing and their skin color.

The results showed that the socio-demographic factors of language fluency, religion, gender, SES in high school, and school composition and the peer victimization experiences of South Asian college students were not significantly correlated to each other. First generation students did not experience more peer victimization than second generation students; however, first generation students did experience more ethnic victimization (i.e., being victimized due to someone’s ethnicity) than second generation students. Additionally, first generation students
experienced higher levels of acculturative stress and higher levels of pressure to acculturate in high school. They also tend to have a higher sense of ethnic identity in their own ethnic group and lower levels of psychological well-being than second generation students.

South Asian students experienced higher levels of peer victimization in high school when they had low levels of acculturation to the American culture. Students experienced higher levels of acculturative stress and felt more pressure to acculturate to the American culture if they were victimized. South Asian students who experienced higher levels of peer victimization in high school have low levels of psychological well-being as college students. Additionally, those who experienced higher levels of peer victimization in high school retained a strong sense of ethnic identity in their own ethnic group as college students.

Results also indicated similar results for ethnic victimization experiences. South Asian students experienced higher levels of ethnic victimization when they had lower levels of acculturation to the American culture. Students experienced higher levels of acculturative stress and felt more pressure to acculturate to the American culture if they were victimized. Higher levels of ethnic victimization in high school was related to lower levels of psychological well-being and a stronger sense of ethnic identity in their own ethnic group as college students.

Results showed that acculturation to the Asian culture and acculturative stress significantly predicted the psychological well-being of South Asian students. For first generation students, ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation to the Asian culture, and acculturative stress significantly predicted their current psychological well-being. For second generation students, acculturation to the Asian culture, pressure to acculturate, and acculturative stress significantly predicted their current psychological well-being.
Peer victimization experiences and ethnic victimization experiences significantly predicted the current ethnic identity of South Asian students. Similar results were found for both first and second generation students. Results indicated that family support moderates the effects of peer victimization experiences on psychological well-being of South Asian college students; while family support did not significantly moderate the effects of peer victimization experiences on ethnic identity of South Asian college students. The summary of main research Hypotheses and findings of the current study are given in Appendix M.

**Peer victimization experiences.** Most of the previous studies conducted on peer victimization and Asian Americans have included primarily Chinese and Korean students or have merged diverse groups under the general rubric of Asian American. Very little is known about the peer victimization experiences of South Asian students in school. There were high levels of peer victimization reported by South Asian students in the present study. Consistent with several studies conducted with Asian Americans (e.g., Green, Way, & Pahl, 2006; Louie, 2004; Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2008, Rosenbloom & Way, 2004) that found Asian Americans were frequently teased, harassed and bullied by non-Asian peers, the present study found similar results for South Asian students.

The present study found that indirect bullying, which included having lies told about them and being excluded, was the most frequent type of bullying experienced by South Asian students. Verbal bullying, which included being called names and being verbally threatened, was the second most frequent type of bullying experienced by South Asian students. Previous studies conducted with other Asian American groups (Fisher et al., 2000; Way, Santos, Niwa, & Kim, 2008) also reported verbal and relational bullying, including name-calling, exclusion from social activities and verbal threats, as the most frequent forms of bullying experienced.
**Socio-demographic factors.** The present study found that none of the socio-demographic factors, such as language fluency, gender, religion, SES in high school, or the ethnic composition of the school, influenced South Asian students’ peer victimization experiences. Previous studies with other immigrant groups (Hanish & Guerra, 2000b, Yu et al., 2003, Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008) have indicated that immigrant students who did not speak English fluently were likely to be victimized more than their English speaking counterparts. In the present study, participants indicated high levels of English fluency in high school which is possibly why language fluency did not play a role in their peer victimization experiences.

Gender was not an influencing factor in the peer victimization experiences of South Asian students in the present study. Males and females displayed equal levels of peer victimization which is consistent with Wang et al.’s (2014) finding that there were no differences in self-reported peer victimization between boys and girls.

However, South Asian males were more likely to experience physical victimization in the present study, both being hit or punched and having items stolen from them, than South Asian females. This finding is consistent with research (Ma, 2002; Mynard & Joseph, 2000; Seals & Young, 2003; Varjas, Henrich, & Meyers, 2009) that indicates boys are more likely to be the victims of physical aggression than girls. Previous studies (Hoover & Oliver, 1996; Varjas et al., 2009) have found that girls are more likely to be victims of verbal aggression than boys. However, in the present study, South Asian male participants were more likely to have been verbally threatened than South Asian female participants. This finding could be potentially explained by Qin, Way, and Rana’s (2008) conclusion that Asian males are targeted because of their physical size and perceived weakness which are perpetuated by racial stereotypes.
In the present study, religion did not influence the peer victimization experiences of South Asian students. It is possible that South Asian students experience victimization by non-South Asian peers regardless of their religion which is what Eslea and Mukhtar (2000) found among South Asian Hindu and Muslim youth in Britain that they were bullied by White students at equivalent levels.

Socio-economic status (SES) did not influence the peer victimization experiences of South Asian students in the present study. Recently immigrated students who lived in low SES backgrounds were bullied more than those who lived in higher SES backgrounds according to Mendez et al. (2012). However, in the present study, majority of the participants reported relatively high levels of annual household income in high school which is possibly why SES did not play a role in their peer victimization experiences.

The ethnic composition of the school not influencing students’ peer victimization experiences is consistent with the findings of Moutttapa et al. (2004) that Asian-American students reported bullying regardless of whether they attended a school where Asian-Americans were an ethnic minority or majority. In terms of academic achievement, 27.3% of participants in the present study thought that they were victimized because of their “good grades”, that is these students perceived that they were negatively treated because they did well academically. The negative treatment by peers is possibly perpetuated by the model minority stereotype that South Asian students are supposed to be smart. This is consistent with the finding of Qin et al., (2008) that Asian American students reported being treated poorly or bullied for “getting good grades” or “being too smart”. Peguero and Williams (2013) also found that high-achieving Asian Americans were more likely to bullied.
The present study did find that participants’ country of birth was related to their ethnic victimization experiences, acculturation to the American culture, and the pressure to acculturate to the mainstream American culture. Participants born in Pakistan reported higher ethnic victimization experiences than those born in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Afghanistan. The least ethnic victimization experiences were reported by participants born in the USA. Previous studies have not examined country of birth in relation to ethnic victimization for South Asian participants. Since Pakistanis are predominantly of the Islamic faith, possible explanations for the higher degree of ethnic victimization experiences of Pakistani students could be religion or clothing related to religion such as a burqa or hijab. As previously reported by Hassouneh and Kulwicki (2007), the wearing of a burqa or hijab increases the risk of victimization among Muslims.

South Asian students were victimized by students from both their own ethnic group and other ethnic groups. This was reported for physical bullying, verbal bullying, and indirect bullying. These findings are consistent with the recent AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander) Bullying Prevention Task Force Report (U.S. Department of Education et al., 2016) which indicated that Asian students were bullied by students from other ethnic groups but also by students from their own ethnic group. According to the report, recently-arrived immigrants were bullied by students from their own ethnic group for “being too Asian” and U.S. born students were bullied by students from their own ethnic group for “not being Asian enough.”

**Perceived reasons for bullying.** South Asian students reported that they thought they were bullied because of cultural stereotypes, ethnicity or nationality, cultural beliefs, customs and traditions, way of dressing, and skin color. First generation immigrant students reported that they thought they were bullied because of their accent, way of dressing, immigrant status (being
called a “fob”), lack of fluency in English, and lack of knowledge about American culture. Qin et al. (2008) found similar results that first-generation Chinese students were bullied because of their accent, immigrant status, and making mistakes while speaking English. Way of dressing, not dressing fashionably or wearing name brands, was also indicated by Mendez et al. (2012) as a reason less acculturated Mexican students were bullied.

Second generation immigrant students in the present study reported that they thought they were bullied because of cultural stereotypes, ethnicity or nationality, skin color, cultural beliefs, customs, and traditions, and parents’ immigrant status. These findings are also consistent with the AAPI Bullying Prevention Task Force Report (U.S. Department of Education et al., 2016) which indicated that Asian American students, including South Asian students, reported they were bullied because of the following reasons: (1) cultural stereotypes, (2) national origin and immigrant generation, (3) religion and religious practices, (4) appearance including physical stature, skin color, facial features, hair, and style of dress, and (5) limited English proficiency and speaking languages other than English.

**Generational status.** First and second generation South Asian students did not differ in their peer victimization experiences in the present study as hypothesized. Contrary to findings about generational status (e.g., Nguy & Hunter, 2004), wherein first generation students experienced more peer victimization than second generation students, both groups experienced similar levels of victimization in the current study. However, the present study did find that first generation students experienced more ethnic victimization in high school than second generation students, which is consistent with the findings of Pepler et al. (2006) among first generation high school students in Canada.
Since the majority observes more cultural distance between themselves and first
generation immigrants (Matea, Stefanile, & Brown, 2011), it may lead to the higher levels of
ethnic victimization reported by first generation students. Additionally, a low level of
acculturation might make first generation students more prone to victimization related to their
ethnic background as indicated by Yang, Noels, and Saumure (2006) and the present study found
that first generation immigrants reported a lower level of acculturation to the American culture
than second generation immigrant students.

**Acculturation.** Consistent with previous research on age upon arrival in the U.S. and
acculturation (Cheung, Chudek, & Heine, 2011; Berry et al., 2006; Phinney, Horenczyk,
Liebkind & Vedder, 2001; Pawliuk et al., 1996), the younger the South Asian participants were
when arriving in the country, the higher the level of acculturation to the American culture
reported in the present study. Additionally, the older the South Asian participants were when
arriving in the country, the higher the level of acculturation to the Asian culture reported.

In the present study, the more years South Asian participants have spent in the U.S.,
higher levels of acculturation to the American culture reported. These findings are consistent
with previous studies which indicated that the more time individuals spent in the U.S., the greater
their degrees of acculturation to the majority group (Dion & Dion, 2001; Sodowsky & Carey,
1987). Furthermore, the less years South Asian participants have spent in the U.S., the higher
level of acculturation to the Asian culture reported.

Higher levels of acculturation to the Asian culture were reported by South Asian
participants in the present study when they indicated receiving higher levels of family support.
This finding is consistent with family support being a protective factor among immigrant youth
in maintaining traditions and practices from their culture of origin (Gibson, 2001). Since a
relationship between acculturation to the American culture and family support was not found in the present study, it might reflect a generational gap in acculturation suggested by Dasgupta (1998) which is characterized by the unwillingness of South Asian parents in America to let their children fully adapt to the American culture. South Asian parents might not want their children to become “too Americanized” but want them to be “Asianized” so they might offer support for acculturation to the Asian culture but not for acculturation to the American culture.

Another factor influencing acculturation in the present study was the participants’ SES in high school. Consistent with previous studies (Choi & Thomas, 2009; Negy and Woods, 1992), finding that students living in low SES backgrounds tend to display lower levels of acculturation, this current study also found that the lower the SES, the lower the level of acculturation to the American culture reported by South Asian participants. In the present study, the higher the SES, the lower the level of acculturation to the Asian culture reported by the participants. South Asian participants living in higher SES backgrounds might be more acculturated to the American culture and less acculturated to the Asian culture because of their educational levels and occupational choices.

Acculturation is highly correlated with generational status (Cuellar et al., 2007). Consistent with previous studies (Bufka, 1998; Velez, 1995), first generation participants reported a lower level of acculturation to the American culture and a higher level of acculturation to the Asian culture than second generation participants in the present study.

The present study found that South Asian participants who were more fluent in English were more acculturated to the American culture. South Asian participants who were more fluent in their native language were less acculturated to the American culture and more acculturated to their culture of origin. These findings support that linguistic acculturation, or the ability to speak
English proficiently, may be an indicator of overall level of cultural acclimation for immigrant students as suggested by Yu et al., (2002).

Previous research has shown inconsistent findings about the relationship between level of acculturation and peer victimization (Bauman & Summers, 2009; Peguero, 2009) among other immigrant groups and it has not been explored among South Asian groups. The current study found that South Asian participants with lower levels of acculturation to the American culture were more likely to be victimized by their peers in high school. Less acculturated students might have been victimized by their peers because they did not “fit in” socially at school. Mendez et al. (2012) found that social isolation, not being able to make friends or being part of social cliques, was one of the reasons less acculturated Mexican students were bullied.

First generation students in the present study indicated that they thought they were bullied because of their accent, immigrant status, lack of fluency in English, and lack of knowledge about American culture. Since these reasons indicate low acculturation to others, it could explain the relationship between acculturation and the higher levels of peer victimization experienced by these students. Studies conducted within ethnic groups among Mexican and Chinese students (Mendez et al., 2012, Qin et al., 2008; Niemann et al., 1999) have indicated that recent immigrant students were teased and harassed by more acculturated students within the same ethnic group for these reasons as well.

Furthermore, South Asian students who perceived that they were victimized due to their ethnicity displayed lower levels of acculturation to the American culture in high school. Similar findings were reported among Canadian immigrant youth (McKenney et al., 2006) that less acculturated youth were more targeted and at the highest risk for ethnic victimization. Since the cultural differences might be more obvious in students that are less acculturated to the
mainstream American culture, the majority might perceive more differences between themselves and these students that could lead to peer victimization and victimization targeted at ethnicity.

**Acculturative stress.** South Asian participants who reported higher levels of peer victimization also reported higher levels of acculturative stress in the present study. Additionally, South Asian participants who reported higher levels of ethnic victimization reported higher levels of acculturative stress. Other studies (Sodowsky & Lai, 1997; Tummala-Narra et al., 2012; Xu & Chi, 2012) have reported that higher levels of perceived discrimination and prejudice can lead to higher levels of acculturative stress for Asian immigrants. The current study extends that finding to peer and ethnic victimization experiences among South Asian immigrant students.

Consistent with the findings of Sodowsky and Lai (1997) that Asian immigrants with low levels of acculturation had higher levels of acculturative stress, participants in the current study also reported higher levels of acculturative stress if they had lower levels of acculturation to the American culture. Participants had higher levels of acculturative stress if they had higher levels of acculturation to the Asian culture as suggested by Baker et al. (2012) that acculturative stress is most pronounced among those who are highly acculturated to their Asian culture of origin due to the lack of integration with the host culture. Since the participants who were less acculturated to the American culture were more likely to be victimized by their peers in high school, these experiences of peer victimization and ethnic victimization might have contributed to the increased levels of acculturative stress reported by these participants.

The present study found that first generation students reported more acculturative stress in high school than second generation students, which is consistent with research previously done with Asian Americans (Abe & Zane, 1990; Mena et al., 1987; Padilla et al., 1985; Sodowsky et al., 1991; Yu, 1984). The lower levels of acculturation reported by first generation
South Asian students might indicate more difficulty for them in adapting to the dominant society; and because of this difficulty, they might experience higher levels of acculturative stress, as suggested by Sodowsky et al. (1991).

Strong relationships have been found for language proficiency and acculturative stress; high English language proficiencies have been shown to be related to low acculturative stress (Oh, Koeske, & Sales, 2002). In consistency with these results, South Asian participants who reported higher levels of fluency in English reported lower levels of acculturative stress in the present study.

Contrary to the previous finding that Asian immigrants’ high levels of native language proficiencies decreased the likelihood of acculturative stress (Lueck & Wilson, 2010), the present study found that South Asian participants who reported higher levels of native language fluency reported higher levels of acculturative stress. It is possible that lower levels of acculturation contribute to this stress since native language fluency was linked to lower levels of acculturation to the American culture in the present study.

**Pressure to acculturate.** Previous research has documented the pressure to assimilate (Duster, 1991; Feagin & Vera, 1995; Thomas, 1991) among ethnic minority students to “blend in” but not because of peer victimization experiences. However, the present study found that South Asian students who reported higher levels of peer victimization also reported higher levels of pressure to acculturate to the mainstream American culture. This was also found for students who reported higher levels of ethnic victimization. Peer victimization, especially due to ethnic background, might have caused the pressure for students to “blend in” to the mainstream American culture to avoid being bullied.
South Asian participants who reported lower levels of acculturation to the American culture reported more pressure to acculturate because of being victimized by their peers. Since students in the present study reported that they were victimized because of their lower levels of acculturation, these students might have felt more pressure to “fit in” with their peers and dress or act “American” to escape the victimization as reported by BRYCS (2010) among refugee and immigrant youth. Accent, way of dressing, being called “fresh off the boat” and lack of knowledge about American culture were given by immigrant students as perceived reasons for being bullied in the present study and students might have found it important to dress or act “American” for these reasons.

Gibson (1998) has reported that first generation immigrant students learn from their peers and teachers that they have to get rid of their “foreign ways” to fit in socially at school. Similarly, first generation South Asian students in the present study were more likely to feel the pressure to acculturate than second generation students. South Asian students with lower levels of fluency in English and higher levels of fluency in their native language felt more pressure to acculturate to the mainstream culture. As reported by Lewis (2000), the expectations that peers might have for immigrant students to speak English because they are “American” could lead to this pressure to acculturate for South Asian students.

South Asian students who reported higher levels of pressure to acculturate also reported higher levels of acculturative stress. Lewis et al. (2000) suggested that the expectations to assimilate causes conflict, which in turn, can cause high levels of stress. The pressure to acculturate to the American culture felt by South Asian students to escape victimization possibly contributed to feeling higher levels of stress associated with the acculturation process.
Family support. Contrary to what was hypothesized, the present study did not find a relationship between peer victimization of South Asian students and family support. Previous research conducted with Asian Americans (Greenberg & Chen, 1996; Kim & Cain, 2008) revealed that Asian American students are less likely to utilize family support in negative circumstances because of the different cultural values between parents and children as well as the lack of understanding about American culture by the parents. It is possible that a relationship was not found in the present study because the family support measure did not specifically assess utilizing family support in relation to peer victimization experiences.

Family support was found to be a moderator between peer victimization experiences and current psychological well-being in the present study. South Asian students who reported being victimized by peers in high school indicated higher levels of current happiness when they perceived higher levels of family support. Previous research indicates that among South Asians in the U.S., positive family communication and family support appear to play a protective role in psychological well-being when coping with experiences of racism and discrimination (Rhee, Chang, & Rhee, 2003; Roy sircar et al., 2010; Tummala-Narra et al., 2012). The present study extends this finding to peer victimization experiences. Family support might protect South Asian students who have experienced peer victimization in high school against future psychological distress. Utilizing family support to cope when faced with peer victimization experiences reflects the collectivistic nature of South Asian cultures which emphasizes interdependence among family members.

Participants in the current study who reported higher levels of acculturation to the South Asian culture reported higher levels of support from their family members. As Jang (2002) indicated, Asian American parents were more likely to encourage their children to follow group
norms, fulfill obligations, obey group authority, and strengthen group harmony which are all characteristics of the collectivistic nature of Asian culture. Therefore, parents might provide higher levels of support to their children if the children display more adherence to the South Asian culture, making them more like their parents.

This sense of similarity between South Asian parents and children could also explain why South Asian students who reported higher levels of language fluency in their native language also reported higher levels of family support in the present study. It is possible that higher levels of support are offered by the parents because they can understand their children better if the children are more acculturated to the South Asian culture, lessening cultural conflicts within the family as well as the acculturation gap between parents and children (Masood et al., 2009).

**Psychological well-being.** Consistent with previous research on the long-term consequences of peer victimization (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Eisenberg & Aalsma, 2005; Newman et al., 2005; Pontzer, 2010; Rigby, 2003), the present study found that South Asian students who reported being victimized by their peers in high school indicated lower levels of psychological well-being as college students. In addition, participants who reported higher levels of ethnic victimization in high school indicated lower levels of psychological well-being as college students. Even though the long-term consequences of being victimized because of one’s ethnic background or cultural identity have not been investigated thoroughly in the literature, the findings from the current study are consistent with some studies that indicate ethnic bullying might be associated with negative maladjustment (McKenney et al., 2006; Pepler et al., 2006; Stevens et al., 2005; Oppedal et al., 2005).

Ethnic victimization experiences were found to predict psychological well-being of first generation students in the present study. First generation students who reported higher levels of
ethnic victimization experiences in high school indicated less happiness in college. Green et al. (2006) indicated that experiences of discrimination and negative appraisals about one’s ethnic group from peers are often internalized in immigrant students’ sense of self and foster feelings of helplessness, frustration, and depressive moods over time. Similarly, the ethnic victimization experiences reported by the South Asian participants in the current study might have fostered feelings of depression over time.

First generation participants reported lower levels of current psychological well-being than second generation students in the present study. First generation students might report less happiness in college since they are likely to experience more acculturative stress and more pressure to acculturate than second generation students. A review of studies by Royisircai-Sodowsky & Maestas (2000) indicated that first generation Asian Americans tend to report greater psychological problems and greater stress than second generation Asian Americans.

Participants who reported higher levels of acculturation to the American culture also reported higher levels of psychological well-being. Higher levels of acculturation to the American culture, feeling accepted by the dominant society, and lower levels of perceived prejudice have been linked to better mental health for Asian-Indian immigrants (Mehta, 1998). Since participants who were more acculturated to the American culture experienced less peer victimization and ethnic victimization in high school in the present study, this could be a reason why they had higher levels of psychological well-being as college students.

For second generation students, the pressure to acculturate to the American culture in high school predicted their psychological well-being in college in the present study. Students who reported feeling more pressure to acculturate in high school reported more happiness presently. For these second generation students, acculturation to the American culture means
more acceptance by the dominant society and less perceived prejudice resulting in better mental health (Mehta, 1998).

In the present study, acculturation to the Asian culture predicted the psychological well-being of South Asian students. Participants who reported higher levels of acculturation to the Asian culture in high school reported more happiness in college. For both first and second generation students, higher levels of acculturation to the Asian culture in high school predicted their psychological well-being; more happiness was reported in college. This finding is contrary to what previous investigations (Hovy et al., 2006; Kim & Cain, 2008) have indicated that students who preserved strong adherence to Asian cultural values were more likely to have lower self-esteem, and suffer from anxiety and depression.

It is possible that first generation students who reported high levels of acculturation to the Asian culture in high school developed a bicultural orientation by acculturating more to the American culture and second generation students achieved a balance of traditional cultural values and American values over time, and in college reported better psychological well-being. Longer U.S. residence, being a part of the U.S. culture, and a bicultural orientation have been linked to better psychological health (Baker et al., 2012; Mehta, 1998; Royisircai-Sodowsky & Masetas, 2000).

South Asian participants who reported higher levels of fluency in English also reported higher levels of current psychological well-being. This supports the findings of Yu et al., (2003) that psychological adjustment problems and acculturative stresses are most likely to be seen in immigrant students with limited English proficiency.

Participants who reported higher levels of acculturative stress in high school reported less happiness in college. Previously, Hovey (1998) found that immigrant students who
experienced higher levels of acculturative stress showed a higher risk for depression and suicidal ideation. Acculturative stress has been found to have a persistent, long-term influence on the psychological adjustment for many minorities (Hovey, 2000; Smart & Smart, 1995) and has been identified as one of the many social predictors of depressive symptoms (Shin, 1994). Similarly, acculturative stress in high school predicted the psychological well-being of South Asian students in college in the present study.

This relationship between acculturative stress and psychological well-being was found for both first and second generation students. The stress of first generation students might arise from struggling with acculturation issues (Royisircai-Sodowsky & Maestas, 2000) and having to adapt to two worlds at the same time, the world at home and the world outside of home, might lead to stress in second generation students (Sodowsky, 1991).

**Ethnic identity.** In the present study, South Asian students who reported experiencing peer victimization in high school indicated a strong sense of ethnic identity in their own ethnic group rather than the mainstream American identity, as current college students. For ethnic victimization experiences in high school, similar results were found.

Peer victimization and ethnic victimization experiences in high school also significantly predicted the participants’ ethnic identity in college. Participants who reported higher levels of peer victimization and ethnic victimization experiences in high school indicated a stronger sense of identity in their own ethnic group as college students. These results were found for both first generation and second generation participants.

There was a very high correlation between peer victimization experiences and ethnic identity and it is possible that these scales might be measuring the same constructs or might be sharing some form of response bias. Most of the participants were recruited from South Asian
organizations which indicates a high affinity to their own ethnic group and resulted in high scores on the ethnic identity scale. This strong affiliation to their own ethic group could have led participants to perceive or report higher levels of peer victimization, especially for items relating to ethnic victimization.

These findings support the rejection-identification model proposed by Schmitt and Branscombe (2002) which indicated that perceived discrimination can result in a stronger orientation and identification with one’s ethnic group. The present study extends this to South Asian immigrant students and the findings are based on perceived peer victimization and ethnic victimization experiences as opposed to perceived discrimination in the model. As the model suggests, South Asian students might have responded to perceived threats to themselves and their ingroup with stronger ethnic identification to counter the harm.

First generation South Asian participants indicated stronger levels of ethnic identification with their own ethnic group than second generation South Asian participants. This supports the findings of Ting-Toomey (1981) among Chinese Americans and Cuellar et al. (1997) among Mexican Americans that identification with one’s own ethnic group is the strongest among first generation individuals.

Higher levels of language fluency in the native language was associated with stronger identification with one’s own group in the present study. Previous studies have found that ethnic language and ethnic identity are positively related; knowledge of ethnic language may help maintain ethnic participation, which may in turn reinforce ethnic identity (Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Imbens-Bailey, 1996). Phinney, Romero, Nava, and Huang (2001) found that ethnic language proficiency predicted ethnic identity.
Participants who reported lower levels of acculturation to the American culture indicated stronger levels of ethnic identity in their own group. Ethnic identity scores have been found to be highest among less acculturated individuals (Cuellar et al., 1997). Among Mexican Americans, Cuellar et al. (2007) found that a diminishment in one’s sense of ethnic identity occurs with increased acculturation into the mainstream culture. The sense of affirmation and belonging, ethnic identity achievement, and ethnic behaviors weakens with behavioral acculturation.

South Asian participants who reported higher levels of acculturative stress indicated stronger levels of ethnic identity in their own group. Royosircai-Sodowsky and Meastas (2000) indicates in describing the push-and-pull phenomenon between acculturation and ethnic identity that an individual from a minority group might feel pushed to become acculturated into the dominant group within a society and pulled by the influence of the ethnic group. In the pushes and pulls of acculturation and ethnic identity, one’s sense of belongingness to an ethnic group can be protective against the stressors in the process of acculturation. As such, South Asian students who experienced acculturative stress because of the cultural conflict between their own culture and the U.S. culture might have strengthened their ethnic identity as a way to alleviate this conflict.

Furthermore, students who felt the pressure to acculturate to the mainstream society retained their sense of identity in their own ethnic group in the present study. It is possible that in acculturating to the mainstream culture and retaining their ethnic identity, South Asian students in the present study has integrated, that is they have retained many values from the culture of origin but has adapted to the dominant culture by learning necessary skills and values (Berry, 1984). Similarly, Mehta (1998) found that integration is the most preferred acculturation style among Asian Indian Americans.
Participants who reported strong levels of ethnic identity in their own group reported lower levels of psychological well-being. Previous research has shown a positive relationship between ethnic identity and psychological well-being (Binning, Unzueta, Huo, & Molina, 2009; Mandara, Gaylord-Harden, Richards & Ragsdale, 2009; Smith & Silva, 2011). However, a recent meta-analysis conducted by Smith and Trimble (2016) revealed that there are mixed results on ethnic identity and well-being; a positive ethnic identity has been associated with poorer well-being but also has been strongly associated with high levels of well-being. They suggested that many factors influence both ethnic identity and psychological well-being and past research practices have not accounted for this complexity.

One of these factors could be acculturative stress. High ethnic identity could intensify the negative effect of acculturative stress on psychological well-being (Kim, Hogge, & Salvisberg, 2014). This is because individuals with high ethnic identity might perceive acculturation-related stressors as a threat to one’s group and oneself. Since the present study found that acculturative stress predicted psychological well-being, it is possible that acculturative stress plays a role in the relationship between ethnic identity and psychological well-being in South Asian students with high ethnic identity. Another possibility is that the relationship between ethnic identity and psychological well-being in the present study is complicated by South Asian students’ reported peer victimization and ethnic victimization experiences; these experiences might exert a stronger influence on psychological well-being than ethnic identity.

**Educational Implications**

The current study investigated several areas that have not been addressed adequately or at all in the existing literature. Most of the literature on peer victimization experiences of ethnic minorities tend to group Asian Americans into one overarching inclusive ethnic label, a practice
contributing to ethnic gloss: the appearance of ethnic and cultural homogeneity that may be inaccurate (Smith & Trimble, 2016). The present study focuses on one of the largest Asian American groups in the U.S., South Asian Americans. Very little is known about their peer victimization experiences and its relation to their psychological well-being and ethnic identity.

This study shows that South Asian students report peer victimization and ethnic victimization in high school. Research about these experiences can help inform and design interventions in school that target peer victimization for ethnic minority students. These interventions can address prevention of bullying and provide cultural awareness and sensitivity training for students, educators and administrators to improve the school climate for all students and improve peer relations.

As the present study found that those students who had lower levels of acculturation were more likely to be victimized by their peers and recently immigrated students were more likely to have lower levels of acculturation; comprehensive schoolwide programs should be designed to provide personal, social, and academic support to recently immigrated students. These programs need to address acculturation issues and the stress associated with acculturation for students. Creating an open and safe space for immigrant students to communicate about these issues will help create a positive and nurturing school environment for them.

South Asian students reported victimization due to their ethnicity and those students who had lower levels of acculturation were more likely to be victimized by their peers due to their ethnicity. Programs designed for immigrant students and students of ethnic minorities should address student experiences with ethnic victimization, foster awareness about victimization, and offer resources for cultural and linguistic support to students, parents, and families. Additionally, to reduce instances of victimization due to ethnicity, immigrant status, or religion, these
programs could promote acceptance and respect among all students by creating a welcoming and supportive school climate that values cultural and religious diversity.

The present study showed that South Asian students who reported that they were victimized in high school reported lower levels of psychological well-being in college. School psychologists and mental health professionals should take this information into account while working with South Asian students and examine how their reported victimization experiences can factor into their psychological well-being.

Limitations

While the findings of the current study provide a significant addition to the literature by examining the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students, there are a few limitations to this study that are important to consider for future research. First, since the study used a retrospective design, the responses of participants might have been affected by their memory recall. South Asian college students were asked about their experiences with peer victimization and acculturation while they were in high school, and the passage of time between high school and college could have impacted their memory about these events and subsequently affected their responses on the measures.

The present study was also limited by the small sample size. The study only consisted of 220 participants and future studies should acquire a larger sample. Another limitation is the socioeconomic status of the sample. The South Asian students in the sample were mostly from upper income backgrounds which might affect the generalizability of the results to other socioeconomic status groups.

Age of the participants is also another limitation. There were some older college students in the sample and age might have played a role in their responses. For example, there might have
been memory effects, generational differences, or different cognitive interpretations of questions. Future studies should compare responses of older college students and younger college students.

Another limitation of the study is that some demographic data of the participants were not collected and this information could have been beneficial for certain analyses. For example, participants were not asked if they were affiliated with any South Asian organizations, their geographic region, or their academic year in college and their answers could have possibly impacted their responses on the measures for peer victimization and ethnic identity.

Recruitment of participants was also limited by recruiting mostly from South Asian student and religious organizations indicating a strong affinity to their own ethnic group and this could have had an impact on their responses, especially on the ethnic identity scale. The strong affiliation to their own ethnic group could have also possibly affected their perceptions and reports of peer victimization, particularly victimization due to ethnicity.

Another limitation is that the present study specifically investigated college students and the impact of peer victimization experiences on ethnic identity and psychological well-being might manifest differently in students who did not continue on to college. Stronger efforts should be made in future studies to acquire a more representative sample.

The measures used in this study also had certain limitations. There is not sufficient information about the reliability of the adapted RBQ measure because the test-retest reliability of the measure was not investigated. The measure used to assess acculturative stress, SAFE, was not specifically designed to be used with South Asian populations and it is possible that the items for acculturative stress did not address culture specific acculturative issues.

The measure used to assess family support, the family subscale of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, was not specific to peer victimization experiences. For
example, one question stated, “I got the emotional help and support I needed from my family”. If this question was worded specifically to peer victimization as such, “I got the emotional help and support I needed from my family when I experienced peer victimization”, participants might have responded differently.

Additionally, ethnic victimization was measured using only four questions. A more comprehensive account of ethnic victimization could have been obtained if more questions were used. Another limitation is that there was only one question that assessed the diversity of the schools that students attended. The question asked if students were part of the ethnic majority or minority at school. If there were more questions that examined diversity, such as the size of the South Asian group at school, presence of other South Asian or Asian groups, the location of the school, more information about school context could have been attained.

The present study was also limited by the way it examined acculturation. Only four dimensions of acculturation were considered: language, food consumption, cultural knowledge, and cultural identity. It is possible that there are cognitive aspects of acculturation such as values, attitudes, beliefs, and ideas (Cuellar et al., 1997) that could impact peer relations for South Asian immigrant students.

Lastly, using self-report measures to collect data has its limitations. There might be issues with social desirability, memory distortions and cultural perceptions. Additionally, reactivity to the investigator’s name which indicates a South Asian background might have possibly impacted participants’ responses.

**Directions for Future Research**

There is a dearth of literature examining peer victimization experiences and its related factors among minority groups. The present study serves as a starting point for studying these
experiences and there are a number of possible directions for further research. Future studies should obtain a larger and a more representative sample of South Asian students.

In addition to sampling larger, longitudinal investigations should also be conducted to examine peer victimization experiences in high school and its impact on further ethnic group identification and psychological well-being. These longitudinal investigations should also use other assessment methods such as peer nomination data, teacher reports, and school-wide assessments in addition to self-report measures to examine various accounts of victimization. A longitudinal investigation will also allow for assessing the continuous development of ethnic identity and to examine if peer victimization experiences impact ethnic identity over time from high school to college. Different aspects of psychological well-being such as depression, self-esteem, social anxiety, and loneliness, should also be similarly investigated.

Future studies should examine other types of victimization such as cyber bullying especially on social media platforms. Additional studies are required to understand the risk factors for peer victimization among minority students. Future research should also focus further on the perceived reasons for victimization reported by students in the present study such as cultural stereotypes, appearance, way of dressing, accent, religious beliefs and practices, and immigrant status. Another perceived reason for victimization to research further is good grades and how the model minority stereotype can impact South Asian students negatively. Religion is a significant aspect to examine further among South Asian immigrant students since victimization due to ethnicity could be confounded with victimization due to religious beliefs. The present study only examined first and second generation students and future studies should examine third and subsequent generations since acculturation level increases with later generations (Cuellar,
Harris, & Jasso, 1980). Future studies should also utilize interviews and focus groups to gather insight about ethnic and religious victimization.

Reliable peer victimization scales for minority students should be developed in future research. Most of the existing peer victimization scales do not include items that are specific to the experiences of minority students. There is also a need for measures that assess acculturative stress and pressure to acculturate that are used with various minority groups. Further research should also be conducted to develop a specific scale for ethnic victimization among high school or college students and to understand the ethnic victimization experiences of different minority and religious groups since being victimized due to ethnicity seems to be an issue for many ethnic minority students. Victimization between students within the same ethnic group and the reasons for this victimization should be further examined as this study found that South Asian students are bullied by students from their own ethnic group as well.

Peer victimization experiences in relation to acculturation among different minority groups should also be examined further. Since acculturation is a complex and multi-dimensional process, additional studies are needed to comprehensively explore acculturation among South Asian youth. Future research should also investigate other sources of support for South Asian students such as friends, community, or student organizations that might moderate the relationship between peer victimization and psychological well-being. Another potential aspect to examine further is the high academic achievement seen among South Asian students and how that impacts their experiences with peers as this study found that a perceived reason for victimization given by South Asian students was good grades.

The complex relationship between psychological well-being and ethnic identity among South Asian students should be examined further by investigating factors that contribute to both.
Further research should focus on ethnic identity among South Asian groups, specifically, its role as a coping strategy for negative experiences such as peer victimization. Other outcomes could also be examined other than psychological well-being in future studies, such as depressive symptoms, anxiety, suicidal ideation, or substance abuse. Peer victimization, ethnic victimization, acculturation, ethnic identity and psychological well-being should be further investigated among youth of different ethnic minorities and religions.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to retrospectively investigate the peer victimization experiences of South Asian students in high school and how these experiences are related to their ethnic identity and psychological well-being in college. Sociodemographic characteristics, generational status, ethnic victimization, acculturation, acculturative stress, pressure to acculturate, and family support in relation to peer victimization experiences were also examined. The present study was the first to comprehensively examine and combine all of these factors among South Asian youth in the U.S. South Asian students in this study reported high levels of being victimized by their peers in high school and, they indicated lower levels of psychological well-being and strong levels of ethnic identity in their own ethnic group in college. Those students who reported peer victimization had lower levels of acculturation and experienced more acculturative stress and pressure to acculturate to the mainstream culture. It was suggested that programs designed for ethnic minority students in school should address peer victimization, victimization due to ethnicity, acculturative issues and psychological well-being.
Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Please complete the following information:

1. Age:  
2. Sex: Male Female

3. Religious Affiliation: ________________

4. Country of birth ________________

5. Father’s country of birth: ________________

6. Mother’s country of birth: ________________

7. If you were not born in the U.S., at what age did you come to this country? ______

8. Which grade did you first attend in the U.S.? ________________

9. How many years have you lived in the United States? ________________

10. Were you exposed to the Western or American culture before you arrived in the US (e.g., through T.V., movies, newspapers, internet etc.)? Not at all Occasionally Frequently

11. Country where educated: Primary grades: High School:

13. Your annual household income when you first arrived in the United States:  
   _____ $10,000 and under  _____ $10,001 - $30,000  _____ $30,001 - $50,000  
   _____ $50,001 - $70,000  _____ $70,001 - $90,000  _____ $90,001 and above

14. Current annual Household Income:  
   _____ $10,000 and under  _____ $10,001 - $30,000  _____ $30,001 - $50,000  
   _____ $50,001 - $70,000  _____ $70,001 - $90,000  _____ $90,001 and above

15. Please indicate the ethnic composition of the high school you attended.  
   o I was part of the ethnic majority in school.  
   o I was part of the ethnic minority in school.  
   o Neither, my school was very diverse.  
   o I don’t know/remember.

16. Please indicate your language fluency. Not at all A little Pretty well Extremely well
   How well do you speak English?  
   How well do you understand English?  
   How well do you speak your native language?  
   How well do you understand your native language?
Appendix B

Retrospective Bullying Questionnaire (RBQ)

Here are some questions about being bullied in high school. A student is being bullied when another student, or several other students:
- say mean and hurtful things, or make fun of him or her, or call him or her mean and hurtful names
- completely ignore or exclude him or her from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose
- hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room
- tell lies or spread false rumors about him or her and try to make other students dislike him or her and do other hurtful things like that

These things happen more than just once, and it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend himself or herself. It is also bullying when a student is teased more than just once in a mean and hurtful way.

It is not bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. Also, it is not bullying when two students of about equal strength or power argue or fight.

1. Have you ever been bullied in high school?
   - I have never been bullied
   - Yes, I have been bullied

The next questions are about physical forms of bullying- hitting and kicking, and having things stolen from you.

2. Were you physically bullied at high school?
   - Hit/punched
     - No
     - Yes
   - Stolen from
     - No
     - Yes

3. Did this happen?
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Frequently
   - Constantly

4. How serious did you consider these bullying-attacks to be?
   - I wasn’t bullied
   - Not at all
   - Only a bit
   - Quite serious
   - Extremely serious

5. How long did the bullying attacks usually last?
   - I wasn’t bullied
   - Just a few days
   - Weeks
   - Months
   - A year or more
The next questions are about verbal forms of bullying—being called nasty names and being threatened.

6. Were you verbally bullied at high school?

Called names  No  Yes
Threatened  No  Yes

7. Did this happen?

Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Frequently  Constantly

8. How serious did you consider these bullying-attacks to be?

I wasn’t bullied  Not at all  Only a bit  Quite serious  Extremely serious

9. How long did the bullying attacks usually last?

I wasn’t bullied  Just a few days  Weeks  Months  A year or more

The next questions are about indirect forms of bullying—having lies or nasty rumors told about you behind your back, or being deliberately excluded from social groups.

10. Were you indirectly bullied at high school?

Had lies told about you  No  Yes
Excluded  No  Yes

11. Did this happen?

Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Frequently  Constantly

12. How serious did you consider these bullying-attacks to be?

I wasn’t bullied  Not at all  Only a bit  Quite serious  Extremely serious

13. How long did the bullying attacks usually last?

I wasn’t bullied  Just a few days  Weeks  Months  A year or more

The next questions are about being bullied in another way.

14. Were you bullied in another way at high school?  No  Yes

15. Did this happen?

Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Frequently  Constantly
16. How serious did you consider these bullying-attacks to be?

I wasn’t bullied Not at all Only a bit Quite serious Extremely serious

17. How long did the bullying attacks usually last?

I wasn’t bullied Just a few days Weeks Months A year or more

The next questions are about immigrant bullying.

18. Were you ever bullied when you first started school as an immigrant?

Never Rarely Sometimes Frequently Constantly

19. Do you think you were bullied because you were a recent immigrant at the time?

No Yes I am not sure

20. Do you think you were bullied because of your ethnicity/nationality?

No Yes I am not sure

21. By whom were you mainly bullied by?

- I have never been bullied
- Students from my own ethnic group
- Students from other ethnic groups
- Both students from my own ethnic group and other ethnic groups

22. As an immigrant, please circle any or all of the factors that you think made you a victim of bullying.

- My cultural beliefs, customs and traditions
- My immigrant status (e.g., being called “fob” (fresh off the boat)
- My parents’ immigrant status
- My accent
- My lack of fluency in English
- My way of dressing
- My personal hygiene (e.g., smell, hair)
- My skin color
- My religious beliefs
- My friends
- My lack of knowledge about American culture and people (e.g., music, sports, movies)
- My lack of knowledge about American values, customs and traditions
- Certain stereotypes associated with my culture
- My ethnicity/nationality
- My good grades
Appendix C

Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AAMAS)

Instructions: Use the scale below to answer the following questions about your past experience in high school as an immigrant student. Please circle the number that best represents your view on each item. Please note that reference to “Asian” hereafter refers to Asians in America and not Asia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not very well</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Very well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How well did you <strong>speak</strong> the language of --</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your own Asian culture of origin?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How well did you <strong>understand</strong> the language of --</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your own Asian culture of origin?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>How well did you <strong>read and write</strong> in the language of --</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your own Asian culture of origin?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>How often did you <strong>listen to music or look at</strong> movies and magazines from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your own Asian culture of origin?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the White mainstream groups?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How much did you <strong>like</strong> the food of -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your own Asian culture of origin?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the White mainstream groups?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How often did you <strong>eat</strong> the food of -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your own Asian culture of origin?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the White mainstream groups?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>How <strong>knowledgeable</strong> were you about the <strong>history</strong> of -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your own Asian culture of origin?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the White mainstream groups?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>How <strong>knowledgeable</strong> were you about the <strong>culture and traditions</strong> of –</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your own Asian culture of origin?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the White mainstream culture?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>How much did you <strong>practice</strong> the <strong>traditions and keep the holidays</strong> of -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your own Asian culture of origin?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the White mainstream culture?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. **How much did you identify with** –
   a. your own Asian culture of origin? 1 2 3 4 5 6
   c. the White mainstream groups? 1 2 3 4 5 6

11. **How much did you feel you have in common with** people from -
   a. your own Asian culture of origin? 1 2 3 4 5 6
   c. the White mainstream groups? 1 2 3 4 5 6

12. **How much did you interact and associate with** people from -
   a. your own Asian culture of origin? 1 2 3 4 5 6
   b. the White mainstream groups? 1 2 3 4 5 6

13. **How much did you like to interact and associate with** people from -
   a. your own Asian culture of origin? 1 2 3 4 5 6
   c. the White mainstream groups? 1 2 3 4 5 6

14. **How proud were you to be a part of** -
   a. your own Asian culture of origin? 1 2 3 4 5 6
   c. the White mainstream groups? 1 2 3 4 5 6

*15. **How negative did you feel about** people from -
   a. your own Asian culture of origin? 1 2 3 4 5 6
   c. the White mainstream groups? 1 2 3 4 5 6

*This item must be reverse-coded before scoring.
Appendix D

Pressure to Acculturate Scale

Please indicate your agreement to the following statements about your past experience in high school as an immigrant student.

1. I did not speak English well when I first arrived or when I first started school in the United States.
   1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

2. I did not understand English well when I first arrived or when I first started school in the United States.
   1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

3. I felt the need to adapt to the American culture because of the bullying.
   1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

4. I felt the need to learn English because of the bullying.
   1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

5. I felt that the bullying would stop if I adapted into the American culture.
   1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

6. The bullying lessened as I adapted more into the American culture.
   1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

7. The bullying lessened as I gained more fluency in the English language.
   1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree
Appendix E

Social, Attitudinal, Familial, and Environmental Acculturative Stress Scale (SAFE)

Please indicate how you perceived cultural stress in the past as an immigrant student in high school. For each statement below, please check only one box.

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree

1. I felt uncomfortable when others made jokes about my culture.
2. My family members did not understand my American values.
3. My family members and I had different expectations about my future.
4. It bothered me that I could not be with my family.
5. My ethnicity was a limitation in looking for a good job.
6. Many people have stereotypes about my culture.
7. Living in the U.S. gave me stress.
8. It bothered me when I thought of my limited English skills.
9. People from other ethnic groups tried to stop me from advancing.
10. I got pressure from others to become a part of the American culture.
11. Because of my ethnicity, I did not get enough credit for the work I did.
12. It bothered me when I lost contact with friends or families in my native country.
13. Other ethnic friends excluded me from activities because of my ethnic background.
14. People looked down upon me when I practiced my ethnic customs.
15. It would have been better if I had more people from my ethnic group in my neighborhood.
16. I would have gained more respect if I were in my native country.
Appendix F

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) – Family Subscale

Instructions: The following statements are about your past experience in high school as an immigrant student. We are interested in how you feel about the following statements. Read each statement carefully and indicate how you feel about each statement.

1 = Very Strongly Disagree
2 = Strongly Disagree
3 = Mildly Disagree
4 = Neutral
5 = Mildly Agree
6 = Strongly Agree
7 = Very Strongly Agree

1. My family really tried to help me.  
2. My family was willing to help me make decisions.  
3. I was able to talk about my problems with my family.  
4. I got the emotional help and support I needed from my family.
Appendix G

The Short Depression Happiness Scale (SDHS)

A number of statements that people have made to describe how they feel are given below. Please read each one and tick the box which best describes how frequently you felt that way in the past month, including today. Some statements describe positive feelings and some describe negative feelings. You may have experienced both positive and negative feelings at different times during the past seven days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. I felt dissatisfied with my life</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. I felt happy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I felt cheerless</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I felt pleased with the way I am</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I felt that life was enjoyable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I felt that life was meaningless</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Items 1, 3, and 6 are reverse scored.
Appendix H

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many
different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from.
Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African
American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian
or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your
ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be ____________________

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

(1) Strongly agree  (2) Agree  (3) Disagree  (4) Strongly disagree

1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions,
   and customs.

2. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic
group.

3. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.

4. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.

5. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.

6. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.

7. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.

8. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my
   ethnic group.

9. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.

10. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.

11. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.

12. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.
Hello,

Hope everything is going well. I am contacting student organizations because I am collecting data for a study I am conducting about South Asian students. Below is a description of the study and a link to the survey. Could you please participate and pass this on to your organization members? The research is lacking on the school experiences of South Asian students so it will be a great help for our research. Thank you very much.

My name is Rejitha Nair, a doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. program in Educational Psychology at The Graduate Center, City University of New York, and I am the principal investigator of a study that will retrospectively examine the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students (South Asians include individuals with ancestral roots in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and Afghanistan).

You are invited to participate in the study if you are a South Asian college student who is a first generation (born outside the U.S.) or second generation (at least one parent born outside the U.S.) immigrant and attended at least some high school in the U.S. to take an online survey about your past experiences in school. Participation is entirely voluntary and completely anonymous. The survey takes about 10-15 minutes.

The risk involved in this study is minimal and the benefits of participation in this study will be in the contribution made to the understanding of peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students in schools, a very under researched population.

You can access the survey with this link: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SouthAsians](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SouthAsians)

Thank you very much for your participation and time,

Rejitha Nair
Appendix J

Recruitment Post

This recruitment post was posted on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Hi, My name is Rejitha Nair and I am a doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. program in Educational Psychology at The Graduate Center CUNY, and I am conducting a study that will retrospectively examine the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students. I am looking for South Asian college students who are first or second generation immigrants and went to high school in the U.S to take an online survey about their past experiences in school. Participation is entirely voluntary and completely anonymous. The survey takes about 10-15 minutes.

Here is the link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SouthAsians

Thank you very much for your help and time,
Rejitha Nair
Appendix K

Recruitment Flyer

Are you South Asian?

If you are a South Asian first or second generation immigrant student who attended high school in the U.S. and if you are at least 18 years of age, you are invited to participate in a study about the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students.

The study is conducted by Rejitha Nair, Doctoral Student in Educational Psychology at the Graduate Center of City University of New York (CUNY).

Participation is anonymous.

Here is the survey link:

http:// surveymonkey.com/s/SouthAsians

If you have any questions please email me at RNair@gc.cuny.edu
Appendix L

Informed Consent

My name is Rejitha Nair and I am a doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. program in Educational Psychology at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and Principal Investigator of a study that will retrospectively examine the peer victimization experiences of South Asian immigrant students.

Participants in this study must be a South Asian college student 18 years old or older, be a first generation (born outside the U.S) or second generation (at least one parent born outside the U.S.) immigrant who has attended high school in the U.S. South Asians include individuals with ancestral roots in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and Afghanistan.

If you give permission, you will be asked to answer some questions about your demographic information, past experiences in high school, specifically peer victimization experiences, level of adaptation to the U.S. culture in high school, current psychological well-being, and ethnic identity. For the purpose of this study, I anticipate recruiting approximately 350-400 participants.

Your participation should take about 10-15 minutes. All identifying information and survey information is anonymous and all survey information will remain strictly confidential. You may opt out of the survey at any time, however once an online survey has been submitted, there is no way to identify the respondent.

The risk involved in this study is minimal. Since the survey is asking you about your past peer victimization experiences, if you experience any psychological distress while recalling the events, you can exit the survey at any time. If you experience any unmanageable psychological distress because of the questions during or after filling out the questionnaire, you can contact me at RNair@gc.cuny.edu and I can refer you to a counselor.

The benefits of your participation in this study will be in the contribution made to the understanding of peer victimization experiences of immigrant students in schools.

I may publish the results of the study, but any identifying characteristics will not be used in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please email me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

You may email me at RNair@gc.cuny.edu or my advisor, Cliff Yung-Chi Chen, Ph.D., at ychen8@gc.cuny.edu if you have any questions. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Kay Powell, IRB administrator at (212) 817-7525, kpowell@gc.cuny.edu.

Thank you very much for your time and participation!
Rejitha Nair
By completing and submitting the survey that follows, you are agreeing to participate in the described research project. Please click the next button below if you agree to participate in the study.
### Appendix M

**Summary of Main Research Hypotheses and Findings of the Current Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Hypothesis 1.**  
South Asian students’ language fluency, religion, gender, previous SES, and school context influenced their peer victimization experiences in high school. | Hypothesis 1 was not supported. South Asian students’ language fluency, religion, gender, previous SES, and school context did not influence their peer victimization experiences in high school. |
| **Hypothesis 2.**  
First generation students will be more likely to report experiencing peer victimization and ethnic victimization than second generation students in high school. | Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. First generation students are not more likely to report peer victimization experiences but they are more likely to report ethnic victimization experiences than second generation students. |
| **Hypothesis 3.**  
South Asian students with lower levels of acculturation to the American mainstream culture in high school were more likely to have experienced peer victimization. | Hypothesis 3 was supported. |
| **Hypothesis 4.**  
South Asian students who experienced peer victimization were more likely to have felt the pressure to acculturate into the mainstream American culture. | Hypothesis 4 was supported. |
| **Hypothesis 5.**  
South Asian students who experienced peer victimization were more likely to have experienced higher levels of acculturative stress. | Hypothesis 5 was supported. |
| **Hypothesis 6.**  
South Asian students who experienced peer victimization in high school are not likely to have utilized family support. | Hypothesis 6 was not supported. South Asian students who experienced peer victimization in high school also reported utilizing family support. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 7. South Asian students who have experienced peer victimization in high school are more likely to display lower levels of current psychological well-being.</td>
<td>Hypothesis 7 was supported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 8. South Asian students who have experienced peer victimization, especially ethnic victimization, in high school are likely to identify with their own ethnic group rather than the mainstream American identity.</td>
<td>Hypothesis 8 was supported.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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