Identity Among Adolescent Arab-Americans in Dearborn, Michigan: An Eriksonian Perspective

by

Zeinab M. Sobh

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Doctoral Committee:

      Professor Kim Killu, Chair

      Professor Paul R. Fossum, Committee Member

      Professor Julie Anne Taylor, Committee Member

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my three children, Ibrahim, Fatima, and Hussein, whose hearts and souls gave me the support and encouragement to complete this labor of love. You three have been by my side through the best of times and through the difficult times. I am so proud to be your mom and I hope I have made you proud as well.

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Abstract

To understand Arab-American adolescents is to acknowledge and address their struggles as they mediate their sense of self. Arab-American adolescents in the United States face difficulties navigating between their native culture and the culture they are being raised in, as well as in their socially devalued status as Muslim Arabs. This investigation looked at the shaping of identity among Arab-Americans through Erik Erikson's research findings on identity statuses. According to Erikson (1968), the main and most important developmental tasks for adolescents are to solve the identity versus role-confusion crisis, to construct their own unique sense of identity, and to find the social environment in which they can belong and create meaningful relationships with other people (Chen et al., 2007). This investigation also looked at the literature on the effects of the perception of adolescent Arab-Americans about their cultural identification as well as their own understanding of their role in society.

Keywords: adolescent development, identity development, identity crises, Erikson's psychosocial developmental stages, self-perception, Muslim-Arabs, Arab-Americans

Chapter 1: Introduction

The greater Detroit metropolitan area is home to one of the largest, oldest, and most diverse Arab-American communities in the United States. The Arab-American community in Dearborn, Michigan, is so large that the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants referred to Dearborn as the "Arab capital of North America" (Crowder, 2015, p. 1). Of the city's residents, reports estimated that more than 30% identify as Americans who claim some form of Arab descent (Leech, 2017). Other reports cited the U.S. Census Bureau estimating that Arab-Americans make up approximately 42% of the city's population (Sands, 2017). Because Arab-Americans are not officially recognized by the federal government as a minority group and are not separately counted by the U.S. Census, it is difficult to determine the exact number of Arab-Americans in Dearborn. Dearborn's residents include Arabs from Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Yemen, and Iraq. Dearborn is also home to the Arab-American National Museum, the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), and a number of mosques and Islamic schools.

Michigan's Arab-American population is the second largest in the United States, after California. However, Michigan's Arab-American community in Southeast Michigan still has the greatest local concentration since California's Arab-American population is much more spread out. The Greater Detroit area hosts a diverse population of Arab Americans. Arab Americans are believed to be the third largest ethnic population in the state of Michigan.

The Arab-American community in Dearborn, Michigan, has been experiencing an unprecedented increase in suicides among its young adult population. Six suicides were reported in the Arab-American community in Dearborn and Dearborn Heights from 2013 to 2015 (Harb, 2015). *The Arab-American News* reported almost a dozen suicides in Dearborn between 2014 and 2016. The exact number of suicide cases is unconfirmed, as the families of Arab-American victims sometimes deny the incidents because of the stigma of mental health issues in the community (Harb, 2015). Each tragic death brought with it shock and sadness, as well as awareness of the need to improve the way the community approaches mental health issues (Harb, 2014).

Arab-American adolescents face challenges that are different from the challenges faced by adolescents from other cultural and ethnic minority groups, due to the increasing feelings of being ostracized and excluded from the majority American culture in the post-9/11 era (Amer & Bagasra, 2013; Britto & Amer, 2007), as well as the social stigma associated with being an Arab-American, the fact that Arab is not a recognized ethnicity in national demographic categories, and the discrimination they face as a cultural group (Erickson & Al-Timimi, 2001).

Historical Timeline of Arab-American Immigration

According to Dado and Hijazi (2014), Arab-Americans define themselves as "having roots in one of the 22 Arabic-speaking countries, including, among others, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, Egypt, and the Gulf countries" (p. 78). American-Muslims are identified by their religious affiliation to Islam. Islam, one of the three monotheistic religions of the world, materialized from and developed within the Arab world (Hammoud et al., 2005). **Table 1** below lists the 22 countries that make up the Arab world.

Table 1

List of the 22 Countries of the Arab World

The 22 Countries of the Arab World	
1. Algeria	12. Mauritania
2. Bahrain	13. Oman
3. The Comoros Islands	14. Palestine
4. Djibouti	15. Qatar
5. Egypt	16. Saudi Arabia
6. Iraq	17. Somalia
7. Jordan	18. Sudan
8. Kuwait	19. Syria
9. Lebanon	20. Tunisia
10. Libya	21. The United Arab Emirates
11. Morocco	22. Yemen

Arabs and Muslims are an integral part of the United States, having come to the Americas even before the founding of the country. The very first Arab to reach American soil is said to have traveled with Christopher Columbus in 1492; he was an Arabic interpreter named Louis de Torres (Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007). Early Arab immigrants were mostly Christians, with a smaller number of Muslims.

Arab-Americans have been in the United States for more than 140 years (Sun & Wu, 2015). Historically, Arabs began immigrating to the United States as early as the late 1800s to the mid-20th century, and the number of immigrants has increased in recent decades (Cumoletti

& Batalova, 2018; Jalloul, 2003). Like immigrants before them, Arab-Americans moved to the

United States for various reasons, driven largely by political turmoil in the region and economic

opportunities abroad (Cumoletti & Batalova, 2018; David, 1982). Today, the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict, the political instability of Lebanon, and wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen

have increased the immigration of Arabs to the United States (Inhorn, 2011). The Middle East

and North Africa have the largest percentage of migrants in the world and the world's highest

proportion of internally displaced persons (Inhorn, 2011; Mowafi, 2011).

More than 18,000 Syrians were resettled in the United States between January 2011 and

December 2016 (including more than 15,000 in 2016 alone) under U.S. President Barack

Obama's administration (Cumoletti & Batalova, 2018). Of the overall 5 million Syrians abroad,

1% (50,000) can be found in the United States (Cumoletti & Batalova, 2018). Of the estimated

15 million Lebanese worldwide, only 3.5 million live in Lebanon today. "Nearly 7 million

Lebanese are estimated to live in Brazil alone and nearly half a million in the USA, where they

make up the single largest group of Arab-Americans" (Inhorn, 2011, p. 584). Since the 2001

U.S.-led war in Afghanistan, more than 3 million Afghans have fled to other countries, including

200,000 who have received asylum in the West (Inhorn, 2011). According to the United Nations

High Commission for Refugees and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the number

of Iraqis who have received political asylum and resettlement in the West since 2003 is estimated

at 60,000 (Inhorn, 2011).

The influx of refugees continues to see a dramatic increase. Of the total 23.9 million

migrants from the Middle East and North Africa worldwide in 2015, approximately 911,000

migrated to the United States (Cumoletti & Batalova, 2018). Although U.S. President Donald

Trump's administration made several changes early in 2017 affecting inflows of immigrants

from several Muslim-majority countries, such as lowering the fiscal year (FY) 2017 refugee

ceiling to 50,000 from the 110,000 level set by President Obama, the Arab-American population

is still expected to continue to grow. It is expected to grow not only in Michigan's Wayne

county, which encompasses the city of Dearborn, but in other populous counties in the state as

well, such as Oakland and Macomb counties where Arab-American occupancy is not as

dominant.

Arab-Americans have played, and continue to play, a central role in American society in

various capacities, including entertainers, politicians, and community leaders. Dr. Michael

DeBakey, one of America's most famous Lebanese pioneers, is a Houston surgeon who invented

the heart pump. In 2005, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* noted that many

consider Dr. DeBakey to be the greatest surgeon ever (Altman, 2008). Ibtihaj Muhammad is an

Arab-American fencer who made history in 2016 as the first Muslim woman to represent the

United States at the Olympics wearing a hijab (Klenke, 2017). David Adamany is the longest-

serving president of Wayne State University (1982-1997) in Detroit. Adamany led Wayne State

for 15 years and helped transform the struggling Detroit institution into a premier research center

(Jesse, 2016).

Numerous Arab-Americans have made tremendous contributions to American culture,

politics, science, and art. However, despite these contributions, Arabs are still considered a

socially devalued group (Bodenhausen et al., 2012). Socially devalued groups are individuals

from low-status ethnic minority groups who continue to experience and perceive discrimination

(Clark et al., 1999). Many other Americans possess a lingering resentment toward Arabs and

Muslims in America after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, as

shown by opinion poll articles in *The Washington Post* (Khan & Ecklund, 2013; Panagopoulos,

2006). The aftermath of these terrorist attacks heightened public suspicion of Arab-Americans as

terrorists (Sun & Wu, 2015). The effect of the September 11 attacks was evident instantaneously,

with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reporting a 1,700% increase in hate crimes

against Muslim Americans between 2000 to 2001 (Anderson, 2002; Khan & Ecklund, 2013).

Derogatory terminology, often used when describing Arabs, includes "terrorists," "towel heads,"

and "ninjas." Increased racial and religious animosity have left Arabs and Muslims, as well as

others who bear physical resemblance to members of these groups, fearful of potential hatred and

hostility (Abu-Ras & Suarez, 2009; Baqi-Aziz, 2001; Rippy & Newman, 2006). To understand

Arab-Americans is to understand the impact of stereotypes and prejudices against the culture.

Being raised in a climate where prejudices and discrimination toward persons of Arab and

Middle Eastern descent are prevalent shapes the identity of Arab adolescents. The Arab-

American adolescent must work to process, engage in meaning making, and, specifically,

depersonalize these negative experiences (Khan & Ecklund, 2013).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the identity development of Arab-American

adolescents through the framework of Erik Erikson's (1950, 1963, 1980, 1995) theory of

development. The path of human development, from infant to adult, is often thought to be

linear—a timeline that represents a steady progress of individual growth through childhood and

adolescence, culminating in adulthood. Many theories of psychological development describe a

normal process of individuation that culminates in a person's having an independent self or

identity (Blos, 1967; Dwairy et al., 2006; Erikson, 1950; Freud, 1935, 1960; Mahler et al., 1975).

These theories often represent a Western cultural perspective of individuation.

Cultural values of individualism and collectivism differ in their relative emphasis on independence versus interdependence with one's group (Goncalo & Staw, 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Generally speaking, the United States represents an individualistic culture (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010). In individualistic cultures, people are viewed as independent and possessing unique patterns of traits that distinguish them from other people (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). In contrast to such independence and uniqueness, people in collectivistic cultures view the self as inherently interdependent with their cultural group. Arab-American culture is viewed as collectivist (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000).

Similar to other collectivist cultures, Arab parents are highly involved in their children's lives and remain so for most of their lives. In more traditional Arab-American families, children do not leave the home until they are married (Haboush, 2007), and women are expected to devote much of their time to caring for their families (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). The family unit is sacred among Arab people, who are raised to depend on it as a continual source of support (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000). This study examined the development of individuation by Arab adolescents who are being raised in individualistic Western societies such as Dearborn, Michigan, but who come from collectivistic cultures.

Theories of child development exist to understand diverse aspects of development. Such theories explain learning and development as they relate to the relationship between environment and other intermeshed systems. Differences among these theories include focusing on either the children's internal processes, while others focus on external influences related to developmental changes (Krishnan, 2010). Erikson's (1950, 1963, 1980, 1995) theory is a psychoanalytically-based theory of development that revolves around conflicts between biological drives and societal expectations. Erikson (1950, 1963) theorized that humans undergo eight psychosocial

stages of development, from infancy to late adulthood. According to Erikson's (1963) theory, an individual goes through eight developmental stages; in each, he or she must face and cope with a central psycho-social problem or crisis. According to Erikson, each stage of development presents its own challenges, which he called a crisis. Erikson used the term "crisis" to describe a series of internal conflicts that present challenges to one's individual identity (Fleming, 2004). At each stage of development, the child or adult is confronted with a conflict of opposing forces. Successful development of one's personality depends on meeting and overcoming these tasks or crises (Fleming, 2004). The eight crises outlined by Erikson are: Basic Trust vs. Mistrust, Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, Initiative vs. Guilt, Industry vs. Inferiority, Identity vs. Identity Confusion, Intimacy vs. Isolation, Generativity vs. Stagnation, and Ego Integrity vs. Despair.

A crisis is a normal event; it is expected and part of the normal progression of life. It is part of the normal developmental process individuals go through from infancy to adulthood. It is also one of the most important conflicts people face in development. It represents a turning point in development rather than a catastrophe, and it has both positive and negative effects that influence the course of future personality development (Ochse & Plug, 1986). An identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of viewing oneself. "Exploration refers to the questioning and weighing up of various identity alternatives. Commitment refers to the choices made in identity relevant areas" (Luyckx et al., 2006, p. 362; Marcia, 1966). When one begins to "achieve" a sense of identity, it means that, as a result of exploration, one has committed to a self that one is comfortable being and displaying in all contexts.

Those who make a strong commitment to an identity after exploration tend to be happier and healthier than those who do not. Those who do not commit to an identity tend to feel out of place in the world. Identity concerns can cause people to have difficulty taking an appropriate

perspective towards other important life tasks, such as career and family. They may become self-critical and self-destructive, and research has described a lack of continuous identity as predictive of both depression and suicidality severity (Sokol & Eisenheim, 2016).

Recently, Beaumont Health President and CEO John Fox announced a partnership with Universal Health Systems (UHS), one of the nation's largest and most respected mental health hospital management companies, to advance mental health services specifically in Southeast Michigan. A 150-bed, free-standing hospital will be built across from Beaumont Hospital-Dearborn, with the goal of having inpatient mental health services across Beaumont Health consolidated and grown into this one location within 3 years, serving adult, pediatric, and geriatric patients. Fox called mental health care a crisis. According to officials from Beaumont and UHS, more than 44 million Americans suffer from some form of mental health issue, which often leads to depression or suicide.

Suicide is a complex phenomenon with numerous influences, including the individual's personality, biology, cultural and social environment, and economic and political contexts (McKenzie et al., 2003). In looking at adolescent suicide patterns as they relate to cultural factors, family relationships appear to play a major role in predicting suicidal behavior within ethnic groups that generally adhere to a collectivist orientation rather than an individualistic orientation (Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2009; Leong & Chou, 1994). Family conflicts may cause distress among adolescents when they are torn between their collectivist role fulfillment and their desire to establish an independent identity which is valued by American society (Goldston et al., 2008; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2009).

Many Arab-Americans find psychiatric and psychological intervention as well as family and marital therapies to be stigmatizing (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000; Fabreka, 1991; Savaya,

1995). This study will help bring an understanding of the origins, nature, and course of internal conflict among Arab-American adolescents who may experience psychological distress. The investigation considered identity development and the chain of events associated with acculturation and assimilation.

As social scientists long ago concluded, immigrants invariably experience processes of "adapting" and "adjusting" to life in a new country (Eleftheriadou, 1997; Ng, 1998). This study looked at the developmental processes of adapting and adjusting to a culture that is not in sync with one's native culture. Arab immigrants to Western countries are known to experience divided loyalties between the ways of the new country and those of the old. They face the dilemma "of whether to reject or embrace assimilation, secularism, and Western education" (Fares, 1991; Jabbra, 1991, p. 43).

Although many of the study's participants may have been born in the United States, the cultural influence from their parents is strong; therefore, they face similar acculturation and assimilation issues. "Broadly, as applied to individuals, *acculturation* refers to changes that take place as a result of contact with culturally dissimilar people, groups, and social influences" (Gibson, 2001; Schwartz et al., 2010, p. 237). The social and cultural forces that help shape our sense of identity operate like a powerful lens through which we make judgments about ourselves and others.

Many Arab immigrants have experienced multiple relocations, temporary settlement in unsanitary refugee camps, and lack of clean water and proper nutrition (Kira, 1999). In addition, many have been traumatized by witnessing the death or torture of loved ones or friends (Kira, 1999). Therefore, it is not surprising that depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are highly prevalent in the new Arab group of immigrants to the United States (e.g.,

Farrag, 1999; Gorman, 2001; Gorst-Unsworth & Goldenberg, 1998; Takeda, 2000). The somatization of symptoms due to the stigma and shame often associated with admitting to a mental health problem has also been noted by many clinicians who work with Arabs and Arab-Americans (e.g., Nassar-McMillan & Hakim-Larson, 2003). The influx of Arab immigrants, as well as the presence of native Arabs, has presented a public health care challenge (Jamil et al., 2002; Kira, 1999).

Problem Statement

The intense increase in the presence and growth of the Arab-American community demands the acknowledgment of the characteristics that make the culture distinctive. In order to create relationships successfully with Arab-Americans, practitioners, educators, and other professionals must be aware of the cultural structure of this population. Being members of a socially devalued group, "Arab-Americans who internalize these negative stereotypes will begin to view their own group in an unfavorable light and become at risk for displaying lower self-esteem, and experiencing loss of meaning and a sense of confusion in their lives" (Ajrouch et al., 2015, p. 92).

This study examined how psychopathology looks in the adolescent stage of development among Arab-Americans from an Eriksonian perspective. The research findings may raise awareness so that proper preventative care can be developed and provided. An objective of this research was to gain an understanding of the internal struggles of Arab-American adolescents to expand avenues of intervention. Therefore, having background knowledge of how people grow and change throughout life and in diverse cultural contexts is essential.

Ajrouch (2000) observed that Arab-Americans in Dearborn emphasize ideas of community and family. Adolescents are not encouraged to develop separately from their families

(Dwairy et al., 2006). They tend to socialize with those of the same gender, and dating is generally not openly accepted (Ajrouch, 2000). Conversely, adolescents in western societies are expected to be individuated from their families, having their own attitudes and values, and developing emotional detachments (Dwairy et al., 2006; Hofstede, 2001; Triandis et al., 1988). Dating among adolescents is generally accepted in the United States.

Arab-American adolescents in Dearborn are having difficulty navigating Erikson's identity crisis. Research has shown that a stable and strong sense of identity is associated with better mental health of adolescents (Ragelienė, 2016). When youth fail to navigate this crisis successfully, they emerge from this period with an uncertainty about who they are. Erikson's (1963) fifth stage of development, ego identity and identity diffusion, refers to polar outcomes of the hypothesized psychosocial crisis occurring in late adolescence. If the adolescent emerges from the crisis with an ego identity, this individual will be committed to an occupation and ideology. The occupation may be a variation of the parental wishes (Erikson, 1963; Marcia, 1966). With respect to ideology, the adolescent or young adult will seem to have reevaluated past beliefs and achieved a resolution that leaves them free to act (Erikson, 1963; Marcia, 1966). The young adult with a developed identity does not appear as if he would be overwhelmed by sudden shifts in his environment or by unexpected responsibilities (Erikson, 1963; Marcia, 1966).

Research Questions

Much research has been done on the problems of adolescents and their sense of self and identity, but much of this research has been conducted on the White, western student. The possibility that Arab-American adolescents are at risk for poor psychological outcomes because of their exposure to socio-cultural adversities has been largely ignored by researchers (Ahmed et al., 2011). With these deficiencies in mind, this research looked at the struggles in identity

formation and social interactions of Arab-American adolescents. Because Arab-Americans are

not officially recognized as a federal minority group, they can get classified as White. For this

research, the term White refers to people of European descent who do not identify as Arab and/or

do not speak arabic. The research addressed the following two questions:

1. How does identity formation of Arab-American adolescents look within the context
   of Dearborn, Michigan?

2. How do adolescent Arab-Americans perceive their cultural identity within the context
   of the culture of Dearborn, Michigan?

Chapter 2: Review Of The Literature

Identity development is one of the most significant tasks that adolescents engage in. Erikson defines this period extensively in his stages of development theory. At each stage, it is assumed that the resolution of psychosocial stages will be positive, given "an average expectable environment." Arab culture and the discrimination faced by Arab-American adolescents brings challenges to the average expectable environment required to navigate successfully the interactions of an individual's needs and abilities and the social demands and rewards. Within this context, it was most appropriate to review the available literature concerning Erikson's developmental periods and Arab cultural restraints and impact on optimal development of identity.

Adolescence is the gradual period of transition from childhood to adulthood (Spear, 2000), specifically from the ages of 13 to 17 years (Beesdo et al., 2009). Adolescence is a time of great change; sexual and other physical maturation occur, as well as social and emotional reforms. New expectations for social and academic adjustments emerge. The stress among adolescents is amplified when there are additional issues of multicultural diversity, specifically as related to self and identity factors (Thoits, 2013). As the adolescent navigates through this transitional stage of physical and psychological development, it becomes particularly challenging for youth who are growing into a social world where their home and host cultures differ. Through these challenges, youth must develop an integrated self-identity, which is a defining aspect of the period of adolescence.

Erik Erikson (1950, 1963) theorized that humans undergo stages of psychosocial development. His ideas were heavily influenced by the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud. "Erikson's neo-psychoanalytic writings are based on the sexual drive system detailed by Sigmund Freud but focused most sharply on the psychosocial system and its interconnections with individual development" (Adams & Marshall, 1996, p. 429). Erikson extended Freud's work on identity by describing the stages of development to include the human lifespan: from infancy to old age (Fleming, 2004). Scholars of adolescence, trained in the psychological sciences, often refer to the writings of Erikson (1968) for inspiration and theoretical guidance (Adams & Marshall, 1996).

Erikson's theory details expected psychosocial crises and outcomes in different periods of life (Bretherton, 1997). The theory looks at eight chronological periods in an individual's lifespan and the changes that each period presents as a result of one's changing social environment. Erikson's psychosocial developmental theory suggests a synchrony between individual growth and social expectations (Bretherton, 1997).

According to Erikson, each stage of development presents its own challenges, which he labeled "crises." **Table 2** outlines Erikson's stages of psychosocial development. For Erikson (1963), these crises are psychosocial in nature because they involve psychological needs of the individual, conflicting with the needs of society. For example, Erikson's first psychosocial crisis occurs during the first year or so of life. The crisis is one of Trust vs. Mistrust. During this stage, the infant is uncertain about the world in which he or she lives. To resolve these feelings of uncertainty, the infant looks towards his or her primary caregiver for stability and consistency of care. When the care the infant receives is consistent, predictable, and reliable, he or she will develop a sense of trust which extends to other relationships, and the infant will feel secure even

when threatened (Erikson, 1968; McLeod, 2013). The successful development of one's

personality depends on meeting and overcoming tasks or crises at each stage of development

(Fleming, 2004).

The following table represents Erikson's (1959, 1968) psychosocial stages of

development (McLeod, 2013).

Table 2

Erikson's Stages of Development

Stage of Development	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue	Age
1	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope	Infancy (0-1½)
2	Autonomy vs. Shame	Will	Early Childhood (1½-3)
3	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose	Play Age (3-5)
4	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competency	School Age (5-12)
5	Ego Identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity	Adolescence (12-18)
6	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love	Young Adult (18-40)
7	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care	Adulthood (40-65)
8	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	Maturity (65+)

At each stage, it is assumed that the resolution of psychosocial stages will be positive, given "an average expectable environment" (Bretherton, 1997; Hartmann, 1964). An average expectable environment means that if the interactions of an individual's needs and abilities are met by social demands and rewards, there will be a resolution of Erikson's internal "crises." The individual will emerge from that developmental stage with the appropriate ego strength for his or her age (Bretherton, 1997).

Overview of Erikson's Psychosocial Stages

Stage One: Trust vs. Mistrust

In Erikson's first stage, the child's main and most crucial social interaction is with his or her mother or mother-figure. Erikson believed it is through these interactions that the child learns both trust and mistrust. The child does so by learning to accept the mother's absence without undue anxiety. Upon the mother's return, the child begins to learn to trust that difficulties in life will eventually result in a positive outcome. The child gains a sense of hope that is needed to meet challenges that will be presented at later stages in life. If not, the child will become withdrawn and lack hope. Caregivers help a child develop a sense of trust when they provide care, reliability, and affection. A lack of care, reliability, and affection will lead to mistrust.

Stage Two: Autonomy vs. Shame

During the second stage, the struggle of the toddler is to gain a sense of autonomy or control of bodily functions, as well as gross and fine motor skills such as walking, talking, and later dressing and feeding oneself. In this stage, the child wants to complete these activities without the help of an adult. Parents in this stage are aware that the child cannot do all these things by himself or herself, so parents are tasked with establishing rules or standards of proper behavior. Children in this stage must learn the meaning of the word "no." Parents who over-

control their children will lead to children feeling shame and doubt in themselves. Erikson noted that different cultures have different standards of expectations for children's behaviors. The overall outcome of overcoming the crisis of this stage is to create a sense of independence.

Stage Three: Initiative vs. Guilt

This stage occurs during the preschool years, when play and imagination take on important roles. Initiative is the ability to assess and begin things independently, such as planning activities and accomplishing tasks. Children have their sense of initiative reinforced by being given the freedom and encouragement to play. Through this freedom, the child gains a sense of purpose. Guilt occurs when the child's developing conscience feels in competition with the parent and the parent's wishes. Parents can instill too much guilt if they insist too strongly on "good" behavior. The anticipated outcome of this stage is for the child to develop a sense of purpose through his or her initial attempts to assert control and power over the environment.

Stage Four: Industry vs. Inferiority

In this stage, Erikson believed the main objective is reaching a sense of competence; the idea is that the child who is ill prepared for school or lacks the tools for learning from life's experience will despair. The child is facing new social and academic demands as he or she enters school. According to Erikson, the child in this stage learns to win recognition by producing things. For most children, this is a period of relative calm.

Stage Five: Ego Identity vs. Role Confusion

The anticipated outcome of this stage is to reach a consistency in an individual's core sense of self. The basic tasks of this period are to separate from his or her parents and to assume an identity of one's own. Many people do not fully succeed in completing these two tasks until they are well beyond their teen years. Erikson's fifth stage was the focus of this investigation and

was explained further throughout this investigation.

Stage Six: Intimacy vs. Isolation

The anticipated outcome of this stage is to reach a sense of intimacy, closeness, and mutual sharing with another. According to Erikson, intimacy between two people as a couple is only possible when each has developed a strong sense of identity, separately. Conflict occurs when two people are to grow and mature together but have not matured separately. Isolation can be developed in the form of divorce. Failure in this stage can lead to feelings of loneliness and lack of loving relationships with other people.

Stage Seven: Generativity vs. Stagnation

During this stage, the individual's main concerns are career and family—in other words, features of their life that will outlast them. Adults in this stage begin to create and nurture things that bring about a positive change that benefits others. According to Erikson, middle-aged people tend to be engaged in inventive and important work and family matters. Important relationships are the ones within family, workplace, church, and other communities. This is the stage when individuals assume bigger responsibilities. People in this stage feel happy by making a positive difference and building a good legacy or helping others through their own crisis. Stagnation refers to the failure to find a way to contribute.

Stage Eight: Ego Integrity vs. Despair

During this period, the individual experiences a sense of integrity when he or she feels proud of his or her achievements and is satisfied with the life being lived. With the experience of integrity, the individual has few regrets or recriminations. Development of a sense of integrity, however, is truly possible only if the person has successfully resolved the other seven psychosocial crises. With successful resolution of earlier crises, old-aged people are likely to

reflect on their lives positively and attain wisdom even in the face of imminent death. The resolution of the crisis is for older adults to look back on life and feel a sense of fulfillment. Individuals who are unsuccessful in this stage experience despair or disgust; older-aged individuals feel that they have been unproductive in their lives and experience many regrets.

Continuation of Erikson's Fifth Stage of Development

Erikson's (1963) first four psychosocial stages (trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry) occur during childhood. Ideally, they are successfully resolved by the age of 11 years. These stages serve as the preparatory foundation for the identity crisis of adolescence, which leads to Erikson's arguably most popular life stage: Erikson's fifth stage of development. Of all Eriksonian stages, Identity vs. Role Confusion is the most researched (Marcia & Josselson, 2013).

Erikson's fifth stage details the development of the adolescent child, focusing on the conflict of Identity vs. Role Confusion. Identity according to Erikson, does not exist before this stage because the youth has not experienced the integration of selfhood as a psychosocial problem (McAdams, 2001). The child before adolescence may have a sense of identity. However, a sense of identity is not fully developed until that sense has been tested by societal pressures. Erikson believed that, in adolescence, the timing of these psychosocial problems emerges because of the rise of gender and sexual development (Erikson, 1968; McAdams, 2001).

Erikson (1968) viewed identity development as the central issue of adolescence (Harper, 2007). Erikson (1968) described "the psychological aspect of adolescence" (p. 91) as an identity crisis in which one is to reexamine and reinterpret one's childhood self and begin to craft the adult whom one will become (Altschul et al., 2006, p. 1155). It is at this time that individuals first explore the ideological and occupational options available in society and experiment with a

wide range of social roles (McAdams, 2001). Adolescents also begin making provisional

commitments to their life plans (Marcia, 1980; McAdams, 2001). Erikson believed that when

adolescents successfully navigate the identity crisis, they emerge with a clear understanding of

their individual identity and, as a result, can easily share this "self" with others (Ragelienė,

2016).

Erikson (1959) associated adolescent identity exploration with behaviors that may

include rebelliousness and mood swings. This process of identity exploration is often confusing

and difficult for parents and other adults in the adolescent's life. The adolescents are learning to

define and invent themselves and aspects of different identities are being "tried out." These

different layers associated with the self may not be in harmony with the values and beliefs of

their parental figures or society's defined role for the adolescent. In Erikson's fifth stage of

development, supportive parental figures and a supportive society are crucial in the development

of the identity. Pathology erupts when the child is not able to reconcile the confrontation of the

opposing forces. Positive outcomes of this stage are awareness of uniqueness of self, knowledge

and integration of roles in society, feelings of continuity of the self over time, and fidelity

(Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010). Negative outcomes are reflected in the inability to identify

appropriate roles in their life (Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010).

Failing the Identity Crisis

When youth fail to navigate the identity crisis successfully, they emerge from this stage

with an uncertainty about who they are. Ego identity and identity diffusion (Erikson, 1963) refer

to polar outcomes of the hypothesized psychosocial crisis occurring in late adolescence. If one

emerges from the crisis with an ego identity, the individual will be committed to an occupation

and ideology. The occupation may be a variation of the parental wishes (Marcia, 1966). With

respect to ideology, the adolescent or young adult will seem to have reevaluated past beliefs and achieved a resolution that leaves them free to act (Marcia, 1966). The young adult with a developed identity does not appear as if he or she would be overwhelmed by sudden shifts in his or her environment or by unexpected responsibilities (Marcia, 1966).

Erikson believed that when youth fail to navigate the identity crisis, they can become needy and dependent. They may take on the identity given to them by their families. This resembles Marcia's (1966) idea of identity-diffusion. When an individual fails the identity crisis, the hallmark of this failure is a lack of commitment (Marcia, 1966). As he or she emerges from adolescence, the individual has neither decided upon an occupation nor is much concerned about it. Although the individual may indicate a preferred occupation, he or she seems to have little comprehension of the career's daily activities and undertakings. Their lackluster approach to this commitment gives the impression that the choice could be abandoned should other opportunities arise (Marcia, 1966). The identity-diffused individual is either uninterested in and/or undecided on a specific philosophical outlook on life (Marcia, 1966).

Those who struggle to navigate the crisis successfully tend to fail at the two basic tasks of this period. The first task is to separate oneself from one's parents, especially the same-sex parent (Erikson, 1963). The second task in this stage is to assume an identity of one's own through exploration (Erikson, 1963). Both Erikson and Freud believed that youth will experiment with different social skills and social strategies. This exploration includes ritual courtship practices traditionally known in our own society as dating.

Erikson and the Arab-American Family

Ajrouch (2000) observed that in Dearborn's Arab-American community, both community and family are emphasized. Interdependence within the family unit is characteristic of Arab

culture (El-Islam, 2008). Separating oneself from the parental nucleus constitutes inappropriate behavior. Adolescents who separate from the family are viewed as moving away from the culture. Conflict surfaces in families when there is a perceived threat of loss of the original culture. As noted, the first task of Erikson's fifth stage is to separate oneself from one's parents, especially the same-sex parent. Acculturative stress, religiosity, and psychological adjustment are some of the issues observed among Arab-American adolescents (Goforth et al., 2014). "The Arab-American youth experiences challenges related to maintaining their heritage culture's traditions and values and the degree to which they participate in mainstream American traditions" (p. 1). These challenges often result in parent-child conflict. Erikson's theory can be used to help understand internal conflicts among Arab-American adolescents.

The second part of Erikson's fifth stage of development is the maturation of sexual feelings, which is done through socialization techniques such as ritual courtship practices or dating. The majority of research in the areas of identity and intimacy has been based on Erikson's (1950, 1963, 1968, 1980, 1994) work. Inspired by and extending from Erikson's writings, much of the current research on identity statuses has focused on the association between identity and intimacy (Adams & Marshall, 1996; Kroger, 1989, 1993; Marcia & Archer, 1993). Other researchers have also identified adolescence as the period of transition in which individuals become interested in sex and are biologically capable of having children (Albert & Steinberg, 2011).

According to Erikson, in order for adolescents to reach a level of intimacy (Erikson's sixth stage), they must satisfy a need to belong (Horst, 1995). Satisfying the need to belong is done through the socialization of the self. Socialization leads to identity formation. "Social settings are a source of influence in shaping the identity formation processes" (Adams &

Marshall, 1996, p. 435). Social behavior and societal pressures are often conflict areas for Arab-American families because the social experience of the United States differs from that experience in their native country. To understand the Arab-American adolescent experience, one must pay attention to the underlying elements that drive their social reality. Culture dictates social relationships, adherence to traditional dress, and the overall social experience. Adolescent "dating" is forbidden. Arab-American adolescents are raised with the traditions and values of their parents, and they must reconcile them with culturally diverse surroundings. Two conflicting forces emerge: the pressure to remain within the structure of the family and the individual's need for a sense of uniqueness.

> At a glance, the process of socialization and human development appears to be based on the paradoxical association between two seemingly opposing factors; that is, the duality between agency and communion, individuality *vs*. collectivity, self *vs*. other. (Adams & Marshall, 1996, p. 430)

Ethnic Arab immigrants to Western countries are known to experience divided loyalties between the ways of the new country and those of the old, and the dilemma "of whether to reject or embrace assimilation, secularism, and Western education" (Fares, 1991; Jabbra, 1991, p. 43), among other phenomena. There arises a clash between the need to belong and restrictive parental standards for behavior. Furthermore, according to Erikson, adolescents satisfying a need to belong call for an increased sense of and desire for individuality and independence from parental control. Arab-American adolescents seeking a sense of uniqueness are perceived as rejecting their culture. For example, the preference for and fluent use of English with close friends is viewed as desertion of the native language. Their acculturation to mainstream society is halted by the parental fear of Western conformity. This pull-back from acculturation brings about

conflict since greater acculturation to mainstream society is associated with higher levels of life

satisfaction (Awad, 2010). In addition, research has shown that belonging to the "normal," or

popular peer group, is positively associated with better adolescent adaptation to the environment

(Heaven et al., 2005).

Gender and Religion

Gender and religion influence experiences of Arab-American identity and identity

contention. Both concepts illuminate the challenges hindering Arab-Americans and Arab-

American immigrants in a complex network of identity formation. Identity can be assigned or

selected. In most modern technologically complex societies, it is selected (Adams & Marshall,

1996). Selected identity is based on the values and goals of the individual, while an assigned

identity is based on the values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people. In Arab-

American culture, among other variables, identity is often assigned and shaped mainly by

religion and gender. Naber (2005) found that many Arab-American young adults believed

their parents had transmitted an "Arab-Muslim" identity to them throughout childhood and

adolescence.

Generally speaking, in Eastern cultures there is a greater influence of the social

expectation on individual development compared to Western cultures. Gender stereotypes

regarding social expectations and social roles influence a sort of default behavior in women of

Eastern cultures. Western, or individualistic cultures, tend to emphasize behaviors pertaining to

personal goals, while Eastern, or collectivistic cultures, tend to emphasize behaviors pertaining

to group cohesion and community cooperation (Matsumoto & Kupperbusch, 2001). We then see

conflict and confusion when the Arab-American adolescent is being influenced by the Western

model of adolescent development.

Gender

Arab-American identities and relationships are critically associated with gender. Gender is a central aspect to the unfolding of an Arab-American identity that one finds in the ethnic enclave of Dearborn (Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007). Gender is the mechanism that navigates the undertaking of social life in the Arab culture. Intergenerational differences on the constructs of masculinity, femininity, and marriage sometimes give rise to conflict in the Arab family.

In Erikson's identity stage of development, the adolescent has to learn the roles he or she will occupy as an adult. In an environment where an identity may be assigned by gender, Erikson (1968) described the outcome as role confusion. Role confusion involves individuals not being sure about themselves or their place in society. For example, the Arab-American daughter may feel pressured by her family to undertake the occupation of a teacher, which is an overwhelmingly female profession, because it provides the "appropriate" lifestyle for a girl. The conflict between societal pressure and her own wants may lead to confusion in her occupational identity. An Arab-American boy is expected to grow up and take care of his family financially. There may be shame associated with choosing an occupation that does not allow him to do so. He may choose to be a stay-at-home father, which would be conflicting with the traditional "breadwinner" role of Arab-American males.

Religion-Islam

Religion plays an important part in Arab culture (Nassar-McMillan & Hakim-Larson, 2003). We often see struggles between the cultures and traditions of Arab immigrants and the "mainstream" culture in the United States (Ajrouch, 2004). Religion is one particular segment of culture. Although there is a large Arab Christian population, the majority of Arab-Americans arriving in the United States are Muslim (Ajrouch, 2000). In Dearborn, the size of the Muslim

community is significant, as evidenced by the presence of the largest mosque in the United

States, the Islamic Center of America. The Dearborn Public Schools close for major Islamic

holidays. Islam presents a way of life for Muslims that may present significant additional

challenges for Muslim adolescents in the United States (Sheikh, 2009). Arab-American Muslims

struggle with issues of acculturation, difficulties maintaining religious beliefs, and gender

relations. In addition to the normative developmental challenges shared with all adolescents,

"Muslim youth must cope with challenges specific to their religious identity within the current

geopolitical context" (Ahmed & Ezzeddine, 2009, p. 160).

Religion influences how adolescents enact an Arab identity, and religion is a central

aspect of Arab ethnicity in America (Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007). Nassar-McMillan and Hakim-

Larson (2003) found that Muslims have had a more difficult time assimilating into mainstream

society in the United States than have their Christian counterparts because Muslims adopt more

traditions that appear to conflict with mainstream American culture. In addition, Muslims are

more vulnerable to discrimination and bigotry (Awad, 2010). The media portrayal of Muslims

has been destructive in the western world (Al Wekhian, 2016; Khawaja, 2016). The way in

which Muslims and Arab immigrants are portrayed by the media can make a big difference in

how people react to that group of individuals. Biased media coverage and religious affiliation

affect American attitudes towards socializing with Arab Muslims. Arab-American adolescents

might have higher risks of being victimized than other minority populations due to

discrimination, immigration, religious beliefs, and negative portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in

the media (Awad, 2010; El-Sayed & Galea, 2009; Wray-Lake et al., 2008).

In Erikson's (1968) fifth stage of development, the individual is attempting to gain the

virtue of fidelity. Fidelity involves being able to commit oneself to others on the basis of

accepting others, even when there may be ideological differences (McLeod, 2013). The virtue is

gained after a combination of *exploration* (active search among alternatives) and *commitment*

(demonstrated investment) in important life areas, including occupational choice and ideology

(religious and political beliefs). When religious beliefs are assigned to the adolescent as part of

the culture of Arab-American families, this gives rise to crises between what they may want to

commit to and what is assigned to them.

Psychological Stressors as a Result of the Identity Crisis

Erikson (1968) believed that when youth successfully navigate this crisis, they emerge

with a clear understanding of their individual identity and can easily share this "self" with others;

therefore, they are healthy and well-adjusted. An individual who fails to resolve the crisis in

identity development will experience identity confusion (Erikson, 1968). The confusion includes

doubt about one's identity and roles, and can even lead to psychotic episodes (Erikson, 1968).

Marked social isolation or withdrawal, symptoms of problematic mental health, is the result of

failing the identity crisis when the individual reaches young adulthood (Erikson, 1968). A

differentiated sense of self, as distinct and separate from other persons, is a critical

developmental achievement. It has profound implications for the quality of later interpersonal

relations. Self-boundary deficits have been implicated in the whole range of psychopathology,

including schizophrenia, character neuroses, and opiate addiction (Acklin, 1986; Blatt & Ritzler,

1974).

Arab-Americans: A Vulnerable Population

Vulnerable populations are defined as a group that is at increased risk for poor physical,

psychological, and social health outcomes (Derose et al., 2007). In the psychological domain,

vulnerable populations include those with chronic mental conditions, such as schizophrenia,

bipolar disorder, major depression, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, as well as those with a history of alcohol and/or substance abuse, and those who are suicidal or prone to homelessness. In the social realm, vulnerable populations include those living in abusive families, the homeless, immigrants, and refugees. Immigrants and the stigma associated with some form of immigration status have been long identified as a vulnerable population (Derose et al., 2007).

A combination of external factors, such as biological maturation and social expectations, affects the progression of the developmental stages of identity. Cultural expectation is another example of a factor that is external and outside the child's control. Erikson (1970) stressed the importance of cultural influences on development. Parents and their support of exploration of identity also affect the progression of the developmental stage of identity. Arab parents struggle with relinquishing their protective roles. While Erikson called for parents to establish rules or standards of proper behavior, he did note that different cultures have different standards and expectations for children's behaviors. The formation of the identity of the Arab-American adolescent is affected by the levels of acculturation of the child and the family, immigration status, and the psychological challenges involved in this transitional stage. Like people of color, the developmental process reveals itself differently for individuals from a minority group than for Whites (Harper, 2007).

Without the psychosocial skills imperative for optimal emotional function, Arab-American children, who are ill equipped for the rigors of the adolescent identity crisis, can experience a plethora of problematic behaviors and debilitating emotional disorders. Critical events, such as disasters, conflicts, wars, and health epidemics, occur with social and psychological consequences that often compromise people's ability to function day to day,

leading to the development of maladaptive ways of coping. These behaviors and emotional handicaps, in turn, confound the child on every level of personal, academic, and social endeavor and accomplishment (Erikson, 1963; Harter, 1990; Josselson, 1994; Waterman, 1992).

Self-Esteem and Arab-Americans

When there is a crisis in the developmental stage, adolescents must employ coping behaviors to ward off pathology. The psychosocial crisis, according to Erikson's (1970) theory, occurs "when one makes psychological efforts to adjust to the demands of one's social environment at each stage of development" (p. 118). These psychological stressors can take the shape of different features, one being low self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to an individual's feelings of his or her own worthiness and competence (Muris et al., 2003). When there is little discrepancy between the ideal and the perceived real self, the individual will experience high self-esteem (Muris et al., 2003). Arab-American adolescents who are having difficulty integrating the two selves would be more susceptible to having low self-esteem. Those Arab-American adolescents who are furthermore having difficulty creating a social environment, where they feel a sense of belonging, also are at risk of low self-esteem. Most socialization literature has stated, "the individual and social functions of socialization serve psychological and social well-being through feelings that the self is significant or matters (often defined as self-esteem) and perceptions of mattering to others" (Adams & Marshall, 1996, p. 430; Erikson, 1964; Rosenberg, 1985). Not feeling as if you "fit in" leads to low self-esteem. According to Harter (1993, as cited in Muris et al., 2003), "low self-esteem is associated with depression, anxiety, and maladjustment both in school and social relationships" (p. 1792).

Cultural Resources for Arab-Americans

Arab-American adolescents are at risk for poor psychological outcomes because of their exposure to socio-cultural adversities. Ahmed et al. (2011) examined "the role of socio-cultural adversities (discrimination and acculturative stress) and cultural resources (ethnic identity, religious support and religious coping) in terms of their direct impact on psychological distress" (p. 181). The study looked at 240 Arab-American adolescents and their resources to combat such socio-cultural adversities. The results of the study indicated a strong positive relationship between socio-cultural adversities and psychological distress. To counter such distress, the research supported the role of cultural resources as promotive of Arab-American adolescent psychological well-being.

While Arab-American adolescents may be at risk for psychological distress because of their exposure to socio-cultural adversities, cultural resources may help counteract the effect of these adversities by serving a protective role. Cultural resources that may be particularly salient for Arab-American adolescents included "ethnic identity, religious coping and religious support" (Ahmed et al., 2011, p. 181). The study found that the cultural resources factor was negatively related to psychological distress. Those adolescents, who reported using more religious coping and having more ethnic identity and religious support, were less likely to indicate that they were psychologically distressed. Ethnic identity has consistently demonstrated a negative relationship with depression (Roberts et al., 1999; Yasui et al., 2004) and anxiety (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995). Religious support refers to the social support that one derives from members, leaders, or clergy in their congregations (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Increased religious support has been linked to lower levels of depression (Fiala et al., 2002) and decreased emotional distress (Pargament et al., 2000).

These findings suggested the importance of the awareness of cultural identity and resources when working with ethnic minority adolescents, especially as they face discrimination and acculturative stress (Marcia, 1966). Communities for which religion plays a central role may utilize religious coping in the face of socio-cultural stressors. Communities can do so by integrating networks of religious support into the everyday lives of the adolescents. In addition, creating lines of communication regarding ethnic identity with religious guides in the community would benefit ethnic minority adolescents.

The Identity Crisis in the Classroom

According to Erikson (1968), the main and most important developmental tasks for adolescents are to solve the Identity vs. Role Confusion crisis, to construct their own unique sense of identity, and to find the social environment in which they belong and have meaningful relationships with other people (Chen et al., 2007). The school environment is viewed as one of the main social environments for the learning of the self, with some researchers viewing the purpose of schooling as the development of the individual child (Connelly et al., 2008).

School Climate

On average, students spend 6-7 hours a day at school (U.S. Department of Education, 2007), where they experience pressure to adapt to the school climate. The school climate is the social system of shared norms and expectations (Booth et al., 2014). In Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of human development, developmental outcomes are shaped by the interplay between the characteristics of the individual and the characteristics of the individual's environment (Booth et al., 2014). Eccles and Midgley (1990) noted that problems arise when the early adolescent's developmental stage does not fit the environment, creating a lack of stage environment fit. According to Erikson (1968), the crisis that adolescents experience entails the

struggle to find a balance between developing an individual identity and having a sense of being accepted and "fitting in."

School Climate and Identity

Identity is acknowledged as complex and multidimensional, as is the conceptualization of school climate. While there are many categorical devices to conceptualize school climate, as a working definition, school climate includes the total environmental quality within a school building (Anderson, 1982). School climate has a direct impact on identity development, especially in the socialization process. La Guardia and Ryan (2002) found that a school climate that fosters students' positive social interactions and social acceptance would likely benefit identity development. A student's environment and interpersonal relationships ultimately affect his or her growth and development. Researchers Riekie and Aldridge (2015) looked at the relationship between school climate, student well-being, resilience, and moral identity from the student's perspective. The researchers conducted a quantitative study of 618 eleventh-grade students aged 16-17. They examined identity as it related to six constructs: teacher support, school connectedness, rule clarity, reporting and seeking help, affirming diversity, and peer connectedness. The researchers found those six constructs to produce resilience, moral identity, and overall promotion of well-being in students (Riekie & Aldridge, 2015).

The school climate is an environment that can be very stressful for adolescents. Adolescence is a time of great change: changes in body shape and size, changes in the voice, and changes in appearance. There are also new expectations for social and academic behaviors, and adjustments have to be made as the students transition from middle to high school. According to Erikson (1963), life can be very stressful, especially in the earlier stages of transition (Fleming,

2004). A stressed child will not be able to learn appropriately, which further calls for the need for a self-affirming school environment.

Arab-Americans and the School Culture

Research on self-affirmation suggested that it can minimize the anxiety, stress, and defensiveness associated with threats to our sense of self (Legault et al., 2012). Threats to self-affirmation include acts of bullying, which is defined as "a specific form of aggressive behavior and can be described as a situation when a student is exposed repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students" (Olweus, 1991, p. 412). One reason that children may be bullied is because of a real or perceived difference from a norm (Ojala & Nesdale, 2004). Minority students appear to be "easier" targets for bullying, with research showing that minority students were significantly more likely to report a negative bullying climate than non-minority students (Langdon & Preble, 2008). Therefore, aside from difficulty in mediating their identity in a different system, Arab-Americans are faced with a profound and legitimate fear of demonstrating that identity. Bullying is strongly associated with stress, which can consequently lead to negative health outcomes. In particular, victims of bullying are at an increased risk of mental health problems (e.g., depression and anxiety) and psychosomatic ailments (e.g., headaches and poor school adjustment; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

Research conducted by Gumma-Swiatkowski (2012) explored the relationship between bullying victimization and levels of acculturation. Gumma-Świątkowski looked at the link between bullied Arab-American youths and the degree to which they have become acculturated. The study involved 200 middle and high school Arab-American students from a metropolitan area with a large population of Arab-Americans. The participants completed the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire and an adaptation of the Acculturation Scale for Mexican

Americans-II adapted for use with an Arab population (Gumma-Świątkowski, 2012). The

ANOVA results suggested that the level of acculturation of an individual cannot be correlated

with the level of bullying victimization to which they are exposed. However, research has

identified that adolescent immigrants' bullying experience is affected by their adaptation to the

new environment and culture (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Peguero, 2009). In summary, the

association between race/ethnicity and bullying is complex, and is influenced and aggravated by

acculturation stress (Bauman & Summers, 2009).

Self-Perceptions of the Adolescent Arab-American

Self-perception refers to the way in which people come to understand their own attitudes

and beliefs based on their behaviors in given situations. Environmental stability and

developmental changes affect an individual's self-concept. An individual's self-perception, or

"self-concept" according to Rogers (1959), often expands to include the perception of others of

their worth or esteem as a person. Rosenberg (1965) suggested that self-concept is basically an

attitude, either positive or negative, towards one's self. As children develop into adolescents,

they continue to develop their self-concept. Developmental changes in self-perception may have

implications for the etiology of depression (AlGhamdi et al., 2011).

Arab-Americans, as a minority group, are continuously undergoing cultural, social and

political changes. Compared with other ethnic groups, Arab-American students tend to have the

lowest self- esteem (Tabbah et al., 2011). Negative or low self-esteem associated with

perturbations in self-perception are linked to depressive symptoms (Abela & Taylor, 2003;

AlGhamdi et al., 2011; Kim & Cicchetti, 2006). Developing a sense of identity includes feelings

and attitudes a person has toward his or her ethnic group (Awad, 2010; Phinney, 2003; Tajfel,

1981). Unfortunately, one common characteristic for most Arab-Americans is the experience

of prejudice and discrimination (Awad, 2010). Specifically, Arab-Americans' religious identification as Muslim was found to be the strongest predictor of perceived discrimination for Arab-Americans (Awad, 2010). Perceived discrimination is often the result of stigmatizing representation of Arabs in the media. American media's negative stereotypes of Arabs follow a child from his or her early years through adulthood, resulting in psychological distress. Moradi and Hasan (2004) examined the link between perceived discrimination, self-esteem, and psychological distress as well as the mediating effects of personal control. Some of the negative psychological costs to discrimination include loss of self-esteem and well-being (Awad, 2010; Lee et al., 2007).

Self-Perceptions and Mental Health of the Arab-American Adolescent

As social scientists long ago concluded, immigrants invariably experience processes of "adapting" and "adjusting" to life in a new country (Eleftheriadou, 1997; Ng, 1998). Part of the obstacles and issues that affect the Arab-American community of Dearborn, Michigan include the mental health needs of the resident, especially the immigrant population. The influx of immigrants, including refugees, has presented a public health care challenge (Jamil et al., 2002; Kira, 1999). Over the past century, immigration has been linked to mental health. Recognizing and appropriately treating mental health problems among new immigrants and refugees in primary care poses a challenge because of specific stressors associated with migration and resettlement (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Strong evidence has shown that some groups of migrants have an elevated incidence of psychotic disorders after migration (Cantor-Graae, 2007; Coid et al., 2008; Jarvis, 2007; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Morgan et al., 2008). Depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are prevalent among this new group of immigrants to the United States (e.g., Farrag, 1999; Gorman, 2001; Gorst-Unsworth & Goldenberg, 1998; Takeda,

2000). The rate of substance abuse, which is usually rare in individuals of Arab descent, has been found to be relatively high in this sub-group (Jamil et al., 2000; Jamil et al., 2002).

School and Mental Health

Stress is a natural human response to pressure when faced with challenging situations. When we are facing a challenge or threat, our stress system releases cortisol, the "fight or flight" stress hormone. This release provides a boost of energy and focus to deal with the stressor. Adolescence, a time of physiological changes, is marked by changes in how an individual responds to stressors. Specifically, adolescence is marked by significant shifts in hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis reactivity, resulting in heightened stress-induced hormonal responses (Romeo, 2013). When the school presents as a stressor for the adolescent, they are repeatedly exposed to the same stressor, possibly resulting in difficulties with mental health.

Comprehension about how school culture is linked to a student's mental health is underdeveloped, regardless of its principal presence in students' lives. School experiences have lasting implications for a person's life, especially emotionally and behaviorally (Milkie & Warner, 2011). "The study of selfhood (individuality) in adolescence, within the psychiatric sciences, has remained long committed to fundamental writings on identity and its connections to puberty, conflict-free and conflict-laden energies, changes in the family dynamics and the second (final) resolution of the oedipal complex (e.g. see Freud, 1936, 1965; Blos, 1962)" (Adams & Marshall, 1996, p. 429).

Cultural Attitudes Towards Mental Health

Arab culture tends to focus less than Western culture on encouraging self-reflection and the expression of emotions (Haboush, 2007). Mental health services tend to be frowned upon still in the Arab culture and, most often, the decision to seek professional medical help is often made

by the family as a collective (El-Islam, 2008). The somatization of symptoms due to the stigma and shame often associated with admitting to a mental health problem has also been noted by many clinicians who work with Arabs and Arab-Americans (Nassar-McMillan & Hakim-Larson, 2003). There is a growing discussion among mental health practitioners on "how we should incorporate multicultural sensitivity into the counseling practice" (p. 150). "Because of the role of fate in the teaching of Islam, Arab-Americans are thought to be survival-oriented rather than insight-oriented" (p. 150). The approach to counseling Arab-Americans is often recommended through family or system approaches (Nobles & Sciarra, 2000). Still, the understanding of how to approach the counseling of Arab-Americans is underdeveloped in the literature. Literature on counseling in light of negative stereotypes and discrimination has focused on African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. Until recently, discussions of Arab-American populations were absent (Nassar-McMillan & Hakim-Larson, 2003).

Criticisms of Erikson's Identity Concept

Erikson's notion of adolescence as a time of identity flux is well accepted but problematic (Oyserman et al., 2001). Most criticism of Erikson can be looked at through two questions: (a) Is it true that we have a fixed identity for life? and (b) Is it true that the notion of identity is applicable to all? (Head, 2002). Erikson implied that once identity has been achieved, it remains fairly constant. Critics of his theory believe that Erikson did not take into consideration the rapid changing of life (Head, 2002), nor did Erikson account fully for the development of intimacy or other expressions of interpersonal attachment (Franz & White, 1985). Franz and White (1985) concluded that the major shortcoming of Erikson's theory is not, as some feminists have argued, "a male theory but that it fails to account adequately for the

processes of interpersonal attachment that are essential to the development of both males and females" (p. 224).

Searches on Erikson's problematic identity crisis result in minimal research on Muslim identities. Of the minimal results, most of the research has focused on British Muslim identities or identity developments of Arab-Americans outside of the United States (Basit, 2017; Hutnik & Street, 2010). This is remarkable, since the climate of Islamophobia was developed in Western societies. 'Islamophobia' is the response to the threat, or perceptions of threat, to Islam (Sayyid, 2014). 'Islamophobia' is lived and practiced differently in each of these nations because it has been created out of different national histories of racism (Poynting & Mason, 2007). Immigration patterns differ as well as levels of discrimination. It is important to understand Arab-Americans specific to the local and global culture in which they live. For example, Muslim Arab-Americans living in Middle-Eastern communities and Muslim societies will face different levels of discrimination, if any, than Muslim Arab-Americans living in Western societies.

Erikson's arguably most popular life stage is the fifth stage of development, in which the child becomes confronted by societal pressures. Foremost of societal pressures among Arab-American adolescents in Dearborn is the need to navigate multiple, complicated relationships with their peers, parents, and teachers. These various relationships are sources of social and internal conflict. Adolescents in minority groups struggle to feel that they belong to the dominant mainstream White culture. They struggle to feel accepted and build close relationships with their White peer groups. So, as a result, adolescents begin to seek to conform to the behavioral norms of the peer group with which they identify themselves. Erikson's work on identity and adolescence is relevant to the Arab-American adolescent population because it brings about an additional perspective on a minority group to an already established body of knowledge. In

contemporary identity research, Erikson is seldom associated with work on culture, race, and ethnicity. This lack of association is ironic because not only did Erikson consider these factors, but they figured prominently into his theorizing (Syed & Fish, 2018).

Relatively little research has focused solely on Arab-American students and the relationship between identity and adverse climates. Additionally, much research has been done on adolescents' problems and their relationship to self-esteem, but a bulk amount of this research is on Caucasian students, disregarding that Arab-American adolescents are at risk for poor psychological outcomes because of their exposure to socio-cultural adversities.

Summary

The evolving research in developmental social psychology on the concept of identity argues that identity is an ongoing process. It can be altered when "self-awareness, self-focusing, or self-consciousness is heightened or incongruity exists between the self-as-known (real self) and the self that could be (ideal self)" (Adams & Marshall, 1996, p. 436). Individuals, regardless of origin, need a sense of uniqueness and a sense of belonging to function successfully (Adams & Marshall, 1996). While much research has been done on adolescents' problems and their relationship to self-esteem, a large amount of the research is on White youth. Lacking a sense of belonging and/or uniqueness is of concern among adolescent Arab-Americans who are being raised among a wide range of conflicting roles and relationships. Successful identity development integrates that wide range of conflicting roles and relationships (McAdams, 2001).

"The structure of the life systems in which the individual is embedded will function, in part, to shape the processes involved in identity formation" (Adams & Marshall, 1996, p. 435). Arab-American adolescents struggle with societal pressure and family expectations that influence the "crises" that Erikson discussed in his theory on identity formation. It is important to

note that crises are not necessarily bad. Growth, it can be argued, begins with distress. Erikson

believed that when youth successfully navigate this crisis, they emerge with a clear

understanding of their individual identity and can easily share this "self" with others; therefore,

they are healthy and well-adjusted. When the adolescent fails this crisis, it is partly due to the

discrepancy between the ideal self and the current self. "Large discrepancies create anxiety

surrounding perceived distance between what is and what should be" (Adams & Marshall, 1996,

p. 435).

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of the research was to look at the shaping of identity among Arab-American adolescents through Erik Erikson's research findings on identity statuses. According to Erikson (1968), the main and most important developmental tasks for adolescents are to solve the identity versus role-confusion crisis, construct their own unique sense of identity, and find the social environment in which they can belong and create meaningful relationships with other people (Chen et al., 2007). In Erikson's fifth stage of development, the crisis between development of an Identity vs. Role Confusion materializes, which highlights the adolescent stage of development. According to Erikson, the successful resolution of this developmental stage will produce a core strength in the truthfulness and consistency of one's core self or faith in one's ideology (Erikson, 1968; Fleming, 2004). Unsuccessful transitioning at this stage will result in the denial of a healthy role formation, which can take the form of defiance of authority or of resignation and despair (Erikson, 1968; Fleming, 2004). In this stage, adolescents are not only learning who they are, but also learning to define their role in society and invent themselves by assuming an identity of their own.

Self-perception refers to the way in which people come to understand their own attitudes and beliefs based on their behavior in given situations. According to self-perception theorists, individuals come to know their own attitudes and emotions partially by understanding them from self-observations and the circumstances in which these behaviors occur (Bem, 1972). Through the exploration of the perception of adolescent Arab-Americans on themselves, the study

allowed for rich information on emotional disturbances and subsequent pathological behaviors as adolescents transition from childhood to adulthood. Through the use of interviews with Arab-American adolescents, the study helped to frame their identity development and the role culture plays in their development of a sense of self. The interviews provided insight into ways Arab-American adolescents protect their self-esteem and behaviors in which they engage to feel a connectedness and belonging with others whom they perceive to be similar to themselves. Specifically, the study provided insight into the social patterns of Arab-American adolescents in Dearborn as they navigate their role as part of a minority group in the United States.

Research Questions

The research addressed the following two questions:

1. How does identity formation of Arab-American adolescents look within the context of Dearborn, Michigan?

2. How do adolescent Arab-Americans perceive their cultural identity within the context of the culture of Dearborn, Michigan?

Method

The research methodology was qualitative, which is the appropriate method for developing explanations of social phenomena. The fundamental elements of a qualitative approach to research are to seek to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves (Tolley et al., 2016). Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations (Tolley et al., 2016).

The qualitative research process involved data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. Qualitative research looks holistically at the data and tries to explain the system

and the complexity of that research. In order to answer the research questions, data were collected, processed, and analyzed from one primary source: participants' audio-recorded, in-depth interviews. One of the most common qualitative methods are in-depth interviews, which are optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored (Tolley et al., 2016).

Participants

The researcher conducted field research among first- and second-generation Arab-American adolescents living in the Dearborn area. For the purposes of this study, a "first-generation" immigrant refers to a foreign-born citizen or resident who has immigrated to the United States, while "second-generation" refers to the U.S.-born children of foreign-born parents. The youths and their families were of Arab descent and identified as Muslims. The participants were purposefully selected because of their ethnic background, religion, and age. The age of participants were 13-17 years. For the purposes of this research, the focus was on the intersection of those adolescent years and the teenage years, generally defined as ages 13-19 (Huffaker & Calvert, 2005). Specifically, the research sample began at age 13 and extended through age 17, before legal status is acquired since many youth still live at home during those years, thereby providing a more homogeneous sample than if some of the research sample was in junior high school while others were in college. Therefore, this investigation refers to this 13-17 year-old age group as adolescents or teens. The 13-17 year-old age group is still within the parameters of Erikson's adolescent stage of development—between the ages of 12 and 18.

The research adapted nonprobability sampling, a process that selects participants because they are available, convenient, or represent some characteristic the investigator wants to study (Kothari, 2004). Nonprobability sampling, or non-random sampling, is best for this research

because of the ability to select the participants purposely based on the predetermined criteria

listed above. For purposive sampling, a researcher has a specific purpose in mind and

participants who suit the purpose of the study are included. Perhaps the most common reason for

using non-probability sampling is that it is less costly than probability sampling and can often be

implemented more quickly (Etikan et al., 2016).

Inclusion Criteria

The researcher conducted field research among first- and second-generation Arab-

American adolescents living in the Dearborn area.

1. The youths and their families were of Arab descent and identified as Muslims.

2. The age of participants was 13-17 years.

3. Participants were currently attending a high school in Dearborn, Michigan.

4. Once themes emerged from the field research, the researcher interviewed school staff

    within the Dearborn Public Schools.

Sampling

In qualitative research, only a sample of a population is selected for any given study,

given the research objectives and the characteristics of the study population. The sampling for

this research study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is one of the most common

sampling strategies and includes grouping participants according to preselected criteria relevant

to the particular research question—in this case, Arab-American adolescents. The participants

selected were adolescents, aged 13-17, and were currently attending a high school in Dearborn,

Michigan. The recruitment process began simply with word-of-mouth recruiting. The researcher

is very familiar with the community of Dearborn and knows many families who fit the criteria of

the sample population being selected for the study. The researcher knows families in the

community through familial connections, as well as school and local community groups

involvement. Upon reaching out to families who fit the criteria, each family, whether they agreed

to participate or not, was then asked if they knew of additional families who also fit the criteria

and who may be interested in participating in the study. In addition, the researcher sent out an

email to Arab-American families in the community, describing the study and asking for

participants (Appendix A provides a sample of the email to parents). The emails sent to the

families were selected from the researcher's own personal electronic mailing list. The researcher

had compiled a list of the names and addresses of social contacts over the years. This list was

compiled from years of relationships the researcher has built with individuals in the Dearborn

community. From this mailing list, the researcher selected families who met the criteria of the

study and the emails were sent to the families who met those criteria. Additional participants

were sought through word-of-mouth recruiting, referral requests from participant families, and

members of the Dearborn community. The emails and word-of-mouth recruitment requesting

participants continued until the target number of participants agreed to participate in the study.

Additional recruitment methods included contacting the Arab Community Center for

Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) for recruitment, which offers a variety of programs to

empower youth to become leaders and get involved in their communities. Such programs

included ACCESS Active Community Teen Service (ACTS), which is a high school youth

program dedicated to building leadership skills through advocacy and civic engagement.

Towards the bottom of the recruitment email, the message asks the families who agree to

participate to contact the researcher via email or telephone to schedule the interview. When the

interview was scheduled, parents were notified to either attend the interview to sign the parental

consent form or provide the consent via email. Those parents who attended the interview signed

the consent and were then asked to wait outside of the interview room. Those who were not

available to attend the interview to sign the parental consent form were sent the consent form via

email and asked to sign. The child's assent was obtained privately. The location of the interviews

was at a local library in Dearborn. The researcher obtained permission from the library to rent

out private rooms available for meetings, so that the information retrieved by the participants

was not overheard by others and remained confidential.

Thirty interviews, and three necessary follow-up interviews, were conducted during the

fall of 2019 and winter of 2020. Follow-up questions for participants were developed after the

researcher completed some data analysis and obtained an initial understanding of the findings.

After the coding of the interviews, the researcher examined whether there were additional

inquiries to answer and analyze further the research questions. The qualitative approach to data

collection encourages the flexibility to change lines of inquiry and to move in new directions, as

more information and a better understanding of what relevant data are acquired.

Because the questions may have elicited minimal discomfort to the participants, they

were reminded that they were able to discontinue the interview at any point they felt

uncomfortable. The participants were also made aware that they were not obligated to answer

any questions they did not want to. Any participant expressing discomfort was provided with a

list of resources available to them for emotional support, such as the number to the teen crisis

help line and mental health providers in the Metro Detroit area.

Guidelines for Developing Interview Questions

According to Erikson (1968), the main and most important developmental tasks for

adolescents are to solve the Identity vs. Role Confusion crisis, to construct their own unique

sense of identity, and to find the social environment where they can belong and have meaningful

relationships with other people (Chen et al., 2007). The interview questions were formatted to understand this experience of the adolescents by targeting the following key areas of Erikson's theory of development.

Internal Conflicts. Erikson (1950, 1963, 1980, 1995) used the term *crisis* to describe a series of internal conflicts that are linked to developmental stages. The internal conflict of Identity vs. Identity Confusion was understood through questions centered around an idea of a sense of self. These questions addressed the participants' commitment to an occupation, a religion, and the values by which they live. The questions also assessed if there were conflicting pressures on the participants to reach those commitments.

Sense of Self. Erikson believed that adolescents who have failed to navigate the identity crisis successfully will be uncertain about who they are. Questions were formatted to explore the sense of personal identity the interviewees had. The questions also assessed whether the participants had a clear understanding of their goals and the steps needed to reach such goals (place of living, occupation, religious practice).

School Life. According to Erikson (1968), the crisis that adolescents experience represents the struggle to find a balance between developing an individual identity and having a sense of being accepted and "fitting in." Questions about the school experience helped to identify how the adolescents felt among their peers. Questions also assessed the extent to which the individuals feel connected to their peers and how they identify with their peers.

Future. According to Erikson's theory, how a person resolves the crisis will determine their personal identity and future development (Ragelienė, 2016). Questions were formatted to understand the future plans and vision of the adolescent. Questions sought to identify if the participants had an understanding of where they will be in 5 and 10 years, including their marital

status, relationships with family, occupational exploration and commitment, and roles in the community.

Perception of Self. According to Erikson's theory, during the adolescent developmental stage, youth must determine who they want to be and how they want to be perceived by others. Questions were formatted to understand how the adolescents view themselves and how they perceive others' views of them. Questions also addressed the level of discrimination participants have faced and the degree to which they have internalized that discrimination, if any.

Social Life. Erikson believed that when adolescents successfully navigate the identity crisis, they emerge with a clear understanding of their individual identity and, as a result, can easily share this "self" with others (Ragelienė, 2016). Questions attempted to understand how confident the adolescents were to associate freely with other people and how much they did so without losing their own identity. Questions also addressed an understanding of how socially connected or disconnected the adolescents were. Questions looked to identify their role among their peers and how they viewed their social experience. Were they experiencing social rejection? If so, by whom? In addition, were the participants experiencing social withdrawal or isolation?

Relationships. Both high-quality and satisfying relationships with other people (Walsh et al., 2010) and the formed sense of identity (Dumas et al., 2009) are associated with better adolescent mental health and psychological well-being. Questions addressed the relationships of love and support in the adolescent's life. Relationships included romantic relationships as well as close relationships within and outside the family. The questions also addressed the level of support the participants had among their relationships, including the quantity and quality of their support system.

Family. Erikson believed that when youth fail to navigate the crisis, they can become needy and dependent. They may take on the identity given to them by the family. Questions focused on the relationship that the adolescents had with family members and the level of identification they experienced with their parents. The questions looked at the immigration pattern in the family, as well as the level of acculturation the participants have undergone. Do the participants identify with the beliefs of their family members, or are they in contrast with their own?

Data Sources

A qualitative study of the social world of adolescent Arab-Americans was conducted, using semi-structured interviews as the primary research approach. Semi-structured interviews serve to gather focused, qualitative textual data. A semi-structured, in-depth interview is a flexible, iterative method of gathering data. This method offers a balance between the flexibility of an open-ended interview and the focus of a structured ethnographic survey. The researcher formulated appropriate questions to help provide valuable information from the context of the participants' experiences. General open-ended questions were asked to allow the participants to voice their experiences and perspectives. A sample of the outline of the interview is provided in Appendix B.

Qualitative researchers often use video cameras or audio recorders to record in-depth interviews for transcription (Creswell, 2007). All interviews were audio-recorded for transcription purposes. The interviews were recorded on the researcher's iPhone, via the Voice Memos app. The recordings were then transcribed through Rev.com. The interviews were informal, open-ended, and carried out in a conversational style. All the interviews were

completed at a local library in Dearborn, in a private room rented out by the researcher to ensure confidentiality.

After analysis of the data, the researcher conducted four validation interviews, with one administrator and three teachers in the attending schools of the participants. The interviews were open-ended interviews regarding confirmation of analysis/results. The researcher asked questions regarding the administrators' and teachers' perceptions of the experience of the Arab-American students in the school culture.

Consent/Assent for Participation

Each person who agreed to be interviewed was asked to read and sign an informed consent/assent form prior to participating. The form also assured participants of the confidentiality of their participation and the information gained from the interview. The researcher obtained the child's assent for participation, the parent's consent for participation, and the consent for participation of the school staff participants. Written informed consent is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate (Tolley et al., 2016). Informed consent is one of the most important tools for ensuring respect for persons during research (Tolley et al., 2016). The consent/assent form included the following: the purpose of the research; what was expected of the research participant, including the amount of time likely to be required for participation; expected risks and benefits, including psychological and social; the fact that participation was voluntary and one can decline to answer specific questions and withdraw at any time with no negative repercussions; how confidentiality was protected; the name and contact information of the local lead investigator to be contacted for questions or problems related to the research; and the name and contact information of an

appropriate person to contact with questions about one's rights as a research participant.

Appendix C provides examples of the consent forms and release of information forms.

Upon agreement to participate, as noted in the recruitment letter, the families and school staff were requested to contact the researcher and notify her of their agreement. At that time, the researcher informed the parents and participants that they must sign an informed consent form. The families and school staff had the option to have the consent form be sent to them via email and returned to the researcher before their scheduled interviews, or they had the option to receive, read, and sign the informed consent form the day of the scheduled interview in paper form. The adolescent's assent was obtained on the day of the scheduled interview, confidentially; that is, the parents of the adolescent were not made aware of whether the child provided assent, to ensure that the child was not being forced to participate in the study by the parents. No participant refused participation. However, if the adolescent had refused, the researcher would have obliged and ended the interview.

The return of all signed permission forms were needed before data collection began. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through the University of Michigan was obtained (10/24/2019). Because the research involved the recruitment of minors, specific IRB approval was needed.

The researcher verbally notified both the parents and the participants of the exceptions to confidentiality. The researcher would need to break confidentiality if (a) the researcher deemed the participant a danger to self and/or others; (b) if the researcher believed there was suspicion of child abuse or neglect; and/or (c3) if the researcher believed there was suspicion of elder abuse or neglect.

After each interview, the participants were each given a number linked to their responses. This number correlated to a name to which only the researcher had access. The names were recorded on a MASTER list with only the first three letters of the participant's last name and the first letter of the first name. The coded names had the participant's number linked to it on the MASTER list to which only the researcher had access. The MASTER list was utilized for any follow-up interviews that were needed after coding. It was placed in a safe with a lock and key for confidentiality purposes. After the follow-up interviews, the MASTER list was shredded.

Researcher

The researcher is a doctoral student of education in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. The researcher holds a master's degree in Clinical Psychology (with licensure to practice in the state of Michigan), with 13 years of clinical experience working with families in the metro-Detroit area to promote positive well-being. In addition, the researcher is of Arab descent, is a second-generation immigrant, and is fluent in Arabic, which extends her accessibility to the ever-growing Arab population in the community.

Data Analysis

Three processes were blended throughout the study: collection, coding, and analysis of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). All of the audiotaped interviews were entered into secure, password-protected computer files. The process of analysis began with reading and re-reading the transcripts and making initial notes over the course of the reading. These notes included descriptive comments focusing on the ideas and concepts conveyed by the participants, linguistic comments focusing on the word choice used in the participants' narratives, and conceptual comments exploring developing ideas or themes. After the initial noting process, the notes were

examined (one participant at a time) to extract emergent themes from their interviews, expressed as phrases interpreted by the researcher. These themes were then gathered as a whole and grouped by similarities and differences. This grouping process led to perceived patterns within the data and the elicitation of themes. Theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research. The themes were used to further the understanding of the adolescent Arab-Americans' social world as they develop a sense of identity.

Coding

The process of coding qualitative data is an important part of developing and refining interpretations in the interviews. "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 8). Coding is the process of organizing and sorting data. Codes serve as a way to label, compile, and organize data (Gibbs, 2007).

The process of creating codes included both pre-set and open. Before beginning the data collection and the coding process, the researcher created a "start list" of pre-set codes (a sample of the researcher's pre-set code can be found in Appendix D). These initial codes were derived from the conceptual framework of Erikson's theory on identity development, as well as the list of research questions and problem areas that emerged in the literature review. After reading and analyzing the data from the in-depth interviews of the sampling population, emergent codes materialized. These "emergent codes" are those ideas, concepts, actions, relationships, and meanings that come up in the data. They are different from the pre-set codes (Gibbs, 2007). The researcher was conscious of emergent codes that formed the basis of the overall picture (Appendix E represents the systematic way the researcher approached the coding of the data).

As the data were being coded, the researcher assessed whether she needed to add, collapse, expand, and revise the coding categories (Gibbs, 2007). As part of the process of coding, the researcher took notes of reactions and ideas that emerged. These ideas are important and vital to the analytic process (Gibbs, 2007).

Materials

The following materials were necessary to implement the study: Apple iPhone, Voice Memo App, MacBook Air, documents listed in Appendices A, B, C, and D.

Procedure

Prior to data gathering, the examiner assessed the responses of families who were willing to agree to the interview. The examiner chose families with roots in any of the 22 Arabic-speaking countries, including Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, Egypt, and the Gulf countries. The examiner attempted to select an equivalent number of male and female adolescents as well as an equal distribution of the number of participants in each age group.

Compensation

Each participant received a $10 gift card from Starbucks Coffee company. Each participant was notified at the beginning of the interview that they would receive the $10 gift card regardless of whether they completed the interview.

Overview

The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent. The analytic objective of this research was to describe individual experiences as well as group norms. Some

aspects of the study were flexible (for example, the addition and exclusion of particular interview

questions). The participant responses affected how and which questions the researcher asked

next. The qualitative method was based primarily on interviews. The topic of research was not

the interview itself but rather the issues discussed in the interview (Peräkylä, 2011).

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the identity development of Muslim Arab-American adolescents through the framework of psychologist Erik Erikson's (1950, 1963, 1980, 1995) theory of development. This research further investigated the development of individuation by Arab-American adolescents who are being raised in a Western society in the United States, such as Dearborn, Michigan, but who come from collectivistic cultures.

The results of this investigation are presented in three sections. The first section highlights aspects of the participants' demographics. The second section presents a summary of the selective coding used to analyze the data and create the themes. In the third section of the results, the presentation of research findings is organized by identified themes.

Demographics

The qualitative research methodology used in this investigation involved data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. In order to answer the research questions, data were collected, processed, and analyzed from one primary source: participant audio-recorded in-depth interviews. Participants varied both within and between ethnic groups. An ethnic group is a group of people who share a common heritage, culture, and/or language. All the participants were of Arab descent and identified as Muslims; however, they varied in their originating roots in the 22 Arabic-speaking countries that make up the Arab World (Dado & Hijazi, 2014). The length of the interviews differed, on average lasting around 45 minutes, with the shortest interview lasting 15 minutes and 47 seconds. This shortest interview was a male 17-year-old

participant who appeared shy and nervous. The longest interview lasted 86 minutes and 41 seconds; the 17-year-old female was very open and opinionated about the socio-cultural constraints placed on Arab-American female adolescents. All the participants were reminded that they were able to discontinue the interview at any point they felt discomfort; however, every participant completed the interview.

Participants were enrolled in one of the three high schools in Dearborn Public Schools (DPS), identified in the study as School #1, School #2, and School #3. **Figure 1** below shows attendance areas for Dearborn Public Schools' three traditional high schools, as set by the School Board in 2018. Dearborn School District has three high schools: Dearborn, Fordson, and Edsel Ford. Fordson, founded in 1922, is located in East Dearborn and best imitates Dearborn's Arab population, with 95% of the roughly 2,700 students of Arab descent; Lebanese-Americans and Muslims are the largest populations (Chavan, 2016). Dearborn High School, located in West Dearborn, has a mix of African-American, Latino, White, Arab-American, and Asian among its 2,200 students (Charlton, 2020). Among Dearborn's three public high schools, Edsel Ford receives most of its students from South Dearborn and has the largest Yemeni population (McGhee, 2018). Thirty-two percent of DPS teachers are working on an endorsement or already have the ESL endorsement according to Rose Aldubaily, the district's director of English Language Learning (ELL) (Harb, 2017). Because Arab-Americans are not officially recognized as a federal minority group, it is difficult to determine the exact number of Arab-Americans in each Dearborn public high school.

Figure 1

Map for High School Attendance Areas in Dearborn (from Dearborn Schools)
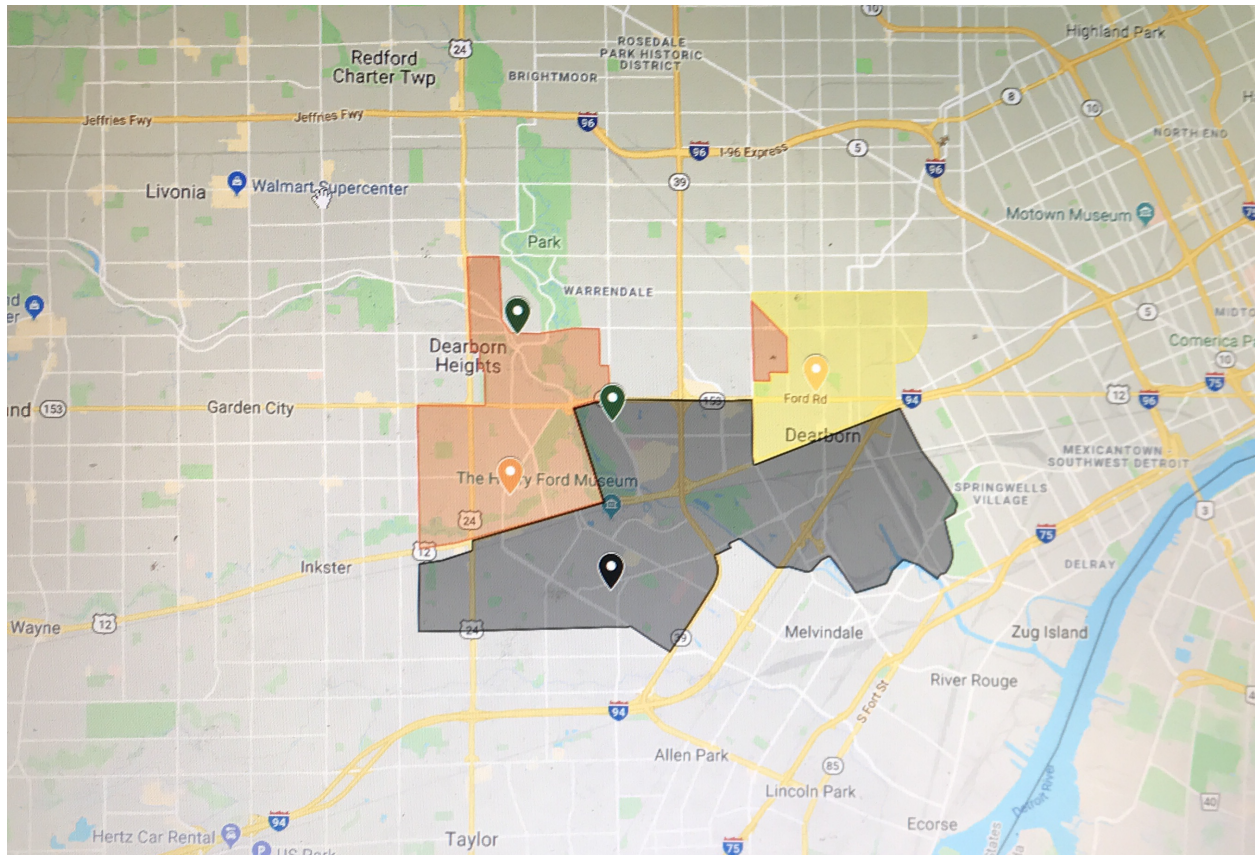
Note: No date available. Map retrieved from https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=

1ZFLHP gjd0B81YK7S9BPdg3Hb9UthrWEt&ll=42.32150013258523%2C-83.2408618

7792562&z=12

Table 3 contains the demographic characteristics of the participants in the research. Participants varied in age, genders, and ethnic backgrounds. Of the 30 participants, 87% were from Lebanon, 3% were from Yemen, 3% were from Egypt, and 7% were from Iraq. The majority age of the study population was 17 years old (57%) and the majority of participants were students in School #2 (77%), which is located in West Dearborn. Of the participants, 80% were non-immigrants.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Female	20	67
Male	10	33
Immigration		
Immigrant	6	20
Non-immigrant	24	80
Highest Educational Level		
9th grade	7	23
10th grade	1	3
11th grade	5	17
12th grade	17	57

Table 3 (continued)

Characteristics	n	%
Age of Student		
13 years old	4	13
14 years old	3	10
15 years old	1	3
16 years old	5	17
17 years old	17	57
Countries of Origin		
Lebanon	26	87
Yemen	1	3
Iraq	2	7
Egypt	1	3
Attending School		
School #1	5	17
School #2	23	77
School #3	2	6

Open Coding

In qualitative research, coding is a definition of the data being analyzed (Gibbs, 2007).

"A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a

summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based

or visual data" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 3). The researcher read through the transcribed data several

times and began to create tentative labels for chunks of data that appeared to summarize the

information. The researcher then recorded examples of participants' words and phrases. **Table 4**

represents an elaborate list of codes used to review the data.

Table 4

List of Codes

Key Area	Associated Open Codes	Sample Responses/Direct Quotes

Internal Conflicts	● Emotional responses:
	  ○ Defeat
	  ○ Hopelessness
	  ○ Anxiety
	  ○ Rejection
	  ○ Inability to identify with media characters
		● "I can't relate to anyone I see on T.V."
		● "If I go out of the state, I am not safe."
		● "I don't feel safe."

School Life	● Diversity
	  ○ Diversity among teachers
	  ○ Diversity among classmates
	● Interactions among White classmates
	● Discrimination
	● Grades
		● "I have all Arab friends."
		● "I have all White teachers."
		● "I am very comfortable where I am because I see a lot of me there."
		● "They treat us different."
		● "We don't hang out with them."

Table 4 (continued)

Key Area	Associated Open Codes	Sample Responses/Direct Quotes
Future	- Role models - Career aspirations - Choices	"I want to get my Master's, but it's all going to depend on if my husband will let me."
Perception of Self	- Awareness of the negative stereotype - Positive descriptions of self - Discomfort in responses	"If I go out of state for school, I would be very cautious going there to see what they think of me." "I'm afraid to leave Dearborn." "We get the stares." "I can't hide my scarf."
Social Life	- Rules and restrictions - Friend groups - Gender differences	"I can't go to dances." "I can't go to clubs." "It's fine if my brother goes or does it."

Key Area	Associated Open Codes	Sample Responses/Direct Quotes
	•	•
Family Life	• Intergenerational cultural dissonance • Immigration background • Traditional parents • Religious behaviors • Emphasis on education	• "Don't understand me." • "They were raised different than me." • "They have the old mentality." • "This culture...It's just what they know." • "We talk English to each other, not Arabic."
Relations with Peers	• Arab friends • White friends • Differences in clothing • Differences in restrictions • Closeness among other minority groups	• "They are like me." • "I don't have to explain anything." • "They won't judge." • "They can wear inappropriate clothing."

It is important to note that coding is not a precise science; it is primarily an interpretive act (Saldaña, 2013). Coding in most qualitative studies is a solitary act, with the researcher as the lone ethnographer in the study (Galman, 2007; Saldaña, 2015).

Themes

The process of analysis began with reading the transcripts multiple times and making initial notes over the course of the reading. These notes included descriptive comments focusing on the ideas and concepts conveyed by the participants, linguistic comments focusing on the word choice used in the participants' narratives, and conceptual comments exploring developing ideas or themes. After the initial noting process, the researcher examined the notes (one participant at a time) to extract emergent themes from their interviews, expressed as phrases interpreted by the researcher. These themes were then gathered as a whole and grouped by similarities and differences. This grouping process led to perceived patterns within the data and the elicitation of themes. Theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research.

The interviewees contributed differing amounts of information to the themes and subthemes that made up the narrative. Some participants discussed at length one or more themes, while some participants made fairly equal offerings across all main themes. The development of themes attempted to represent all participants' voices and views in this study. While the themes were reported as being discrete, there was considerable overlap among them and interrelationships between them. In addition, the participants' responses to interview questions often addressed more than one theme. In those cases, the interviewer interpreted the data and described the data within the context of the surrounding responses.

Research Questions

The research addressed the following two questions:

1. How does identity formation of Arab-American adolescents look within the context of Dearborn, Michigan?

2. How do adolescent Arab-Americans perceive their cultural identity within the context
    of the culture of Dearborn, Michigan?

Results

The analysis of these research questions yielded several themes. Themes emerged from
the analysis of the transcripts. A theme is a pattern that captures something significant or
interesting about the data and/or research question (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Thematic
analysis is a widely used, and increasingly popular, method of qualitative data analysis (Braun &
Clarke, 2012). Direct interview quotes were used to highlight and personalize the data. The
quotes were edited for grammatical clarity and all names were removed to protect participant
identity. The researcher employed techniques for discovering themes in texts. A theoretical
thematic analysis was completed, addressing specific research questions and analyzing the data
with this in mind (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012). The researcher coded each segment of data that
was relevant to or captured something interesting about the research questions. The researcher
utilized open coding, which developed and modified the codes as the researcher worked through
the coding process.

"The qualitative analysis process is cyclic, without finite interpretation, and requires
researchers to return repeatedly to data and the coding process throughout the analysis process"
(Vaismoradi et al., 2016, p. 103). The researcher engaged in four phases of theme development:
"initialization," "construction," "modification," and "finalization." Each phase consists of stages
that are defined as follows in **Table 5**.

Table 5

Phases and Stages of Theme Development in Qualitative Thematic Analysis

Phases	Stage
Initialization	Reading transcripts and highlighting references to the research questions
	Coding and looking for summaries in participants interviews
	Writing reflective notes
Construction	Comparing
	Labelling
	Defining & describing
Modification	Relating themes to established knowledge
	Stabilizing
Finalization	Developing the narrative

Initialization

The initialization phase consisted of first transcribing the data, then reading the transcripts multiple times. While doing so, the researcher coded the data by taking notes describing the participants' perspectives and highlighting direct quotations from the transcription. By reading through the data, the researcher began categorizing the data into codes.

Through initialization, the researcher began to reach an overall understanding of the data and also the main thematic issues in the perspective of the study.

Construction

The construction phase consisted of reflecting on the codes and comparing the codes associated with the data. Reflecting included thinking carefully about how the codes aided the development of an understanding of the data. The researcher reflected on what the codes were drawing attention towards and if the codes appropriately reflected the interest of the research. This reflection on the codes included the emotional disposition of the participants, their family life, their values, their social world, and their sense of self.

In this phase, the researcher engaged in the process of organizing and sorting the qualitative data. The researcher further categorized the data that were similar in meaning and clustered the segments that related to one another. The researcher began to revise and connect codes together to represent themes. There were a total of 27 codes, as listed in **Table 4**. The more the same code occurs in a text, the more likely it can be considered to be a theme (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Theme analysis was based on the techniques noted in the *Theme Analysis Techniques* section below.

Modification

In this phase, the themes were almost fully developed. The researcher continued to assess the data repeatedly. In doing so, the researcher looked at responses that discussed the key areas identified in Table 4. Those areas helped the researcher decide which concepts and themes to communicate in the analysis and guided the researcher on how the data could be organized and coded. Through the modification phase, the researcher began to relate the themes to the literature identified in Chapter 2. Such examples included family relations that are characteristic of Arab

families, social behaviors, and psychological distress of adolescents. The research questions (i.e., the purpose of the study) served to guide the theme identification.

Also, during this phase, the researcher "distanced" herself from the data to gain a new and fresh perspective. That is, the researcher stopped reading the data for approximately one week. "Paradoxically, researchers need to both immerse themselves in the data and conversely distance themselves from the data so as to reveal themes, and to assess and examine the accuracy of the coding process" (Vaismoradi et al., 2016, p. 106).

Finalization

In the last phase of the theme development process, the researcher solidified the narrative that had developed by aiming to capture the meanings of the participants' responses. Narrative analysis is based on the premise that people use stories to make sense of themselves and their world and to present themselves to others (Sarbin, 1986). Through the narrative, the researcher discovered themes and subthemes in the data. The narrative is the "researchers' creativity to depict themes through the presentation of a story that is psychologically, culturally, and socially innovative" (Vaismoradi et al., 2016, p. 107).

Theme Analysis Techniques

One word-based technique utilized by the researcher was to understand what the participants were talking about by looking at the words they used. The transcripts were analyzed by word and phrase repetitions. Words that occur often are seen as being salient in the minds of respondents (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Word repetitions were analyzed informally. In the informal mode, the researcher simply read the texts and noted words or synonyms that participants used often. The researcher looked for topics that recurred frequently in the data.

"The more the same concept occurs in a text, the more likely it is a theme" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 89).

The researcher noted explicit repetition of keywords, phrases, or sentences. Words such as "traditional," "family," " terrorist," and "proud" were prominent. Phrases noted included, "I can relate to…," "They are the same as us," "I can't relate to…," "It is not my choice," "White kids are more…," and "I feel unsafe because...." Sentences describing religious identity, perception of the Arab self, cultural behaviors, and communication with Arab and White teachers were noted as well. These repetitions were information utilized as clues for themes that were used in the actual coding of the texts.

Another technique utilized by the researcher for discovering themes in texts was through connectors, in which the researcher looked carefully at words and phrases that indicated relationships among things. Causal relationships are often indicated by such words and phrases as "because," "since," and "as a result" (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). For example, the researcher coded for causal relations regarding the discord between parents and participants, the conviction behind socially isolating from White classmates, and the effect of negative media attention on their Arab identity. Other causal relationships included feeling fearful as a result of identifying with a socially devalued group, the participants feeling as if they were "given" an identity because of their traditional parents, and not feeling as if they belonged to the dominant culture since they were Arab. The researcher also looked for causal statements regarding the relationship between adversities and psychological distress.

Several codes that were related and overlapped were then organized into themes. Each theme was defined by identifying "the 'essence' of what each theme is about" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). There were five major themes, each of which had sub-themes. The following

themes are predominantly descriptive because they describe patterns in the data relevant to the research question. Each theme is discussed individually, along with substantiating quotes. **Table 6** lists the main themes and sub-themes of the data.

Table 6

Main Themes and Sub-themes of the Data

Main Themes	Sub-themes
Theme #1: A lack of intercultural commonalities or common denominators with White classmates	● Perception of Values ● Sensitivity to Humor ● Educational Attainment/Emphasis ● Rules and Restrictions
Theme #2: The strength of religion as a cultural identity marker	● Pleasure and satisfaction in their religious identity ● Religious identity as a given identity, not chosen
Theme #3: Intergenerational cultural dissonance	● Religious strictness ● Overprotectiveness
Theme #4: Negative stereotype awareness	● Perceived discrimination in school ● Discrimination against the hijab

| Theme #5: Inability to find positive representation of themselves in television characters | • The oppressed Muslim female narrative |

Theme #1: A lack of intercultural commonalities or common denominators with White classmates

One of the themes to emerge from the analysis was a lack of intercultural commonalities or common denominators with White classmates. Intercultural refers to occurring between or involving two or more cultures. This theme is defined by the cultural social environment which the participants had actively crafted for themselves. Factors that are incorporated into the social environments of adolescents include family, school, peers, and community. The participants noted they had minimal interpersonal relationships, if any, or close associations with individuals who were White. The White students were considered "classmates" only, or "acquaintances." The interaction we have with friends is on a different level than that of acquaintances. With close friends, we trust them with our personal thoughts and feelings, and they are at the top of the structure of friendship networks. The majority of the participants endorsed having close friends that they would trust who were of Arab background only.

This lack of interaction by the Arab-American adolescents with their White peers within their school environment may come as a surprise to adults. At one point during the interviews, a mother had brought her 16-year-old daughter to the interview. As the mother was leaving, she asked the researcher for an example of one of the questions. The researcher stated she would be asking her daughter about the diversity of her friend group and her interaction with her White peers. The mother responded, "Oh, my daughter hangs out with everyone," to which her

daughter replied, "No, Mom, I don't. They [White peers] hang out together and we [Arab students] hang out together." The mother, visibly surprised, stated, "Wow, I did not know that!"

The researcher found that the social environment the participants were creating for themselves was actually not diverse at all. The social environment one creates is based on the forming of relationships with people of one's choosing. The participants were self-creating social environments based on peers with similar ethnic backgrounds and were indeed associating on a deeper level with individuals of similar heritage. The participants noted they had friends that were of mainstream White culture; however, the term "close" was often used to differentiate the friendships they had with White peers and peers of similar ethnic background.

The participants noted they felt accepted by their social group and were confident these relationships would be, if they were not already, long-lasting. They noted their friends ate the same food as they did, had parents with similar parenting styles, and were raised with similar values. Additional common ground noted was that families, communities, and religion had a central role in their lives and their peers' lives. Despite having some diversity in their school environments, the perceived diversity of lifestyles, perceived value systems, and religious identification had consequences for social interaction with their White peers. The Arab-American adolescents discussed the differences in rules, behaviors, and communication as guidelines for not being able to create and maintain meaningful relationships with individuals outside of their culture. The following quotes highlight participants' perception of the lack of intercultural commonalities with White classmates:

- Participant #2 shared the following:

- ○ "They [Arab classmates] have the same mindset and personality as me…. If they don't think the same as me, I drift away from them." Her friends are Arabs only "because you and them are alike. I can relate to them."
- Participant #8 shared the following:
  - ○ "They [White classmates] don't understand you."
- Participant #11 shared the following:
  - ○ "You can get along with them [White peers], but you don't have that connection…. I have never been close with friends that were not Arab."

Sub-theme #1: Perception of values. While research has reported on how the White culture believes Muslim immigrants have fundamentally different values than itself (Keung, 2016), this research identified the perspective Arab-American Muslim adolescents have of their own intercultural interactions. Values, as used here, include beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes. Participants repeatedly referred to their White peers as having fundamentally different values than they did. Phrase repetitions were identified in explicit statements such as "They don't have the same values as us" and "They aren't modest like we are." The perceived contrasting values act as abstract guiding principles for the lack of interpersonal interaction with White classmates. Their abstract mindset was leading participants to engage in judgments or behaviors towards the mainstream White culture.

Values were expressed in the study as reflecting what was important to the Arab-American adolescents in their lives. The values the participants discussed were, in the broad sense, guides for how people live their lives, including their moral judgments, goals, and behaviors. The Arab-American adolescents believed that the value they place on family, obedience to parents, and education differed from that of their White peers. Because they came

from a collectivistic orientation, they were looking for cultural values and social role attributes in

friends that were similar to themselves. They viewed the individualistic culture of their White

peers and the collectivistic culture of their own ethnic group as mutually exclusive opposites.

Therefore, the Arab-American participants were forming peer relationships directly influenced

by their cultural beliefs and values rather than by individual characteristics. The following quotes

highlight participants' perception of values differing from their White classmates:

- Participant #2 shared the following:

  - "They [White peers] don't have the same mindset as me…. They don't have the

    same personality."

- Participant #6 shared the following:

  - "All my friends are Arab because we believe in the same things."

- Participant #11 shared the following:

  - "Arabs have more of a family connection. They depend on each other."

- Participant #14 shared the following:

  - "There isn't that immigrant connection...that minority connection with them

    [White peers]."

Sub-theme #2: Sensitivity to humor. Humor is a universal phenomenon but is also

culturally tinted (Jiang et al., 2019). Typically, people from different cultural backgrounds may

see humor in different ways. Humor refers to the tendency to experience or express what is

amusing and funny, which is always accompanied by emotional response and vocal-behavioral

expressions such as laughter and smiling (Chen & Martin, 2007; Martin & Ford, 2018). The

perception and use of humor impacted the younger Arab adolescents' (13-16 years) attempts to

create social relationships with their White classmates. The East-West cultural difference in

humor usage, as identified by Chen and Martin (2007), was prominent in the perception of Arab-American adolescents of their identity. The Arab-American participants feared that their White classmates may interpret their jokes negatively, so that was one reason they did not interact with them. They viewed their White peers as socially sensitive to humor and were uncertain in their reactions. The uncertainty led to avoidance.

Humor, to the Arab-American adolescent, created cultural boundaries. The participants endorsed humor often embedded in cultural norms and deeply rooted in language. They noted that aspects of their humor among peers were more culture-bound, such as humorous Arabic phrases. The participants noted that their White peers would not understand the meaning behind such Arabic phrases. As a result, the Arab-American adolescent endorsed uncertainty of how the humor would translate across cultures. Some participants noted that they used humor to laugh at one another, and much of their humor was delivered at the expense of themselves and their friends. It appeared that the Arab-American participants were utilizing humor as a coping strategy for perceived discrimination. They endorsed "making fun" of one another based on their cultural background. This was mainly evident among the younger Arab boys, who noted that they enjoyed watching Arab comedians on YouTube who laughed at the culture. This specific type of humor did not resonate with their White peers. Because they feared this type of humor was a social taboo among their White peers, the Arab-American adolescents avoided utilizing humor to build social relationships with them. The following quotes highlight the participants' perception of sensitivity to humor:

- Participant #8 shared the following:
  - "They might take things differently, like jokes…. White kids are very sensitive to how they are going to seem."

- Participant #17 shared the following:

  ○ "I don't have to explain things [with Arab peers]…like jokes."

- Participant #16 noted the following:

  ○ "If I say something or joke about double standards [in the culture], they [Arabs] understand it. They [White peers] aren't going to understand it."

Sub-theme #3: Educational attainment/emphasis. This research analyzed the perception Arab-American adolescents had of the value of education among their culture. There were perceived differences among their White classmates in cultural norms regarding education, specifically among immigrants. Many of the participants believed there was a difference in the value placed on education between White culture and Arab culture, and they believed their White peers did not have as strong an intergenerational drive towards educational attainment as they did. The adolescents endorsed education and employment as highly valued in Arab culture. Both schools and jobs are embedded in larger ecological systems. The adolescents' Arab-American parents cared tremendously about their children's education and had successfully transferred that value to their children. The motivation behind tremendously caring about their children's education, according to the participants, was partly to bring value and honor to the family. The participants, regardless of age, noted that their Arab parents applied pressure on them to earn a high grade point average and to choose specific majors. The participants noted that their parents encouraged them to study medicine, law, engineering, pharmacy, or other majors that lead to jobs in high demand and higher salaries. The participants noted that their parents continuously reminded them of the sacrifices the family has made so that they could have an education. These sacrifices included immigrating to foreign lands and great financial sacrifices. The participants felt that this transaction was not relatable to their White peers.

The educational aspirations of Arabs and how the participants believed they assign a higher value to education was evident in their discussion of the American teen drama series *Gossip Girl.* The show portrays high school life in the halls of fictional Constance Billard School for Girls and St. Jude's School for Boys. These posh private schools are attended predominantly by White students who have a very shallow approach to education. High school is primarily a source of socialization rather than educational attainment. The characters are more concerned about keeping up-to-date on gossip than their grades. The following quotes highlight the participants' perception of the differences in educational attainment:

- Participant #16 noted the following:

  - "For us [Arabs], college is a big deal!"

- Participant #8 noted the following:

  - "Education is emphasized in our culture…. It's an immigrant thing."

- Participant #10 noted the following:

  - "There is an emphasis on education, from an immigration standpoint. Some families in Lebanon don't have money to send their kids to school. My dad reminds us all the time."

- Participant #13 noted the following:

  - "White people do it [educational attainment] strictly for success. But Arabs want you to take advantage of what is offered here than what isn't offered over there [native country]."

- Participant #30 noted the following:

  - "My parents are strict. They want something in the medical field, but I want to be a criminal detective. They won't listen."

- Participant #6 noted the following regarding the value of education in *Gossip Girl*:

  ○ "School wasn't that stressed in it (*Gossip Girl*).... School was an option for the characters. They could take a gap year. Arabs think school is necessary. It's not an option. We [Arabs] hear, 'Which college are you going to? Not 'Are you going?'"

Sub-theme #4: Rules and restrictions. It is important to identify the influences that are working against these behaviors and separating Arab and White peers. Rules and restrictions dictate much of the lack of intercultural commonalities or common denominators with the White classmates, specifically regarding social restrictions and social norms. Differences in Arab social customs limited socialization among their peers. Differences in Arab social customs included fear of social blunders. Participants were comfortable in their social behaviors based on their culture, but expressed uncertainty with the customs of the dominant White culture. Convenience and comfort with the status quo were also strong reasons for the lack of closeness among non-Arab classmates. The Arab participants perceived Arabs were readily available for friendship, more so than White classmates. A sense of rejection was also strong among the reasons for a lack of closeness among non-Arab classmates. During the interviews, many of the younger participants, specifically the 9th and 10th graders, discussed not having close relationships with White classmates due to fear of rejection. Cultural similarity made behavior explanations easier among Arab peers. They noted they did not have to "explain much" to their Arab friends. They did not have to explain why they could not attend social parties because "we all have similar rules." The following quotes highlight the participants' perception of the differences in rules and restrictions to which Arab-American adolescents must adhere, compared to their White peers.

- Participant #2 shared the following:

- ○ "I am friends with only Arabs because our parents have the same rules…. In my culture there is a lot of emphasis on how we act and represent ourselves…. They [Whites] are allowed to do stuff that I'm not allowed to do. In my grade, the White students all go out and they go to dances. We aren't allowed to do that."

- Participant #6 shared the following:

  - ○ "White people have a social life. We don't…. All my close friends are Arab since the ninth grade because I can relate to them more. We are able to do the same things…and our parents have the same mentality, so it's easier…. Dances for our culture is not the norm. An after-party is not allowed. My White friends would be able to do whatever they want."

- Participant #8 shared the following:

  - ○ "If a White kid walks into an Arab house, it will be a different experience for them...like taking shoes off. Arab families do that. They don't…we don't introduce ourselves in the same way as White kids…. Arabs don't do that."

- Participant #8 also stated the following:

  - ○ "Dearborn is so populated with Arabs that the people I meet are Arab. Since ten years old, they are my friends and I just stuck with them. I have non-Arab friends but hanging out with them is not like an everyday thing."

- Participant #4 stated the following:

  - ○ "Not a lot of them [White classmates] are friends with us! They don't want to."

- Participant #5, a female, shared the following:

  - ○ "They can wear really short shorts so they are not modest like we are."

Theme #2: The strength of religion as a cultural identity marker

Another theme that emerged from the analysis was the strength of religion as a cultural identity marker, which was so strong that it caused the boundaries between culture and religion to blur. Religion and culture have always been closely correlated. Religion creates culture. Both culture and religion are social constructs and influence one another. Research has noted that groups of people who share a religious identity can be meaningfully viewed as sharing cultural models (Cohen & Hill, 2007). The participants in the study looked at their religion as a defining aspect of their sense of self, yet had difficulty expressing what parts of their identity come from religion and what parts come from culture. Both culture and religion play significant roles in their development, yet culture is more complicated to understand and express.

Some researchers believe Islam must not be viewed as a culture (Ramadan, 2010), while others maintain that religion is a cultural expression (Boyer, 2001). The research found that it was difficult for Arab-American adolescents to separate religion and culture. Culture was characterized by religious customs and habitual religious behavior. Because the borders between culture and religion were predominantly blurry, there was no clear distinction between an Arab identity and a Muslim identity. For example, the researcher asked Participant #7 to describe herself as an Arab, and Participant #7 replied uncomfortably, "I don't know." She looked away from the researcher and shrugged. However, when the researcher asked Participant #7 to describe herself as a Muslim, she appeared much more comfortable. She responded quickly with descriptions of being Muslim, maintained eye contact, and exhibited less anxious behaviors.

Religion, in the perspective of the participants, was utilized in the construction of the cultural self. Because Arab culture and the Islamic faith were deeply intertwined among the participants, religious behaviors were used as cultural markers to help define their group and

identity among their group. Ramadan, a month of religious significance observed by Muslims worldwide, was often used to describe Arab cultural behaviors. The word "traditional" among the participants became synonymous with religious practice. The following quotes highlight the participants' perception of religion as a culture identity marker:

- Participant # 7 stated the following:
  - "I am Arab because I pray."
- Participant #8 was asked to discuss his culture and he responded with the following:
  - "Well, Ramadan happens every year, we fast." Participant #8 also noted his dad, an immigrant, was more traditionally Arab than his mother. When queried why he believed that to be, he noted, "Because my dad grew up in Lebanon, so he doesn't skip any Arab traditions, like Ramadan."
- Participant #2 was discussing family relations and noted:
  - "My mom is traditional." When queried how so, Participant #2 said, "Mom is very religious. She is all about religion and prayer."
- Participant #3 also noted:
  - "My step-dad is the more traditional one. He prays and goes to the mosque every day."
- The researcher asked Participant #4, an immigrant, what the term "traditional" meant to him, and he replied:
  - "Someone like my father who follows the religion really carefully and he prays every day."
- Participant #5, also an immigrant but female, said:

- ○ "My dad is more traditional than my mom. He's extra when it comes to religion."

  The researcher asked her for examples of her father being traditional and the

  participant listed, "Goes to the mosque and follows the rules of the religion."

- Participant #6 was asked to describe herself as an Arab and stated:

- ○ "I don't know! How do you describe yourself as an Arab!?... It's good to be

  Muslim, I guess."

Sub-theme #1: Pleasure and satisfaction in their religious and Arab identity. Two

sub-themes emerged from the strength of religion as a cultural identity marker, one being

pleasure and satisfaction in their religious identity. The participants described being "proud" of

being Muslim and Arab. There was a strong emphasis on "we are proud to be Arab," despite

what others think of them. The following quotes highlight the participants' perception of the

pleasure and satisfaction in their religious and Arab identity:

- When the researcher asked Participant #2 to describe her identity, she replied:

- ○ "I identify as a female Muslim." She continued, "I am not ashamed by being

  Muslim. I'm happy with my religion."

- Participant #3 noted:

- ○ "It feels really good to be an Arab. The religion feels good. It's not very strict. "

  The researcher asked Participant #3 if he felt proud to be Arab. He responded,

  "Yes, the religion isn't complicated."

- Participant #7, a female, stated,

- ○ "It's [Arab] my culture. It's how I grew up. I am proud of it."

- Participant #15 shared the following:

- ○ "I am proud to be Muslim."

Sub-theme #2: Religious identity as a given identity, not chosen. Many of the participants engaged in avoidance behaviors, such as looking away and avoiding eye contact, in an effort to avoid the conversation, specifically when it came to describing their Arab identity. The adolescents who were older (16 and 17 years of age) were more comfortable discussing their religious identity as a given identity. The older participants understood religious belief and practice with a heightened sense of self-awareness. They placed value on individual responsibility and commitment towards their religion. The older participants spoke freely about exploring the religious identity given to them by their parents through classes, books, and seminars. Many of the older adolescents wondered if they truly accepted this identity and if this would be the identity they maintained after high school. A person's identity and sense of self tend to be influenced by one's personal experiences. Being discriminated against because of one's cultural or religious identity will influence whether a person maintains that identity further in one's life.

The younger (13-15 years old) adolescents repeatedly noted their religious identity was "just is." They expressed minimal to no self-awareness in their role of assuming their religious identity. All the participants spoke about Islam as the religion they were born into; however, the older participants viewed adolescence as a time to explore this identity and make a choice thereafter. Many female participants who have worn the hijab from a very young age (e.g., 9 years old) noted that they did not explore the true meaning behind the hijab before they took on that identity. The hijab is a veil worn by Muslim women which covers the head. Five participants who wore the hijab wondered if they would keep it on after high school. They wondered if this was an identity that they wanted, or what their parents had given them, or told them they wanted.

Many of the older adolescents were beginning to explore their religious identity, or as they described it, were "getting into" the religion, in an attempt to "understand it more." Approximately eight participants were voluntarily enrolled in classes to learn about their religion, a decision they had made on their own without their parents' influence. The following quotes highlight the participants' perception of their religious identity as a given identity rather than a chosen identity:

- Participant #7 was asked about being a Muslim and stated:

  ○ "That's my religion…that's how I grew up and what I was taught to learn and believe."

- Participant #15 noted:

  ○ "In eighth or ninth grade, I started asking why...why am I am Muslim? I wanted to know about my religion so I started taking classes. We feel out of control if we follow the religion blindly."

- Participant #16 noted:

  ○ "I am trying to learn more about my religion. Before, it just was my religion. Now I am reading the Quran to try to understand my religion more."

- Participant #18 noted:

  ○ "I am working on my Muslim identity. I am reading my Quran to understand my Arab and Muslim identity."

Theme #3: Intergenerational cultural dissonance

One of the themes to emerge from the analysis was intergenerational cultural dissonance. Dissonance, in its most basic form, signifies a fundamental lack of agreement (Duckworth & Ade-Ojo, 2016). The concept of cultural dissonance, or culturally based intergenerational

conflicts, has been described as occurring in transcultural families in which varying degrees of acculturation occur among members of the same family (Kumabe et al., 1985; Lee & Mjelde-Mossey, 2004). Many of the participants in the study had one or two parents who were immigrants. The participants described different degrees of acculturation among their parents. Some parents had immigrated only a few years ago, while other participants had family members who had immigrated over 20, 30, and even 40 years ago.

The majority of participants endorsed a more distant relationship with the parent that either immigrated the least amount of time or who has acculturated the least. This was understood as "traditional" by the participants. Adolescents often assimilate to the mainstream culture at a faster rate than their immigrant parents, due to their exposure to school settings and the media in the host society (Wu & Chao, 2011). The relationship with the traditional parent was characterized by amounts of discord. The following quotes highlight the perception of the Arab-American adolescents of the intergenerational cultural dissonance:

- Participant #2 noted:
  - "I'm closer to my dad and my dad's side of the family." She then proceeded to discuss how her dad's side of the family "[is] more westernized" and "non-traditional" and "they celebrate all the Western holidays." Participant #2's father is not an immigrant, but her mother is. When the researcher asked Participant #2 if she considered her father traditional, she said, "Dad is more loose. He allows us to be like everyone else. Like if they can do it, I can do it [referring to White classmates]." Participant #2 emphasized, "Dad lets me go to dances. He tells my mom to just let her go." Participant #2 described her mom as the traditional parent

because "Mom is very religious" and "Mom is a perfectionist" who "doesn't understand we can fix mistakes."

- Participant #3 noted:

  ○ "The more traditional parent is my step-dad," who is an immigrant, while his mother is not.

- Participant #7 said:

  ○ "Dad is more traditional. Dad is an immigrant." When asked why, Participant #7 stated, "Because he was born there [Lebanon] and their traditions are more intense."

- Participant #6 stated she was closer to her father and siblings because:

  ○ "Mom is more traditional and Dad and my siblings are more modern." When queried how so, she noted, "My mother is more strict in her religious beliefs."

Sub-theme #1: Religious strictness. The strength of religion as a traditional identity marker was also prominent in the perception of adolescents of their parents. Strictness and overprotectiveness were associated with traditional Arab parenting. The jobs the participants, specifically the female participants, noted they could undertake had to be "respectful" according to their parents. The places they visited, the friends they hung out with, and the clothes they wore had to be approved by the parents. The participants who described their parents as "very religious" endorsed frustration with being able to "keep up" with the observation of Muslim religious rituals (i.e., praying five times a day, minimal contact with the opposite gender, and adherence to a strictly moderate dress code). Those who self-described their family as "more moderately religious" or "more spiritual than religious" endorsed less rigidness in their adherence to religious rituals.

While both the male and female participants found this strictness to be "annoying," a small minority found it to be endearing. The older participants expressed appreciation for their parents for wanting to protect their safety. Despite the restrictions it placed on them, the overprotectiveness the older participants endorsed from their parents made them feel "secure." The following quotes highlight the participants' perception of strictness in their religious identification:

- Participant #15 (a female) noted the following:

    ○ "Religion is everything...we can barely get near the other gender."

- Participant #15 noted the following:

    ○ "Muslim girls working...has to be at a respectful place, like a doctor's office."

- Participant #16 noted the following:

    ○ "Everything is based on religion. That is what holds me back."

- Participant #23 noted the following:

    ○ "Everything has to be in line with religious behaviors."

- Participant #30 noted the following:

    ○ "We can't drink, can't date, can't smoke, can't go to dances...none of it."

Sub-theme #2: Overprotectiveness. The participants often described their parents as "overprotective." This was in protecting their reputation, their physical bodies, and their emotional well-being. The participants discussed being overprotected with regards to going out late at night, for example. Many of the participants noted this type of restriction was due to a multiple of reasons. They noted their parents were worried they would be abducted at night or shamed for being out too late. Regardless of which reaction their parents took, the adolescents described it as an overreaction. However, specifically among the older female adolescents, the

protectiveness towards girls in Arab culture was met with pride. The overprotective parent was

largely influenced by the Islamic culture. The participants noted that their "overprotective"

parent would often highlight Islam's fixed set of rituals and practices when influencing the daily

lives of their children. The following quotes highlight the participants' perception of the

overprotectiveness of their parents:

- Participant #22 noted the following:

  ○ "I have strict parents. I have to study something in the medical field. They said I

  have to."

- Participant #25 noted the following:

  ○ "My parents are overprotective…. I would say more protective than strict."

- Participant #16 noted the following:

  ○ "It's not that they don't trust me. It's that they are protective. They see me as

  vulnerable and they worry about me."

- Participant #24 noted the following:

  ○ My parents are strict, but strict is the norm. They ask the why, the who, the when,

  what, what are you hiding….anytime I leave the house. The more strict they are,

  the more I fight it."

Theme #4: Negative stereotype awareness

In addition to the school environment, the participants spoke about negative cultural

stereotypes found in the general media and being stereotyped in different contexts (i.e., school).

Every participant noted that the mass media identifies Arabs as "terrorists. They endorsed the

media as perpetuating the stereotype about Arabs as terrorists. They provided examples to the

researcher of reports of Arabs being harassed globally and attacked physically. They noted that

Arabs, specifically Arab men, were the "villains" in movies, embedded in the stereotype that Arabs were violent. Many of the participants were hypervigilant of the negative connotations of speaking the Arabic language in public. Many of the older male participants noted they do not speak Arabic in airports and are very aware of saying the word "Allah" as well. The participants actively inhibited their native language for fear of the repercussions.

The analysis of the data found that the current perception of adolescents of their Arab identity was generally favorable, despite the awareness of the negative stereotype. The majority of participants noted they were "proud" of their Arab identity and were destined for success.

The following quotes highlight the participants' awareness of negative stereotypes regarding Arabs:

- Participant #3 noted:

  ○ "They think we are terrorists, but we are very good people. We aren't terrorists!"

- Participant #8 stated:

  ○ "Not a lot of people understand who we are. They may fear Arabs or misunderstand them, based on false information." He gave an example: "Like on the Internet, we are terrorists. People think a lot of times that we are."

- Participant #3 said:

  ○ "I don't think people think we are successful because of the President. In an interview, someone asked Donald Trump if Arabs are successful and he said no. We have to be successful to prove them wrong."

- Participant #8 responded:

  ○ "It is very normal for Arabs to be successful nowadays."

Sub-theme #1: Perceived discrimination in school. Discrimination is defined as the differential treatment of people or groups of people on the basis of arbitrary characteristics, such as gender, race, or age (Ayalon, 2019). The participants spoke of numerous times they felt discriminated against by a teacher or classmate in their schools. The Arab-Americans' perceptions of their school climates were strongly and consistently related to perceptions of discrimination. The participants felt that they often received differential treatment by their White teachers, who they perceived exhibited favorableness to their White peers. There was an overgeneralized belief that, because they were a minority group, they carried with them an ethnic stereotype, and White teachers were treating them based on these stereotypes, such as being aggressive and anti-American.

The participants discussed aspects of their environmental contexts in school that felt discriminatory. The following quotes highlight the participants' perceived discrimination in school:

- Participant #2 described an incident of her own where she felt discriminated against by a teacher. She stated:
  - "Last year I had a teacher...he did not like Arabs. His favorites were all the White students. The White students would be given opportunities to increase their grade and we wouldn't." The researcher asked Participant #2 if she thought there was a negative opinion about her religion and she said, "Of course!"
- Participant #6 noted:
  - "At school, some kids call us terrorists because of all the stories they hear."
- Participant #6 also noted:
  - "I feel unsafe sometimes...like I'm not wanted here [America]."

- Participant #16 noted the following:

  - "One class I have is all White classmates. I feel like such an outsider. They are private. They don't talk to me."

- Participant # 18 noted:

  - "Especially in middle school...I saw a lot how the White teachers favored the White kids."

Sub-theme #2: Discrimination against the hijab. As the number of Muslim students in public schools in the United States has increased, so have challenges to their rights to religious expression (Taylor, Ayoub, & Moussa, 2014). Discrimination against the hijab, a form of identification for Muslims, was prominent in the analysis of stereotype awareness. The hijab is a Muslim headscarf worn by females. The participants spoke about their fear of wearing the scarf because it identified them as Muslim in situations where they feared for their safety. All the female participants who wore the hijab were aware of instances, nationwide, in which women were having their hijab pulled off of them. They spoke about the fact that, due to the hijab, they would be recipients of stares and looks of contempt when they left Dearborn. The following quotes highlight the perceived discrimination against the hijab experienced by the participants:

- Participant #6, who wears a hijab, noted:

  - "When I volunteered as a teacher aide, at a school that wasn't in Dearborn, I felt weird and different. The students didn't know what I am. I didn't get the respect. I got the stares. I got the looks."

- Participant #2, who does not wear a scarf although members of her immediate family do, said:

- ○ "If we go outside of Dearborn, or even outside of Michigan…when we go on vacation, as a family we get looked at differently because my mom and sister wear a scarf. I don't feel it personally because I look like one of them."
- Participant #5 said:
  - ○ "I think some people judge us. They think we are forced to wear a hijab and we are not."

Theme #5: Inability to find positive representation of themselves in television characters

Minimal representation of minority groups in mass media has long been problematic, with exclusion being the norm rather than the exception in Hollywood. Arabs, specifically Muslims, are noticeably absent in mainstream media, and when they are present, they are usually portrayed negatively. Hollywood, for more than a century, has targeted Arabs (Shaheen, 2014).

The participants noted that they knew of very few television shows they were watching that had any Arab characters. When asked how they felt about this, the researcher found that the participants had become "numb" to the exclusion, stating, "It's just the way it is," while others noted, "It just makes us work harder." The majority of the participants did not feel angry about minimal representation, nor did they endorse giving this exclusion much thought.

Female participants endorsed watching the television show *Gossip Girl*, a pop culture phenomenon. The fictional characters of *Gossip Girl* were masters of their own destiny, rarely relying on their families to make life choices. The characters decided what they would wear, who they would date, what colleges they would attend, and which parties to attend, among other decisions, without worrying about family restrictions or community opinion. The participants spoke of envy for these characters for having the autonomy to make those decisions. The

following quotes highlighted the participants' inability to find positive representations in mainstream media:

- Participant #6 said she liked the shows *Gossip Girl* and *Friends*. Participant #6 noted:
  - "I don't know any Arab characters." The shows she watches are "high school shows, then I can relate to the situation." The researcher brought up *Gossip Girl,* responding, "I can relate to the situation, not the characters." We discussed this further: "*Gossip Girl* is very different from my community—more high-class and the characters are more stressed about a social life than we care about here."
- Participant #26 noted the following:
  - "That (*Gossip Girl*) is very different from my community. White people have a social life. We don't."
- Participant #1 noted the following:
  - "They (*Gossip Girl* characters) are allowed to go to college anywhere. Their parents don't care. I have to stay in Michigan."
- Participant #18 noted the following:
  - "If there is a terrorist in the movie, he has a thick beard and looks Arab!"
- Participant #8 noted the following:
  - "I watch American-based shows...there are no Arab characters…. Only if it's sports on TV, then there is an Arab."

Sub-theme #1: The oppressed Muslim female narrative. The narrative of the Muslim female as oppressed is a familiar narrative presented in popular culture and one that was discussed in length by the female participants in the study. They noted that the practice of wearing the hijab was illustrated as limiting a female's psychological rights and freedoms. The

Muslim female was mistreated and unhappy in mainstream media, and she could only be "free" if she denounced her hijab and, subsequently, her Muslim identity.

Many of the participants noted they enjoyed watching *Grey's Anatomy*, an ABC medical drama. The researcher asked how they felt about the introduction of Dr. Dahlia Qadri, a Muslim character, in 2018. Dr. Dahlia Qadri was the show's first Muslim, and she was a female surgeon intern who wears a hijab. On one hand, many participant viewers of the show noted they were "surprised" and "proud." Eventually this character was placed in a situation where she removed her scarf, as did another character, Nadia, in the Netflix show *Elite*, which the participants also viewed. In both shows, the character was oppressed and she could not fully live "the American life" until she removed her scarf. The following quotes highlight the perception of the participants of the oppressed Muslim girl narrative in mainstream media:

- Participant #2 stated upon seeing Dr. Dahlia Qadri on TV:
  - "I was so surprised." She continued, "It's so good that they are adding people of different backgrounds because we can relate to it now…. Not just White people can be surgeons. But then she took off her scarf and she was just like everyone else."
- Participant #17 noted:
  - "Nadia was portrayed as an oppressed girl who could only be free when she took off her scarf. I feel like they gave me hope when they introduced her to the show and then took it away from me when they had her remove her scarf."

Validation Interviews

In any research design, confirmability is often a concern. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results can be confirmed or corroborated by others (Trochim, n.d.). After

analysis of the data, the researcher conducted validation interviews with educators in the attending schools of the participants. Validation interviews refer to individual sessions conducted with the educators in an effort to enhance confirmability of the research findings. The number of confirmation interviews was four, and all the validation interview participants were female.

The interviews were open-ended and asked questions about the perception of the educators on the experience of the Arab-American student in the school culture, particularly around the five main themes of the data. The validation interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. **Table 7** represents the demographics of the educators and the schools in which they have experience.

Table 7

Demographic Representation of the Educators in the Research

	Educator #1	Educator #2	Educator #2	Educator #2
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female
Nationality	Arab	Arab	Arab	Arab
School Experience	Experience in all 3 schools	Experience in schools #1 and #2	Experience primarily in school #3	Experience primarily in schools #1 and #3
Length of Experience	Over 10 years experience	Over 15 years experience	Over 10 years experience	Under 10 years experience

Through the validation interviews method, the researcher affirmed inferences made from the qualitative data collected. The interviews, which were conducted individually, corroborated findings at both the individual and organizational levels. During the validation interviews, Dearborn Public School educators heard the formal presentation of the results and themes of the research, and were asked to verify or challenge summative findings regarding the experience of the Arab-American adolescents in school and discuss them further. The validation interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Support for Theme #1: Lack of intercultural commonalities or common denominators with White classmates

Educator #1 works in a school where Arabs and Whites make up "about 50/50" of the student population. Educator #1 described a kinship among Arab teachers and Arab families in Dearborn Public Schools. As an Arab teacher, she has noticed that Arab parents and students "argue" to be put in her class because "I am Arab." She explained, "I don't ever get White people who argue to be put in my class." She described a sense of alliance that is automatically in place due to her identification as an Arab teacher. She informed the researcher that "Arab parents are more comfortable telling me things, like family secrets, because I am not going to go far with it." When queried, she stated, "They have said that they worry White teachers will tell them 'they [their kid] need[s] therapy' and that freaks them out."

All the educators supported the lack of intercultural commonalities by stating they did not see "mixed race friends," although Educator #3 found more cohesiveness among the classmates. In describing the social environment among the White and Arab students in her school, Educator #1 described a "wall" that the Arab students put up when they are around their White classmates. "When they [Arabs] are around their Arab friends, you can see that they put that wall down."

This notion is interesting and is explained further in Chapter 5, since the participants in the study acknowledged a wall, to some degree, that their White peers put up. It appears that within the uncertain social situation of school, the Arab-Americans defend themselves by putting a psychological "wall" up.

Educator #1 noted that students will "act completely different when they are with their Arab or White friends." She said the one kid who will be "loud and obnoxious" when he is with his Arab friends will be "calmer" with his White friends. The "jokes are cleaner" and "they [White kids] are typically afraid to offend." Therefore, she perceived that an Arab student will hang out with more Arab friends because "the Arab kid doesn't take offense. There is an assumption that Arabs understand jokes that White classmates would take offense as not politically correct." She provided the example "You are so gay" as a comment she heard spoken by Arab students. She noted that such a comment that is politically incorrect was considered by the Arab adolescents as humorous because it was not specifically directed at their sexual orientation. The popular expressions "that's so gay" or "you are so gay" are examples of heterosexist language, which communicates anti-gay sentiment (Woodford, Howell, Silverschanz, & Yu, 2012). Although meant as a generic negative adjective, it is imperative to note the impact of gay jokes and/or gay slurs. On the impact of gay jokes, Vaccaro et al. wrote, "emotional rejection or psychological harm could come in many forms. LGBT youth who witness family members telling gay jokes, using gay slurs, or discrimination against LGBT people are at risk for emotional scarring," (p. 76).

It was part of the self-defeating humor Arab students used to laugh at one another, as much of their humor was delivered at the expense of themselves and their friends.

Educator #2 believed that the lack of interaction with individuals who are different from themselves is counterproductive, stating, "This is why it is a shock when they get to college. They are not being exposed to different cultures." While the participants did attend schools with other cultural groups, there was little engagement. The educators noted that socialization on weekends is often separate between the Arab and White classmates, as well as a distinct difference in the type of social activities taken. Educator #1 said she often heard very similar things Monday mornings, with Arab students noting, "This weekend I didn't do much," while her White students will typically have an "adventure" to share on Mondays. She noted, "They typically go camping or they hang out with their other White friends."

All of the educators related *lack of intercultural commonalities* back to their own experience as students. Educator #4 noted, "Even when I was a kid, I didn't have many friends that were White because I couldn't do the things they did." Educator #1 noted that she lost touch with the White friends she did have in high school because "at 18 years old, I couldn't go to the club like they did. I couldn't do overnights or travel with them to a different city."

All of the educators observed Arab students as wanting to be successful. Educator #1 noted that many of her Arab students had high grade point averages and they "want all the kids to know they are smart." She noted, "They will hide bad grades." All the educators noted how education was very important for Arab families. Educator #1 saw much competition among Arab students, noting, "I don't see the White students as competitive as my Arab students." All the educators noted the importance Arab families place on their children's grades, but even more on their behaviors and the respect they display towards the teacher. Educator #3 noted, "Oh, they [Arab students] know that if I call their parents and tell them I was disrespected, they are in trouble! We don't see that as much with the White students."

Support for the Theme #2: The strength of religion as a cultural identity marker

Each educator noted a strong sense of religion among the Arab students and religion as a dictator for their behavior. Educator #2 noted, "I think as far as religion, in middle school and elementary school, it's more sheltered, so it's [religious identity] not tested. They come to high school, and ninth and tenth grade especially, they are interacting with the opposite gender, and it's now on a different level." Educator #2 noted how behaviors that were not in line with religious beliefs were "swept under the rug." She noted she may see an Arab female student removing her scarf at school, and if this was discussed with the parents, the parents would express fear that this behavior would "get out in the community."

The educators all noted that because they were Muslim, they felt that the kids connected to them more. Educator #4 noted, "I understand their culture, I look like them, I understand the background. I am representing their mom, their grandma, their aunts." The educators spoke about the possible downfall of merging the two identities. Educator #2 noted, "They aren't seeing what is outside of Dearborn, so they think everyone follows the same rules." Educator #3 stated many of her students who had graduated high school in Dearborn spoke to her about the "cultural shock" they experienced in college. She noted, "It'ss been very hard for them to figure out where their beliefs fit in with this new culture."

Support for the Theme #3: Intergenerational cultural dissonance

The educators endorsed strong parental involvement among Arab parents, which was characterized as conflictual among the educators. Educator #1 discussed the parental involvement of Arab parents: "The Arab parents see school as their kid's way out of a bad life. That's why we see that the Arab parent will focus a lot on the grade...and that focus leads to a lot of pressure on the kids." Educator #2 noted, "We are seeing a lot of conflict between the kid and

the parent." However, she did note a lot of conflict occurred between her White students and their parents as well. She explained the difference is that "we are seeing Arab parents focus a lot more on the grade itself."

Educator #3 discussed at length the rebellion she has been seeing among her Arab students. She stated:

> We are seeing that the Arab kids are rebelling against the identity that their parents have put on them. We are noticing girls who wear the hijab at drop off, take it off five minutes after their parents leave the premises. We are noticing that kids are coming from home, maybe dressed in a certain modest fashion, and when they get to school they are changing outfits. It's a form of rebellion against the identity that their parents are projecting on them. We do see it more in the East end of Dearborn versus the West end, where the parents may be more traditional.

Educator #4 expressed:

> We really see a lot of this rebellion in ninth and tenth grade. The more traditional families become really, really strict….no conversing with the opposite gender...et cetera, and we see the change in some of the girls. They no longer are allowed to participate in after school sports or other after school activities. They start to rebel against their Arab identity.

Support for the Theme #4: Negative stereotype awareness

All the educators noted the awareness of the negative stereotype towards Arabs among their Arab students, and also recognized there was a rebellion against this stereotype. Educator #2 felt that her students were "hyper-aware" of the stereotype, often hearing them say, "They hate us." She stated, "I've noticed more and more students are not standing up for the Pledge of

Allegiance." When she inquired about this, they told her, "We don't have to." She stated, "There

is a sense that they feel people are against them." People who experience negativity towards their

social groups may take action to challenge the system and attempt to change the status quo via

various forms of social protest (Owuamalam et al., 2016).

The educators also noted that within the school culture, there could be preconceived ideas

and attitudes about Arab cultures among White staff. Educator #1 stated, "The White teachers

don't see the Arab kid. They only see the surface." Educator #4 noted, "There is a stereotype that

we see that if the boys act up, they [White teachers] say, 'Well, he's Arab.'" Educator #3 noted

that there was a time where a "quiet kid" presented themselves and she overheard a White

teacher say, "Well, there's another ELL student." The educators noted that many of their

coworkers would express surprise at the educators' delight in teaching ELL students, with one

coworker telling an educator, "You're happy teaching them?!"

There is division among the cultures, especially among the immigrants and non-

immigrants. Educator #3 noted, "My school has a large Yemeni population and within the

Yemeni population, there is division between the newcomers and those that have been here."

Still, she noted she has seen a "comradery" among the Yemini population more so than other

Arab populations.

Support for the Theme #5: Inability to relate to TV characters

Educator #2 noted she, too, watches shows to "find characters that are similar to me or

my children" and discussed finding it rare. She provided the show *Amsterdam* as an example.

She noticed a Muslim woman wearing a scarf in the background once and became "very

excited." Even as adults, the educators' yearning and searching for positive representation of

themselves were there. All the educators noted that a lack of positive Arab representation is missing in the curriculum as well.

Summary of Findings

The results of this study align and agree with the literature regarding the importance of culture and religion as strong motivational factors for how the adolescents identified themselves. Specific to Arab-American adolescents, behaviors, customs, and values were found to have a major influence on their identity development, as well as on their perception of other cultural groups. While the literature identified that cultural values of individualism and collectivism differed in their relative emphasis on independence versus interdependence with one's group (Goncalo & Staw, 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), this research found that Arab-American adolescents were significantly collectivist. Through their responses, it was clear that social rules and families and communities have a central role in their lives. This was similar to Ajrouch (2000), who observed that Arab-Americans in Dearborn emphasize ideas of community and family, as well as Nassar-McMillan and Hakim-Larson (2003), who discussed religion as an important part of Arab culture. While the messages of the interviews provided a sense of individualism, the cultural and religious affinity spoke of the strong collectivism within the group. Social psychology contributes supportive evidence for Erikson's clinical formulation, showing that individuals do compensate for weak personal identity by highlighting their collective identity (Ng, 1985, 1986). Next, a discussion of these results is explored in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion

To understand Arab-American adolescents is to acknowledge and address their struggles as they mediate their sense of self. Acculturative stress, religiosity, and psychological adjustment are some of the issues observed among Arab-American adolescents (Goforth et al., 2014). Specifically, "the Arab-American youth experiences challenges related to maintaining their heritage culture's traditions and values and the degree to which they participate in mainstream American traditions" (p. 1). Among these challenges is the synthesis of the self that identifies with their heritage culture and the one that integrates into Westernized culture. According to Erikson (1950, 1968), developing a coherent and synthesized sense of identity that integrates all aspects of the self is one of the primary developmental tasks of the transition to adulthood. A coherent and synthesized sense of identity is associated with a positive self-image (Luyckx et al., 2005). Arab-American adolescents who are having difficulty integrating the self that identifies with their heritage culture and the one that identifies with their host culture are more susceptible to having low self-esteem. Those Arab-American adolescents who are furthermore having difficulty creating a social environment where they feel a sense of belonging, or are feeling rejected from their host culture, are also at-risk for low self-esteem.

This research examined the shaping of identity among Arab-Americans through psychologist Erik Erikson's research findings on identity statuses. According to Erikson (1968), the main and most important developmental tasks for adolescents are to solve the Identity vs. Role Confusion crisis, construct their own unique sense of identity, and find the social

environment in which they can belong and create meaningful relationships with other people (Chen et al., 2007). As noted in Chapter 1, the greater Detroit metropolitan area is home to one of the largest, oldest, and most diverse Arab-American communities in the United States. With an influx of refugees, the area continues to see a dramatic increase in its Arab-American population. It is expected to grow not only in Michigan's Wayne county, which encompasses the city of Dearborn, but in other populous counties in the state as well, such as Oakland and Macomb counties, where Arab-American occupancy is not as dominant.

Despite Arab-Americans' increasing population in the United States, there is limited research concerning their psychological functioning and emotional distress. Regardless of the numerous and tremendous contributions Arab-Americans have made to American culture, politics, science, and art, Arabs are still considered a socially devalued group (Bodenhausen et al., 2012). Many other Americans possess a lingering resentment toward stigmatized and devalued Arabs and Muslims in America after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, as shown by opinion poll articles in *The Washington Post* (Khan & Ecklund, 2013; Panagopoulos, 2006). The aftermath of these terrorist attacks has heightened public suspicion of Arab-Americans as terrorists (Sun & Wu, 2015). Increased racial and religious animosity have left Arabs and Muslims, as well as others who bear a physical resemblance to members of these groups, fearful of potential hatred and hostility (Abu-Ras & Suarez, 2009; Baqi-Aziz, 2001; Kira et al., 2010; Rippy & Newman, 2006). In addition, Arab-Americans are often portrayed in an unfavorable light in the media (Sirin et al., 2008) and are often associated in the media with terrorism propaganda (Sirin & Balsano, 2007).

This social devaluation propels anger and negatively impacts personal self-esteem. Today, Arab-Americans are officially classified as White by the U.S. Census, but are

"unofficially represented as different than, and inferior to Whites within U.S. state policies and U.S. popular culture" (Jamal & Naber, 2008, p. 1). Being devalued merely on the basis of one's group membership often leads to emotional distress. Members of devalued groups may be socialized to develop attitudes and behaviors that increase their risk for emotional distress (Katz et al., 2002). Therefore, to understand Arab-American adolescents is to understand the impact of stereotypes and prejudices on their self-esteem and their overall psychological well-being. Discrimination has been linked to greater levels of psychological distress among the Arab-American population (Moradi & Hasan, 2004). Discrimination is a ubiquitous experience for ethnic minorities residing in the United States and around the world (Brondolo et al., 2009; Coll et al., 1996; Greene et al., 2006; Utsey et al., 2002). Being raised in a climate where prejudices and discrimination toward persons of Arab and Middle Eastern descent are prevalent shapes, in part, the identity of Arab-American adolescents. The Arab-American adolescent must work to process, engage in meaning making, and, specifically, depersonalize these negative experiences (Khan & Ecklund, 2013).

Summary of Findings

This summary of findings is based on the key results from the open coding outlined in Chapter 3. The purpose of the research was to view how Erikson's "crises" looked in the adolescent stage of development among Arab-Americans. In Erikson's fifth stage of development, the crisis between development of an Identity vs. Role Confusion materializes, which highlights the adolescent stage of development. According to Erikson, the successful resolution of this developmental stage will produce a core strength in truthfulness and consistency to one's core self or faith in one's ideology (Erikson, 1968; Fleming, 2004). Unsuccessful transitioning at this stage will result in the denial of a healthy role formation, which

can take the form of defiance of authority or of resignation and despair (Erikson, 1968; Fleming, 2004). In this stage, adolescents are not only learning who they are, but are also learning to define their role in society and invent themselves by assuming an identity of their own.

The research methodology used in this research was qualitative, which is the appropriate method for developing explanations of social phenomena. The qualitative research involved data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. Qualitative research looks holistically at the data and seeks to explain the system and complexity of that research. In order to answer the research questions, data were collected, processed, and analyzed from one primary source: participant audio-recorded in-depth interviews. The researcher conducted field research among first- and second-generation Arab-American adolescents living in the Dearborn area. The youths and their families were of Arab descent and identified as Muslims. The age of the participants was between 13-17 years. Each adolescent participant was currently attending a high school in Dearborn, Michigan. Once the researcher identified themes, instructional staff from Dearborn Public Schools were interviewed to corroborate the research findings.

The research produced five major themes:

1. a lack of intercultural commonalities or common denominators with White classmates;

2. the strength of religion as a cultural identity marker;

3. negative stereotype awareness;

4. intergenerational cultural dissonance; and

5. inability to find positive representation of themselves in television characters.

Each theme is fused and expounded on in the Integrative Summary below.

Integrative Summary as Applied to Erikson's Theory and Research Questions

In this section, the researcher integrates the responses to the relevant semi-structured interview questions to address the two research questions raised in Chapter 2, within the framework of Erikson's theory. For each research question, the researcher provides some synthesis of the responses to the interview questions as they address the research questions.

Research Question #1: How does identity formation of Arab-American adolescents look within the context of Dearborn, Michigan?

In Erikson's arguably most popular life stage, the fifth stage of development, the child becomes confronted by societal pressures. Before the fifth stage, adolescents may have a sense of identity. However, it is not fully developed until that sense has been tested by societal pressures. Foremost of societal pressures among Arab-American adolescents in Dearborn is the need to navigate multiple, complicated relationships with their peers, parents, and teachers in contested spaces of identity that distinguish them from White society. The Arab-American adolescents face cultural constraints from their family and community regarding culturally approved behaviors, as they navigate through the mainstream culture. They are faced with cultural pressure to maintain traditional behaviors (Ajrouch, 1999), as well as the values, morals, and attitudes that influence traditional behaviors.

Cultural pressure is inflicted upon Arab-American adolescents through their complicated relationships with their peers, parents, and teachers, all of whom are sources of social and internal conflict for Arab-American adolescents. There is much thought and care among Arab-American adolescents and their families regarding how others perceive them. As the educators noted in their interviews, a system of etiquette is present and strongly expected of the Arab-American adolescent. Arab-American adolescents are expected to be highly obedient to their

parents, who do not want or expect their adolescent children to challenge them or their authority

or to become self-centered rather than family-centered (Jones-Smith, 2018). There is an

expectation of obedience and conformity to the family. There is also an expectation of

maintaining the traditional views of their families. Furthermore, maintaining Muslim culture

adds priority to the family and dictates conforming to the needs and expectations of the family.

Guided by Islam, the social norms of the Arab-American adolescent are conservative. The Arab-

American participants noted that their parents were disapproving of out-of-wedlock relations,

and the emphasis of marriage was an ever-present social pressure among the Arabs-Americans.

Social pressure is a direct influence on an individual from a group of individuals that

encourage human behaviors. The need to belong influences human behavior, as does the need to

feel accepted and supported. Erikson (1950, 1968) believed that youth in this developmental

stage will experiment with different social skills and social strategies, ultimately trying to satisfy

a need to belong. Satisfying the need to belong is done through the socialization of the self,

which Erikson's psychosocial developmental theory suggests is chief when there is a synchrony

between individual growth and social expectations (Bretherton, 1997). "Socialization, in a broad

sense, includes the tendencies that establish and maintain relations between individuals and that

ensure the integration and respect of individuals as participants within a society that regulates

behaviours according to societal codes" (Adams & Marshall, 1996, p. 430; Damon, 1983). Social

behavior and societal pressures are often conflict areas for Arab-American families because the

social experience of the United States differs from their experience in their native country. The

Arab-American participants expressed pressures to assimilate into Western culture, as influenced

by the media, peer groups, and the overall desire to "fit in." They expressed frustration with

feeling differences between their mainstream cultural orientation and heritage cultural

orientation. They wanted to feel accepted by their host culture, but also to be seen by their cultural society as maintaining their traditions.

Erikson (1950, 1968) pointed out that adolescents define themselves in the context of their relationships and through the eyes of others. In their need for belongingness, adolescents will sometimes attempt to alter their behavior in order to seek approval from their social sources. The Arab-American participants discussed having parents who steered them away from some aspects of American adolescent culture that the parents perceived as negative. Some examples included dating and "partying" practices that have become common and normative among American youth and adolescents. Instead, Arab-American parents encourage a social experience that is traditional of the cultural values from their native countries. Such social experiences that are in line with their cultural values, as noted by the participants, included same-gender friend groups, an adherence to an Islamic diet, and females avoiding shaking hands with non-related men. For example, consumption of pork is entirely forbidden by Islam, and most Muslims only consume meat that is specially slaughtered according to particular standards (i.e., halal meat). The Arab culture of the Arab-American participants dictated their social relationships, their adherence to traditional dress, and their overall social experience.

The participants were also conscious about partaking in social experiences that were viewed as reflecting negatively on the family. Among the key values in Arabic culture is the avoidance of public shame (Dwairy, 2009). In collectivistic cultures, such as the Arab culture, "the dishonourable conduct of one reflects upon the honour of all" (Peristiany, 19965, p. 35; also see Fischer et al., 1999). The older female participants noted that wearing short or exposing clothing that is considered contrary to proper modest behavior would bring embarrassment to their families. Drug and alcohol use and living independently from the family as an unwed young

adult were also considered to be dishonorable conduct. Thus, to understand the Arab-American adolescents' experience, one must pay attention to the underlying elements that drive their social reality.

For Erikson, the social aspects that influence human development are most significant in shaping the identity of the individual. According to Erikson (1968), the main and most important developmental task for adolescents to solve the Identity vs. Role Confusion crisis and construct their own unique sense of identity is to find the social environment to which they can belong and create meaningful relationships with other people (Chen et al., 2007). In this age group, relationships with parents are still relevant for adolescents (Eckstein et al., 1999); however, relationships with peers become the center of the adolescents' life (Tarrant, 2002). The Arab-American participants, in order to avoid shame, embrace their collectivistic orientation by joining with others of their culture of origin. For Arab-Americans, discrimination has been viewed as being related to the adaptation processes, with some choosing to remain insulated within the Arab-American cultural community (Abu-Baker, 2006). Arab-American adolescents engage in the process of identity development while having to deal with many stressors, including the risk factors of perceived discrimination and acculturative stress (Amer, 2014). Arab-American adolescents face challenges that are different from the challenges faced by adolescents from other cultural and ethnic minority groups, due to the increasing feelings of being ostracized and excluded from the majority American culture in the post-9/11 era (Amer & Bagasra, 2013; Britto & Amer, 2007), as well as the social stigma associated with being an Arab-American, the fact that Arab is not a recognized ethnicity in national demographic categories, and the discrimination they face as a cultural group (Erickson & Al-Timimi, 2001).

Theme #1: A lack of intercultural commonalities or common denominators with White classmates. The Arab-American adolescents in Dearborn do not feel they belong to the dominant mainstream White culture. They do not feel accepted, nor do they endorse strong relationships with their White peer groups. To combat those feelings, the Arab-American adolescents are seeking to conform to the behavioral norms of the peer group with whom they identify themselves—namely, the Arab group. Members of the peer group can model their behavior according to group norms; therefore, peer groups can have a significant impact on adolescents' development (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). They are creating peer groups through ethnic membership and socially excluding non-members. Ethnic-based social exclusion is unlike peer rejection, which is based on individual characteristics (Plenty & Jonsson, 2017). The participants are engaging in ethnic homophily, the preference for friends who are similar to themselves based on ethnic background (Leszczensk & Pink, 2015). The choice of friendships and the preference for same-ethnic friends among the Arab-American participants were highly correlated with opinion. For example, comments the participants made included the opinions that the same-ethnic peers were more likely to share similar experiences, attitudes, and values. Stark and Flache (2012) showed that peer friendships based on shared opinion can be disguised as ethnic homophily if ethnicity is highly correlated with opinion. The Arab-American participants noted a preference for friends with similar opinions about individuals of White background. They made stereotypical assumptions about the ethnic out-group's interests, values, and beliefs. For example, one Arab-American participant noted, "White kids don't care about school" and "The White girls don't have to dress modest." Ethnic friendship segregation is seen as a reason for concern because Erikson (1968) not only described identity development as providing a sense of continuity within the self and in interaction with others ("self-sameness"), but it also provides

a frame for differentiating between self and others ("uniqueness"), which allows the individual to function autonomously from others (Erikson, 1968).

In adolescence, a self-comparison with peers becomes more important when adolescents try to associate their identities with their peers (Hill et al., 2007). A peer group not only provides emotional support for adolescents, but also provides a social status necessary for their identity development (Nawaz, 2011). For children who are members of an ethnic minority group and who may already feel like outsiders, extensive experiences of social exclusion impede healthy adjustment to school environments (Stone & Han, 2005). Peer group acceptance and social rejection influence psychological distress. Because individuals strive to protect their self-esteem and well-being, they seek out others whom they perceive are similar, to increase the feeling of connectedness and belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Erikson would see this significant alliance within one's cultural group as compensation for avoiding the emotional strain of identity confusion or total loss of identity. On one hand, minority individuals who identify more strongly with their minority group reported greater psychological well-being (Ghavami et al., 2011). However, by not engaging in strong relationships with other peer groups, the Arab-American adolescents lack any cultural socialization outside their Arab peer group that is necessary for identity development. The Arab-American adolescents then lack the abilities to navigate multiple cultural contexts because they do not have the cultural socialization settings that ultimately create the need for adolescents to negotiate multiple cultures. The participants noted that they were discouraged, although not prohibited, to "hang out" with people from other ethnic groups who were dissimilar to their own. However, some of the older Lebanese participants noted that they were encouraged to have social relations with individuals their families deemed to be similar to their own, such as minority groups like African-Americans. Similar to Arabs, African-

Americans reported smaller social networks, more contact frequency, and higher proportions of

kin in their networks than Whites (Ajrouch et al., 2001). The participants endorsed having

families that encourage socialization with minimal group variation from their own. Specifically,

on this topic, Participant #13 said, "African-Americans are like us. My dad has a lot of African-

American friends."

Socializing and developing close relationships among diverse backgrounds allow for the

development of social and cognitive abilities that enable adolescents to form affiliations with

multiple groups (Brown, 1990). According to Erikson's theory, those who lack socialization

among diverse groups may lead to avoiding peer contact all together, and avoidance then may

lead to social isolation. The Arab-American adolescents in Dearborn are avoiding socializing

with their White peers and are being influenced by their families, who are more often

emphasizing socialization with individuals of the same heritage culture than the mainstream

culture. This practice was demonstrated through participants' comments that focused on inner-

cultural socialization practices that were influenced by their parents.

Avoiding relationships with White peers is going to affect the emotional and

psychological well-being of Arab-American adolescents. In Erikson's fifth stage of development,

adolescents must find the social environment to which they belong. If Arab-American

adolescents are only socializing with their cultural group, they will face problems interacting

with peers with different backgrounds in adulthood, specifically as they begin college. As

adolescents grow into adulthood, they are exposed to more cultures. There is a sense of culture

shock when young people who are not exposed to different cultures become immersed in an

unfamiliar culture's way of life and set of attitudes. By only socializing with their own cultural

group, Arab-American adolescents will not have met Erikson's developmental milestones of

being able to navigate multiple cultural contexts and feeling that they belong socially. Erikson

theorized that the consequences of not meeting those developmental challenges of wanting to

belong socially included stagnation and emotional despair. The exclusive social interactions the

participants endorsed will, according to Erikson's theory, cause difficulty when the adolescents

reach the sixth stage of developing: Intimacy vs. Isolation. By not building strong, diverse

relationships in adolescence, the Arab-American participants will have difficulty forming strong

bonds with other diverse populations, which will in turn affect their ability to resolve the

Intimacy vs. Isolation conflict of early adulthood. Erikson warned that those who are not

successful in the resolution of the sixth stage of development may end up feeling isolated and

lonely. According to his theory, Intimacy refers to one's ability to relate to another human being

on a deep, personal level. An individual who has not developed a sense of identity usually will

fear a committed relationship and may retreat into isolation.

This research study also found that Arab teenagers have difficulty communicating

meaningfully with other teens from different ethnic backgrounds. There is fear of rejection and

cautiousness on the part of Arab-American adolescents. Participants commented that they

believed some of their White peers did not *want* to socialize with them. Interactions with non-

Arab-American teens are associated with feelings of anxiety and general discomfort. The

participants in this study questioned their ability to retain and internalize their own culture by

interacting with a new culture. They worried that socialization would allow them to internalize

other cultures, thus losing their own in the process. In Erikson's (1968) fifth stage of

development, the individual is attempting to gain the virtue of fidelity. The adolescents' sense of

fidelity, a key component of healthy development, involves being able to commit oneself to

others on the basis of accepting others, even when there may be ideological differences

(McLeod, 2013). According to Erikson (1964), fidelity emerges as a virtue at the end of the identity crisis in adolescence and indicates that a stable identity has been achieved. By internalizing negative stereotypes and feeling rejected from mainstream culture, the Arab-American adolescents are struggling with gaining the virtue of fidelity. People who do not develop fidelity are likely to commit to a negative identity and the ideology that follows (Markstrom & Kalmanir, 2001).

Socialization among various cultures has been consistently linked to better child adjustment, as it conveys positive messages about race/ethnicity and fosters the youth's positive feelings of their own and other racial/ethnic groups (Hughes et al., 2006; Rodriguez et al., 2009). Research has found that children with diverse friends, or "cross-group friends," have higher levels of social competence (Eisenberg et al., 2009; Lease & Blake 2005) and increased self-esteem, well-being, and resilience (Bagci et al., 2014; Fletcher et al., 2004). The two main reasons found in this research for the rejection of the dominant or host culture in favor of preserving their culture of origin were in both perceived values and identified behaviors. Erikson (1970) stressed the importance of cultural influences on development. Parents and their support for an exploration of identity also affect the progression of the developmental stage of identity. Cultural psychology and Erikson's theory, which was an important forerunner of cultural psychology, alert us to the fact that different cultures may have different valued goals (Schachter, 2005). Conceptions of self and identity are highly dependent on cultural context (Baumeister, 1987; Danziger, 1997; Holland, 1997).

Sub-theme #1: Perception of values. The Arab-American adolescents who participated in this research noted that they believed Arabs had different values from their White peers. This notion is interesting because large international surveys of human values have found that people

from more than 55 nations have consistent values (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001), and others have

found the structure of human values is very similar across more than 80 countries (Bilsky et al.,

2011; Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz et al., 2012). Country of origin explains on average only 2–12%

of inter-individual variance (Fischer & Schwartz, 2011). Despite research that has stated there is

a high consensus on value priorities across countries, Arab-American adolescents may view this

similarity of values across cultures differently. These perceived variances in values are

influencing attitudes and behaviors. This research has identified very minimal social interaction

between Arab and White adolescents partially due to the persistent belief that people from

different backgrounds hold different values. As noted previously in this chapter, the Arab-

American adolescents had made stereotypic assumptions about the ethnic out-group's values.

The Arab-American adolescents believed that the value they place on family and education

differed from the value of their White peers. Because they came from a collectivistic orientation,

the Arab-American adolescents were looking for cultural values and social role attributes in

friends who were similar to themselves. The Arab-American participants were creating peer

relationships directly influenced by their cultural beliefs and values rather than by individual

characteristics. This belief in differing values leaves Arab-American adolescents to lose the

value of social learning experiences. They are not learning with or from others of different

cultural backgrounds. Social learning experiences, which Arab-American adolescents are

missing, allow for interactions and relations to occur among multiple ethnicities in a learning

environment.

Albert Bandura's (1961) social learning theory emphasizes the importance of effective

and engaging learning experiences that take place in a social context. Learning is all about the

interactions. Stereotyping leads us to understand other groups' characteristics in ways that

magnify the differences between groups (Hamilton & Rose, 1980) and inhibits social interactions that are crucial to identity development. The participants in the study noted that their school climate, although providing avenues for positive social interactions with other groups, was not fostering social acceptance from their White peers. A student's environment and interpersonal relationships ultimately affect his or her growth and development. Erikson highlighted the importance of social experiences for adolescents. Erikson viewed mankind as social beings in nature with a desire to belong and strive for significance in their social environment (Çelik & Ergün, 2016). Without these significant interactions, Arab-American adolescents are losing out on interacting with peers who are essential to cognitive learning and social skills acquisition.

Bandura (1973, 1977) recognized that behavior is influenced by both personal and environmental factors. He also found that, through one's own behavior, people can influence themselves and their environment. The Arab-American participants noted that they did not have close relationships with their White classmates. They were only socializing with individuals who were similar to them in behaviors, traditions, and restrictions. By doing so, by creating this homogeneous social environment, the Arab-American adolescents began to perceive differences between social groups through specific behaviors that they saw and then they used these differences in behaviors as exemplars of different values. The social participation in homogeneous groups by the Arab-American participants was creating socially cohesive groups. Social cohesion can be formed through shared interests, values, and ethnic background, among other factors. However, by only creating social groups with similar ethnic members, the Arab-American adolescents are not exposed to now have awareness of the interests and values of other ethnic groups. Different individuals may manifest identifications with their in-group on a continuum, the extremes of which include overidentification.

Erikson (1959) recognized that the process of identity formation during adolescence could contribute to prejudice by facilitating a developmental overidentification with an in-group. He noted that those adolescents who over-identify can become remarkably intolerant in their exclusion of others who are different in cultural backgrounds. Erikson (1959) suggested that this behavior is an adaptive defense in adolescence against a sense of identity confusion. The participants, to some degree, were rejecting White peers due to the White peers' large group affiliation. The participants were cautious about interacting with other cultures that would result in a split from the central ethnic self. The strong affiliation with peers from their own cultural group was a way to complete the self and they, therefore, actively chose to join specific systems that supported their newly developing sense of self. Research on prejudice and discrimination has increasingly moved from focusing on "who is prejudiced and why" to examining how targets of prejudice cope with evidence that they and their group are devalued by society (McCoy & Major, 2003). The self-protective strategy against discrimination adopted by the Arab-American adolescents appears to be isolating from mainstream culture. Prejudice against the in-group is a threat against the self for the Arab-American adolescents and results in a sense of identity confusion and a further split from the central ethnic self. The more profound and extensive the perceived split from the central self, the more profound and extensive the resultant pathology (Rubens, 1994).

Sub-theme #2: Sensitivity to humor. Kazarian and Martin (2004) systematically investigated the relationships between culture and four types of humor usage in terms of specific cultural dimensions. Comparing Lebanese, Canadian, and Belgian humor usage, Kazarian and Martin (2004) found that individuals from individualistic cultures that emphasize harmony and group cohesion are more likely to use affiliative humor, whereas individuals from a collectivist

culture that values self-sacrifice for the sake of group are more likely to employ self-defeating humor. Kazarian and Martin's (2004) findings were similar to the findings of this research, in which participants noted that they used humor to laugh at one another, and much of their humor was delivered at the expense of themselves and their friends. In addition to the other perceived differences between White and Arab culture (i.e., values, behaviors, etc.), a key perceived cultural difference was how humor is used in social interactions. As noted, the participants endorsed humor often embedded in cultural norms and deeply rooted in language. As a result, the Arab-American adolescents were endorsing uncertainty of how their humor was going to translate across cultures.

Humor can be an effective tool to build relationships. Sharing the satisfaction of humor creates a sense of intimacy and connection among people, and this connection works as a buffer against stress, disagreements, and disappointments in relationships. However, because different cultures have different interpretations of specific humor, such as self-defeating humor, the Arab-American adolescents are not utilizing humor to create closeness with their White peers. Since each culture has a set of preferred humor styles, uncommon humor styles may be perceived negatively (Chang & Gruner, 1981; Stocking & Zillman, 1976). Not knowing the appropriate way to use humor in a particular culture may cause misunderstandings, which leads to conflict and, ultimately—as is the case with Arab-American adolescents, avoidance. This research detected a relationship between social anxiety and an appreciation for specific types of humor. The Arab-American participants expressed a level of social anxiety that was associated with social miscommunication and signs of disapproval from their peers. As Participant #8 noted, "They [White peers] might take things differently, like jokes…. White kids are very sensitive to how they are going to seem."

While humor is a universal phenomenon, it is also culturally tinted (Jiang et al., 2019). People from different cultural backgrounds may see humor in different ways. The literature has shown that Easterners and Westerners differ in humor perception (Chen & Martin, 2005, 2007). This research showed that the Arab-American participants were aware of the East-West cultural difference in humor usage and the impact culture has on individuals' humor perception and usage. The East-West cultural difference in humor usage accompanies the adolescent into adulthood as well. Research has indicated that humor can cause problems in diverse work environments in which culturally based expectations are often very different and therefore a potential source of conflict (Clouse & Spurgeon, 1995; Leap & Smeltzer, 1984).

Sub-theme #3: Educational attainment/emphasis. Arab-American parents care greatly about their children's education. This emphasis on education is partly due to the Arab culture characteristic of measuring success by what one does for one's family rather than the individual's achievement (Necola, 2019). Pride is important in Arab culture, and academic success allows for the family of the individual to be seen in a favorable light. As noted earlier in this chapter, honor is highly emphasized within the Arab-American family. Academic achievement brings honor to the family. While academic achievement is valued universally, it has been recognized as influenced by culture (Trumbull & Rothstein-Fisch, 2011). "The very meaning of 'achievement' is culturally variable, and the motives that students have for achieving may be quite different, depending upon their cultural background" (p. 25). The Arab-American participants noted perceived differences from their White classmates in cultural norms regarding educational attainment and motivation, which was one of the reasons they were socially isolating from their White classmates. Research has informed that academic achievement may be valued primarily for promoting future success (job, schooling), as in Western cultures, or for bringing

honor to one's family, as in Eastern cultures (Urdan, 2009). Erikson's theory noted the social and cultural forces that help shape an adolescent's sense of identity. Being academically successful and bringing honor to the family helps integrate aspects of the self in development. The participants noted that academic achievement is valued because it reflects well on the family in a social context and that positive reflection was a motivating factor in academic achievement. As Urdan (2009) found, in collectivistic cultures, achievement motivation is often correlated with social versus individual goals.

Another reason for the strong regard for education is that many Arab-Americans left their country for a better education for their children, and they made sure that their children understand the sacrifices they made. The participants in this research noted that their parents continuously remind them of the sacrifices made by the family so that they could attain an education.

Because the Arab-American adolescents were not perceiving White culture as associated with immigrant identities and immigrant sacrifices, the Arab-American adolescents were viewing educational values as another key difference between the minority culture to which they belong and the host culture of their White peers.

Sub-theme #4: Rules and restrictions. According to Erikson (1968), the family finally loses its place of primacy as a social institution in adolescence as peer groups and outgroups become the most significant social institutions. For adolescents, the social environment becomes increasingly complex, and socialization agents outside families become increasingly salient (Brown & Larson, 2009). However, among Arab-American adolescents, the family continues to be the main socializing factor, with parents purposefully engaging their adolescents in cultural socialization, teaching children about their heritage culture (e.g., cultural knowledge, values, and

practices), and encouraging children to respect their cultural background (Hughes et al., 2006; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004). The Arab-American participants noted that their parents were placing social restrictions on their behaviors according to the customs of their culture. While they perceived their White peers as having the freedom to participate in vast social activities during adolescence, the Arab-American participants communicated parental rules and restrictions that ensured cultural-maintenance behaviors. The participants differentiated themselves from the larger White society by their inability to partake of many social events. Many of the participants were not permitted to attend school dances, and those who were searching for an occupation were only allowed to work in "respectable" positions. The older female participants noted their parents wanted them to work "at a doctor's office" or places where "it wouldn't bring shame to the family."

In adolescence, social transitions involve gaining more rights and privileges, which include the ability to drive, opportunity for employment, and opportunity to join social groups outside of their family. Puberty and school events are frequently studied as key transitions signaling the entry into adolescence (Graber & Brooks-Gunn, 1996). After-school activities, weekend leisure activities, and school dances become opportunities for the adolescent. However, for the Arab-American adolescents, these additional social opportunities are stress-related as they transition from middle school to high school.

Theme #2: The strength of religion as a cultural identity marker. Religion is a fundamental component of Arab collective identity and culture. Religion among Arab-American adolescents acts as a significant social construct in negotiating issues related to culture in the pursuit of an identity. On one hand, their sense of religious identity is promoting a fundamental motivation for social affiliation; on the other hand, it is creating a mindset closed to external

religious influences. Religious identity among Arab-American adolescents is being associated

with antisocial attitudes, especially toward value-threatening out-groups. Due to perceived

differences in values, there is a lack of motivation to affiliate with White peers. This lack of

motivation highlights the extent to which religious beliefs and identity are related to social

affiliation. Social affiliation is characterized by a desire to interact and by pleasure in being with

others.

Muslim Arab-Americans use religion as a guidebook for what aspects of American

culture to adopt or reject (Eid, 2003; Read, 2004). Religion often provides a basis for rejecting

other people, particularly those who are not members of one's own religious faith (Van

Cappellen et al., 2017). Religious individuals affiliate more with members of their in-group and

ignore or exclude members of the out-group (Van Cappellen et al., 2017). Religious people may

also be more collectivistic (Cukur et al., 2004), and members of collectivistic cultures sit closer

together than members of individualistic cultures (Cline & Puhl, 1984; Remland et al., 1995;

Watson, 1970). Individualistic and collectivistic contexts in their preferred ways of relating to

others may produce cultural differences in the way they connect and affiliate with one another.

Religious practices, values, and beliefs are part of every aspect of an Arab-American's

life, including child rearing, education, and relationships with others (Ajrouch, 2000). The

participants in the study endorsed the importance of using religious beliefs to navigate their

cultural identity. They described key Muslim behaviors, such as prayer and fasting, as

characteristic behavior of an Arab identity. In their attempt to negotiate multiple cultures and

forge identities, the religious identity appears to emerge dominant. Religious identity can also

play a crucial role in the lives of Arab-American adolescents, particularly since Arab culture is

said to place an emphasis on religion (Abudabbeh, 1996). On one hand, this strength in an ethnic

identity is beneficial for Arab-American adolescents. Ethnic identity has been found to predict a variety of positive psychological and behavioral outcomes in adolescence (Kiang et al., 2006; Sellers et al., 2006). Religious people are not motivated to affiliate with those who disagree with fundamental aspects of their religion. Although Erikson (1958, 1965, 1968) emphasized the importance of religion to identity formation, he warned that religions serve as buffers against alienation by promoting belongingness through the use of rites and rituals. That is, creating an identity based solely on religion promotes more in-group affiliation and prevents diverse social affiliations. While religion is important to identity, Erikson identified religion as only one domain of identity.

   Sub-theme #1: Pleasure and satisfaction in their religious identity. Ethnic and religious identity is an aspect of acculturation that focuses on one's sense of belonging to an ethnic or religious group. It includes feelings and attitudes that a person has toward their ethnic group (Phinney, 2003; Tajfel, 1981). The participants described being "proud" of their Muslim and Arab identity. For example, Participant #8 noted, "Being Arab means you are very generous, very giving, very welcoming, respectful."

   Interestingly, the personal religious beliefs of the Arab-American adolescents were associated with more in-group favoritism among peers, but presented as the catalyst to separate themselves from their parents. One of the tasks of Erikson's fifth stage is to separate oneself from one's parents. Puberty and ensuing adolescence are times when youth start to separate themselves from their immediate family and create an independent identity. There is a strong, normal age-appropriate desire for increased individuality and self-expression. Erikson (1968) believed that, in adolescence, the timing of these psychosocial problems emerges because of the rise of gender and sexual development (McAdams, 2001). These developmental milestones are

associated with social involvement, peer interaction, and romantic interest, which are not in sync with the religious identity of the Arab teen. Erikson (1950, 1968) recognized identity formation as the experience of developing a well-organized, integrated self within a social environment.

As noted in Chapter 2, social behavior and societal pressures are often conflict areas for Arab-American families. Adolescent "dating" is forbidden, yet Erikson noted one of the tasks of the adolescent stage is to find a romantic partner of one's own. Arab-American adolescents are raised with the traditions and values of their parents, and they must reconcile them with culturally diverse surroundings. Two conflicting forces emerge: the pressure to remain within the structure of the family and the individual's need for a sense of uniqueness. For Erikson (1963), these crises are psychosocial because they involve the psychological needs of the individual in conflict with the needs of society.

All the participants noted that they were not able to "openly date"; however, many endorsed that they did. One participant noted that she had just returned from visiting her boyfriend prior to meeting the researcher; she noted her parents were not aware of this romantic relationship. The participants spoke about not wanting to bring shame to their parents, while still wanting to live a life that they themselves have paved. Some participants spoke about the pressure to choose an occupation that brought esteem to their family, such as a lawyer or a physician, yet those occupations did not interest them. The Arab-American adolescents were also questioning what part of their religious beliefs were their own and which were passed on to them by their parents. Many of the older adolescents were seeking religious education to develop which part of their religious identity was harmonious with their beliefs. Erikson's theory noted that adolescents become capable of constructing theories and philosophies designed to bring all the different and conflicting aspects of their own beliefs and society into a working entity. With

rapid social changes breaking down many traditional values, it has become difficult for young people to find continuity between what they learned and experienced as children and what they learn and experience as adolescents (Elkind, 1970; Erikson, 1950, 1968). The set of religious practices to which they adhere are governed by their family. In adolescence, there is an increase in family conflict, particularly over issues of autonomy and control, as they relate to that set of religious practices.

   Sub-theme #2: Religious identity as a given identity, not chosen. Naber (2005) found that many Arab-American young adults believed their parents had transmitted an "Arab Muslim" identity to them throughout childhood and adolescence. Naber's research was supported by the responses of the Arab-American participants in this current study. The participants had an awareness that they had not chosen this identity, but it "just was." However, the older participants were beginning to explore or inquire into their religious identity in more detail than the younger participants. They informed the researcher that they were studying the Quran, the book of Islam, as well as taking courses at the local mosques. They voiced feeling uneducated about their religious identity and had become accustomed to identifying as Muslim because that was what they were born into. The younger participants were not engaging in exploration, nor did they express a desire to do so. According to Erikson, exploration is the process of examining and experimenting with different roles and beliefs and is an important prelude to establishing a coherent sense of self. Erikson (1968) noted that as a result of the exploration of options, which eventually leads to commitment to various important identity domains (e.g., career, politics, religion, gender roles, and relational choices), a secure and positive identity is constructed.

   Parents provide instrumental support to their children by helping them develop a deep understanding of the meaning of their ethnicity. They do so by teaching them about their cultural

heritage and preparing them to deal with discriminatory experiences (i.e., ethnic socialization). The transmission of an "Arab Muslim" from parents to Arab-American young adults results in tension, and this tension drives the development of Arab-American identity through its negotiated form (Ajrouch, 2007). This negotiated form is birthed from exploration. The process is confusing and often difficult for parents and other adults to understand because the exploration may sometimes lead to rejection of any specific ethnic identity as dominant (Pasupathi et al., 2012). Some of the older Arab-American participants who wore the hijab noted that they were wondering if, after their exploration, they would keep their hijab on.

The psychosocial crisis that these adolescents experienced, according to Erikson's theory, occurred as the Arab-American participants who wore the hijab made psychological efforts to adjust to the demands of their social environment. People judging the hijab has the potential to theoretically deprive the internal expression of who the female Muslim is. Muslim women who wear the hijab want to be seen as viable human beings who have thoughts, feelings, strengths, and weaknesses (Taylor et al., 2014). According to Erikson (1968), the crisis that adolescents experience entails the struggle to find a balance between developing an individual identity and having a sense of being accepted and "fitting in."

Theme #3: Intergenerational cultural dissonance. The Arab-American adolescent that is feeling parental pressure for religious conformity is separating specifically from that parent. Sometimes it is one parent, and other times it is both. Erikson (1968) believed that the separation especially occurs from the same-gender parent. The participants in the study noted they felt closer to the parent who was "less traditional." They perceived "less traditional" as less adherence to the rules and restrictions identified in the Arab culture. The participants noted that they were closer to the parent who was "more Americanized" and "not that strict." Strictness was

associated with religion and conformity. According to Erikson's theory, when religious beliefs

are assigned to adolescents as part of the culture, it gives rise to crises between what they may

want to commit to and what is assigned to them. By separating themselves from the traditional

parent, the youth are questioning or challenging their family's beliefs and values, which include

deeply cherished cultural and religious beliefs. This separating from the traditional parent brings

about conflict because in Arab culture, any behavior that is viewed as distancing from the family

nucleus is contentious.

Erikson (1950) emphasized social variables, such as family, as being essential to identity

development. For example, Erikson (1959, 1968) referred to the initial understanding of female

and male roles in adolescence. The female participants in the study were vocal about their

frustration with their male peers or brothers being less restricted socially. They questioned the

traditional gender ideology in Arab culture. In traditional gender ideologies, families tend to

exert more social control over females than males and limit the female extracurricular activities

to the home (Read & Oselin, 2008). Immigrant minority groups view the preservation of female

chastity and traditional gender roles as mechanisms for asserting moral superiority over

mainstream American culture (Read & Oselin, 2008). To maintain these boundaries, co-ethnic

communities often exert pressure on families to keep women out of the labor market altogether,

or to let women work only intermittently (Le Espiritu, 2001; Gibson, 1988). The female

participants in the study noted that they must undertake jobs that had to be "respectful"

according to their parents, while also noting that parental job sanctions were less adhered to

among their male relatives.

Erikson (1959, 1968) discussed the increased pressure for adolescents to conform to

culturally sanctioned gender roles. These pressures come from a variety of sources that convey

messages about appropriate gender roles, such as parents, peers, educators, and the media. Intergenerational differences on the constructs of masculinity, femininity, and marriage give rise to conflict in the family. The participants noted that they and their traditional parents specifically were in conflict when the traditional parents' ideal version of gender was not met by their adolescent children. This conflict led to problems with communication and openness.

    Sub-theme #1: Religious strictness. Being "caught between two worlds" as a common portrait of ethnic minority youths navigating between their heritage culture and the mainstream American culture was evident. Arab-American adolescents in Dearborn validated the common stereotype of showing interest in the behaviors of mainstream American culture, yet have parents who block that in order to preserve the heritage and religious culture of the youth. Parents are not allowing the practice of mainstream cultural socialization by explicitly stopping the involvement of adolescents in events and activities that represent the mainstream culture. By enforcing these restrictions, parents, as agents of socialization, are negatively influencing the natural process of Arab-American adolescents in learning to become members of the social world. Erikson (1950, 1980) noted that although a child needs to receive behavioral and emotional guidance from parents, the adolescent also needs to seek out models of behavior to contemplate as possible choices for self-identification. Erikson (1963) noted that different cultures have different standards of expectations for children's behaviors.

    Socialization leads to identity formation and, as a result of ongoing socialization, children form a sense of who they are. If Arab-American adolescents are interacting with only individuals of the same culture and gender, they are going to reach a point where they question themselves as members of the dominant society. The respondents were not comfortable with questions asking about their Arab identity. They sounded irritated and avoidant, and some became less

communicative when the conversation was geared more towards an Arab identity compared with asking them about their religious identity. Ajrouch (2007) generated an open discussion among Muslim Lebanese immigrant parents and adolescent children of Muslim immigrant Lebanese parents. She asked questions about family life, adapting to America, community life, peer relations, and ties to the Arab culture. She found that her participants had difficulty explicitly describing the characteristics of an Arab-American identity (Ajrouch, 2007).

This diversity in acculturative levels within families can be conceptualized as cultural dissonance, which may, in some situations, be at the core of their problems (Hong & Ham, 1992; Johnson, 1995). Immigration, for example, creates stress in the family unit, specifically in adapting to a new environment and culture. This acculturative stress particularly demonstrated how the cultural and social aspects of integration affected the relationships that Arab-American adolescents have with their parents. Many studies have found how cultural and social integration may hurt family relationships (Matthjis, 2019), while other studies have found a negative association between cultural assimilation of children and parent–child relationship quality (Dinh & Nguyen, 2006; Smokowski et al., 2008; Tardif & Geva, 2006). The participants endorsed dissonance and a fundamental lack of agreement with the traditional parent who was not acculturated to the Western culture. However, Erikson (1980) believed that with successful integration between the heritage culture and the dominant culture, an adolescent will acquire a basic sense of identity. "For migrants to accept the culture of the community into which they have migrated, while continuing to accept their culture of origin, would seem to be beneficial to their survival (Weinreich, 2008, p. 124).

In Arab-American culture, identity is often assigned and shaped mainly by religion and gender. Religion influences how adolescents enact an Arab identity, and religion is a central

aspect of Arab ethnicity in America (Ajrouch & Jamal, 2007). It was also evident that religion, as an identity marker, was part of the reason for the lack of common denominators with White classmates. Erikson (1959) associated adolescent identity exploration with behaviors that may include rebelliousness and mood swings. This process of identity exploration is often confusing and difficult for parents and other adults in the adolescent's life. The adolescents are learning to define and invent themselves and aspects of different identities are being "tried out." These different layers associated with the self may not be in harmony with the values and beliefs of their parental figures or society's defined role for the adolescent. In Erikson's fifth stage of development, supportive parental figures and a supportive society are crucial in the development of the identity. Pathology erupts when the child is not able to reconcile the confrontation of the opposing forces. Participant #2 gave "dances at school" as an example for behavior differences between her and her White classmates; she stated, "My mom says no to going because of religion."

Sub-theme #2: Overprotectiveness. It is important to consider the role of parents' acculturation in children's adjustment, as children are rooted within an important developmental context—the family. Within this developmental context, parents represent a powerful socializing agent for their children (Collins et al., 2000; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Family obligations in Arab culture are often given priority, and there is a high level of family interdependence. Similar to other collectivist cultures, parents are highly involved in their children's lives and remain so for most of their lives. In more traditional Arab-American families, children do not leave the home until they are married (Haboush, 2007). Until then, they remain the parents' responsibility. What the adolescents in this study were endorsing were high levels of concern for their welfare, reputation, and safety in the family. The family has often been cited as the primary context from

which adolescents derive a sense of ethnic belonging (Bernal et al., 1990; Hughes et al., 2008; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2006). Shame and honor are highly emphasized within this context, and bad personal action not only dishonors the individual but also the entire family unit. As noted, the first task of Erikson's fifth stage is to separate oneself from one's parents, especially the same-sex parent. Acculturative stress, religiosity, and psychological adjustment are some of the issues observed among Arab-American adolescents (Goforth et al., 2014). "The Arab-American youth experiences challenges related to maintaining their heritage culture's traditions and values and the degree to which they participate in mainstream American traditions" (p. 1). These challenges often result in parent–child conflict.

In a study on Muslim Lebanese immigrant parents and adolescent children of Muslim immigrant Lebanese parents, their responses revealed an underlying tension between the American cultural more of freedom and the traditional Arab practice of respect (Ajrouch, 2007). It becomes difficult for traditional Arab families to acknowledge that their offspring may not share in the same beliefs and ways of thinking that they do. Erikson (1968) noted that in mentally and physiologically mature adolescents, in addition to the new feelings, sensations, and desires they experience as a result of changes in their body, adolescents develop a variety of new ways to look at and think about the world. Traditional parents find this difficult, thereby breeding intergenerational cultural dissonance. In contrast to the earlier stages, where parents play a more or less direct role in determining the result of the developmental crises, the influence of parents during this stage is much more indirect (Elkind, 1970; Erikson, 1950, 1968). Traditional Arab families find it difficult to see adolescents as needing to be less managed. Erikson (1959) associated adolescent identity exploration with readily discernible behavioral characteristics,

which include rebelliousness, mood swings, fluctuations in ego strength, and heightened physical complaints.

As the youth become aware of and interact with other cultural groups, one's self-perception changes. These matters lead to answering the next research question.

Research Question #2: How do adolescent Arab-Americans perceive their cultural identity within the context of the culture of Dearborn, Michigan?

Our self-perceptions are influenced, and develop, from our perceptions of the way others view us. Specifically, individuals from different ethnic backgrounds develop these self-perception systems from knowledge of membership in a cultural group and the value attached to that membership. Our self-image is strongly affected by the groups to which we belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The second research question answered how Arab-American adolescents believed others view them as an Arab and how that is currently affecting the way they view themselves and their culture. In Erikson's (1968) fifth stage, adolescents must reconcile what they believe themselves to be compared to how others see them. Environmental stability and developmental changes affect an individual's self-concept. An individual's self-perception or "self-concept," according to Rogers (1959), often expands to include others' perception of their worth or esteem as a person.

Theme #4: Negative stereotype awareness. Erikson's arguably most popular life stage is the fifth stage of development in which the child becomes confronted by societal pressures. The present research found that Arab-American adolescents were acutely aware of the negative stereotypes of the cultural and religious group to which they belonged. Every participant noted that the mass media identified Arabs as "terrorists," and the majority of the participants believed this identification as terrorists was also the perception of mainstream White culture regarding

Arabs. The Arab-American participants, then, were interpreting how they believed White peers saw them based on their perception, and they were responding to that interpretation through behavior. In this case, their response was social isolation from their White peers. They may not be doing it consciously or with awareness that they were doing so, but they were protecting themselves, to a degree, from rejection and discrimination. The majority of the younger participants noted that they believed the dominant culture "hated us." Every participant spoke of a perception of the anti-Muslim sentiment in the West and abroad.

Cooley (2006) described the feelings of pride or shame based on this perceived judgment by others and how individuals respond, based on that interpretation. The vast discrimination and racist experiences the participants endorsed are at risk for having an effect on how they see themselves. The negative messages Arab-American adolescents are receiving from others are particularly influential at this developmental stage. They are starting to rebel against this negative stereotype. The educators in this research noted some have stopped standing up during the Pledge of Allegiance. Researchers have found that when people feel disrespected simply because they belong to a particular gender, race, or other group, they are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors (Parker, 2015). Erikson (1968) noted that adolescents are not only learning who they are, but are also learning to define their role in society.

Sub-theme #1: Perceived discrimination in school. Erikson (1968) examined how social, historical, and political contexts within a racialized society interact with individual development (Syed & Fish, 2018). Erikson (1994) recognized that traumatic events such as political turmoil and war can inform the developmental context of identity. The participants in the research were either immigrants or had parents or relatives who were immigrants. As noted in Chapter 1, Arab-Americans have historically moved to the United States for various reasons, driven largely by

political turmoil in the region and economic opportunities abroad (Cumoletti & Batalova, 2018; David, 1982). Today, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the political instability of Lebanon, and wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen have increased the immigration of Arabs to the United States (Inhorn, 2011). Through Erikson's view, we can understand how the structural oppression of political turmoil in the native country, as well as the stereotype and racism experienced in the United States by the participants, act as trauma and play an integral role in development. Every participant interviewed spoke of at least one time in which he or she felt discriminated against by someone in the general public or by a teacher or a classmate in their schools. Some participants reported numerous occurrences of discriminatory behavior from teachers and classmates. Each discriminating event was described as a traumatic experience.

Erikson related trauma to difficulties with attachment, parenting, and emotional expression (Syed & Fish, 2018). His emphasis on trauma and conflict is unique to adolescence. Erikson emphasized the effect of conflicts on an individual's social behaviors. Romero and Roberts (2003) found that perceived discrimination, defined as an everyday stressor, was associated with lower levels of self-esteem. The Arab-American adolescents' perceptions of their school climates were strongly and consistently related to perceptions of discrimination. Research has already established that an Arab identity is associated with negative stereotypes (Ajrouch et al., 2015; Bodenhausen et al., 2012). What this research identified was the Arab-American adolescents' strong awareness of the negative stereotypes associated with being Arab. The research sought to understand the level of awareness and perception regarding the negative stereotypes as a risk factor for a variety of outcomes. "Arab-Americans who internalize these negative stereotypes will begin to view their own group in an unfavorable light and become at

risk for displaying lower self-esteem, and experiencing loss of meaning and a sense of confusion in their lives" (Ajrouch et al., 2015, p. 92).

Corrigan et al. (2006) defined the process of perceived discrimination as stereotype awareness, meaning the person is aware of the general negative beliefs—in this case, surrounding their culture. A few months prior to the start of these interviews, in May of 2019, a city of Dearborn employee was terminated after posting a racist comment under a post on the Facebook page of a Detroit news station *7 Action News.* The employee, a surveyor for the City of Dearborn, wrote under the post, "Cute picture. Should be on the cover of camels are us," in reference to a woman in a burkini in *Sports Illustrated*. The Council on American-Islamic Relations Michigan Chapter (CAIR-Michigan) responded to the comment, saying, "References to camels is an oft-used dehumanizing racial slur used against persons of Arab ancestry and against Muslims and those who are perceived to be Arab" ("Dearborn Employee," 2019).

In September of 2019, a Dearborn teacher was under investigation for alleged racist comments made to students. An eighth grade student at Stout Middle School in Dearborn said one of her teachers made racist and insensitive remarks regarding her Muslim heritage. "[He] said that we should take showers because we stink and stuff like that," the 13-year-old student said. Other remarks the student said were made to her by this teacher included "Are you American? Do you want to be? Why don't you go back to your country?" and "that I should be more grateful because he gives me free food, free education." "This teacher clearly has a bias against Muslim women who wear the headscarf," said Fatina Abdrabboh, with the Muslim American Advocacy League (Click on Detroit, 2019).

In October of 2019, at Henry Ford College in Dearborn, a student filed a complaint after his business professor allegedly went on an Islamophobic rant in front of other students. A civil

rights complaint was filed with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights stating that this

professor told the student he knew that all of the Muslims and Arabs in Dearborn are on the

government watchlist, and sending money to or supporting Lebanon is a sign of radicalism

(*Downriver Sunday Times*, 2019).

Stigma is a negative stereotype with significant consequences to the development of

identity. "Traditional theories of stigma and discrimination suggest that members of stigmatized

groups internalize public stigma and suffer a loss of self-esteem and self-efficacy" (Watson &

Larson, 2006, p. 235). To understand Arab-Americans is to understand the impact of stereotypes

and prejudices against the culture. Being raised in a climate where prejudices and discrimination

toward persons of Arab and Middle Eastern descent are prevalent shapes the identity of Arab-

American adolescents. The Arab-American adolescent must work to process, engage in meaning

making, and, specifically, depersonalize these negative experiences (Khan & Ecklund, 2013).

Stigma is an important environmental risk factor for a variety of outcomes, specifically among

those who begin to accept the negative views as truth. Stigmatized individuals constrict their

social networks and opportunities in anticipation of rejection due to stigma (Link, 1987). Erikson

(1963) maintained that individuals will experience lower levels of self-esteem due to self-stigma

when they belong to a group that is stigmatized.

Young immigrants are caught between parents who communicate the enculturative

message of their homeland, and teachers who may communicate the acculturative message of the

receiving society (Milstein & Luci, 2004). Enculturation describes the process in which

individuals acquire the values, norms, and skills that enable them to function within our own

cultural groups (Ho, 1995; Milstein & Luci, 2004). Acculturation, in contrast, refers to "the

process of acquiring the values and behaviors appropriate to a new culture" (Redfield et al.,

1936, p. 149; also see Milstein & Luci, 2004). The participants were highly sensitive to the actions and perceptions of their White teachers and were acutely aware of the differences in their backgrounds. Participants noted that their teachers' experiences did not mirror their own. They felt that the White teachers would not understand the struggles that Arab-American students endured because they were not part of the minority group as their Arab teachers were. Erikson (1968) discussed the effect of the struggle to create positive identities within a society that had long denied minority groups the opportunity to develop them. As Erikson noted, identity development is difficult within the strivings and challenges to maintain a traditional culture in a changing society. In multicultural societies, Arab-American adolescents attempt to survive and thrive as they navigate multiple cultures. They struggle among the different assumptions and ways of interacting, values, and goals in multiple cultures.

Sub-theme #2: Discrimination against the hijab. According to Erikson (1968), the development of identity is likely to be different for minority and majority members due to the latter group's history of discrimination. Overt markers of religion for Muslims, such as the hijab for women, often make Muslims vulnerable to discrimination and bigotry (Awad, 2010). Muslims constitute an important part of an increasingly diverse religious landscape of the United States. The identities of Muslim Arab-Americans are partly constructed through the discriminatory interactions they face. Muslims who wear a hijab are often targets of ethnic and religious discrimination (Ibish, 2003). The self and identity of Muslims who wear a hijab are established and maintained by the communication of appearances. The Muslim adolescents who wore the hijab, through their presentation of self through dress, were facing discrimination. These discrimination events challenge individuals to explore their identity and also present problems for building or maintaining a sense of pride in that identity. Discrimination in the

immediate moment primarily provokes exploration rather than pride (Hammack, 2011; Romero & Roberts, 2003). The participants noted that they feared for their safety when leaving the comfort of their Dearborn community. A handful of participants noted that they were thinking of removing the hijab because "it made life easier" for them. Identity results from internal subjective perceptions, self-reflections, and external characterizations (Peek, 2005). Muslim females wearing the hijab must work to make subjective meaning of both actual and perceived discrimination. The hijab, as an identity-related attribute, makes a very visible declaration of their religious identity. Personal discrimination experiences can alter internal subjective perceptions of their identity.

Discrimination is a common experience for ethnic minorities; it has been associated with negative psychological outcomes including lower self-esteem (Romero & Roberts, 2003), increased psychological distress (Sellers & Shelton, 2003), and negative mood and depressive symptoms (Mossakowski, 2003; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2011). The instances associated with racially aggravated assaults due to the hijab have left some of the participants feeling fearful and insecure. Internalized feelings of shame, guilt, insecurity, and low self-worth often provoke maladjusted and self-destructive childhood behaviors that frequently persist into adolescence and adulthood (Erikson, 1963 ; Ferguson et al., 1999; Harter, 1990; Kagen, 1981; Kowleski-Jones & Duncan, 1999; Wangby et al., 1999). Diminished self-worth causes feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness and can result in insecure attachments and isolation, which Erikson's theory warns is the outcome of those adolescents who are not successful in the resolution of Erikson's next stages of development.

The religious identity of the Muslim participants who wear a hijab was visibly demonstrated through dress. Not only do the Muslim adolescents who wear the hijab face

particular exposure to discrimination, but the visibility of their religious identity in fact threatens their position as part of mainstream America. It becomes harder for them to "fit in" with mainstream White culture, compared to Muslim females who do not wear the hijab. Muslim women who wear headscarves are more likely than those who do not to face discrimination (Rippy & Newman, 2008). Internalizing racially aggravated assaults due to the hijab reveals the tension that exists between an identity based on 'Whiteness' as opposed to one based on Islam (Ajrouch & Kusow, 2007).

Theme #5: Inability to find positive representation of themselves in television characters. Erikson (1968) noted that adolescence is a critical time of self-reflection and self-definition. Media outlets act as a powerful tool in the development of a person's self-perception. Arab-American adolescents are feeling rejected by the dominant mainstream culture and dominant media portrayals. They are being cast into negative social roles, and they understand this prejudice. Television portrayals of Arab-Americans allow for the ability to envision better versions of themselves. However, television characters are telling them they are a burden on society. The Arab character is increasingly the "the enemy" during the War on Terror. These negative narratives and images have the power to form social attitudes, shape thoughts and beliefs (Shaheen, 2014). The adolescents are keenly aware of the negative images (including language) attached to them, which makes them socially vulnerable. They acknowledged seeing Arab characters shown in a negative or stereotypical light in television and film. Being members of a socially devalued group, "Arab-Americans who internalize these negative stereotypes will begin to view their own group in an unfavorable light and become at risk for displaying lower self-esteem, and experiencing loss of meaning and a sense of confusion in their lives" (Ajrouch et al., 2015, p. 92).

Therefore, Arab-American adolescents are being shielded from negative stereotypes and minimizing facing uncomfortable challenges. To protect against the media's damaging stereotypes, Arab-American adolescents become sheltered in their community. Arab-American adolescents in Dearborn are feeling overprotected and, to a degree, comfortable within the "Dearborn Bubble." They are not being exposed heavily to other cultures unless they actively seek them out. While many spoke about the safety net of Dearborn, many yearned to live a life outside of the restraints and homogeneity of Dearborn. They wanted to feel trusted, to feel empowered, to feel capable of excelling outside of their comfort zone. Erikson (1968) stressed the development of self-identity within a social context that provides an orientation toward or against positive community living. The participants spoke often of the "New Age" of Arab culture and the barriers that are placed that prohibit them from living fully in the New Age. The participants noted that their generation was more "open-minded" about issues of face and shame in the culture. They spoke about the barrier that is often present between their open-mindedness and the closed-mindedness of their parents. They spoke about a culture of which they were so proud, yet they wanted change, specifically regarding social restrictions and gender role stereotypes in more traditional families. Arab-American adolescents in Dearborn are ready for an era of change regarding cultural restraints and dated cultural norms, and they need the empowerment and support of the community to make that happen. Because the community is largely a social environment for the adolescents, the members of the community are needed to help break these cultural restraints that are impeding identity development. Erikson (1968) noted that in the adolescence stage, the adolescent looks for adult models of leadership to emulate, such as relatives, coaches, and clergy. The adolescent requires supportive role models, such as

parents, teachers, and coaches, to guide them in the exploration phase of identity. The adolescents did not endorse currently receiving this support from their community.

Interpretation of Findings

As the United States continues to welcome newcomers, including immigrants and refugees, from Arab countries, it is important to understand the cultural differences that make up this group. It is also important to understand the importance of family dynamics and social relationships as they help individuals assume identities of their own. Dearborn schools have been proactive in creating a culture of inclusion through student clubs, forward-thinking teaching methods, and emphasis on cultural competency (Harb, 2019). However, it does appear that despite the educational experiences offered to the students on diversity, the Arab-American students were still creating their own social environments that were not diverse at all.

Erikson (1968) defined adolescence as critical for identity development, arguing that a successful navigation of this period results in "identity achievement," whereas failing to develop a coherent sense of self leads to "role confusion" (Gullan et al., 2011). While all young people face the challenges of adolescence, barriers to navigating this life stage successfully are particularly prevalent for minority youth. The barriers identified in this study are hindering the achievement of a sense of self that is a vital developmental task. Specifically, the achievement of a coherent and strong sense of self is critical to positive mental health.

The results of this study align with the literature regarding the importance of culture and religion as strong motivational factors for how adolescents identify themselves. Specific to Arab-American adolescents, behaviors, customs, and values were found to have a major influence on their identity development, as well as on their perception of other cultural groups. While the literature has identified that cultural values of individualism and collectivism differ in their

relative emphasis on independence versus interdependence with one's group (Goncalo & Staw, 2006; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), this research found that Arab-American adolescents were significantly collectivist. Through their responses, it was clear that social rules and families and communities play a central role in their lives. Families influence their social behaviors, their academic achievements, and their occupational aspirations. These findings are similar to those of Ajrouch (2000), who observed that Arab-Americans in Dearborn emphasized ideas of community and family, as well as findings from Nassar-McMillan and Hakim-Larson (2003), who discussed religion as an important part of Arab culture. Nassar-McMillan and Hakim-Larson also highlighted the collectivist orientation of the Islamic culture. While the analysis of the present interviews showed a wish for a sense of individualism, the adolescents' cultural and religious affinity spoke of the strong collectivism within the group. Social psychology contributes supportive evidence for Erikson's clinical formulation, showing that individuals do compensate for weak personal identity by highlighting their collective identity (Ng, 1985, 1986).

The Arab-American adolescents were guided primarily by the instructions of Islam and customs, while they viewed non-Arab-Americans as more free-spirited and contemporary. Although religion and customs played a significant role in their positive self-perception, it was also a source of distress among adolescents and their parents. The findings revealed that Arab-American adolescents are often conflicted with the stringency and restrictions of the customs implemented on them by their parents. These findings were consistent with previous research that discussed the struggles between the cultures and traditions of Arab immigrants and the "mainstream" culture in the United States (Ajrouch, 2004). According to Erikson (1950, 1968), an adolescent's desire to locate oneself in a social context becomes paramount. As the adolescent searches for a sense of belonging, social influences that do not match the emerging sense of the

self are either dismissed or perceived as threats (Barta, 2013). This dismissal was evident in the Arab-American adolescents' perception that socializing with White peers is a possible threat to their ethnic sense. If they socialize, they fear they will conform. If they conform, they will be viewed by their families and communities as rejecting their heritage culture. Whaley (2003) described the discrepancy between mainstream and minority culture as occurring not only on the behavioral level, but also in terms of one's cognitive schemas. Minority youths may feel that they are expressing their "true self" in one setting (among their own cultural group) and a "false self" in another (among the host culture).

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Several of the strengths and limitations of this study coincide with the methodology of the research.

Strengths

The qualitative nature of the research is the most appropriate method to seek to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves (Tolley et al., 2016). Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations (Tolley et al., 2016). This study provided a novel insight into the perceptions of Arab-American adolescents. By doing semi-structured qualitative interviews, the data represented the human experience of adolescents that is often more compelling and robust than quantitative data. The qualitative data of this research included information about behaviors, needs, desires, and a variety of other information that is essential to represent the experience of Arab-American adolescents.

The researcher also chose Erikson's psychosocial theory as the basis for the present study for several reasons. First, Erikson's theory is widely used in the field (McKinney, 2001). Therefore, it was a logical starting point for examining the context in which at-risk youth from minority groups develop a sense of themselves when their dominant culture differs from their home culture. It was also beneficial to utilize Erikson's theory as scholars of adolescence, trained in the psychological sciences, often refer to the writings of Erikson for inspiration and theoretical guidance (Adams & Marshall, 1996). This research utilized Erikson's theory on identity development to answer the two research questions that directed the focus of the study. The questions aimed to assess the struggles in identity formation and social interactions of Arab-American adolescents. Erikson's work on culture, race, and ethnicity figured prominently in his theorizing on identity development (Syed & Fish, 2018).

A criticism of Erikson is that it embraces an individualistic social perspective of identity development and may not be relatable to Eastern collectivistic cultures. Erikson actually offered a broad framework from which to view development. His theory was also heavily influenced on social relationships that adolescents develop, which is an essential part of adolescence and a global human attribute. In addition, the Arab-American adolescents in this research were being raised primarily in Western societies with Western views. While models of identity, such as Erikson's theory, in adolescent development fit nicely into Western philosophies that embrace an individualistic social perspective, Erikson's theory can still be conceptualized into Eastern cultures that traditionally embrace a collectivistic social perspective. Western scholars agree that identity and autonomy are key components of adolescent development that, when mastered, represent important transitional markers from adolescence into adulthood (Lee et al., 2010). These transitional markers, such as social relationships, are universal. Utilizing Erikson allows

for a detailed view on the push and pull between the individualistic and collectivistic social perspectives, which are dominant among Arab-American adolescents.

Limitations

A limitation of this study may be that the coding and analysis were performed by one researcher. Thus, the researcher could not examine inter-rater reliability. Glaser and Strauss (1999) stated that "the constant comparative method is not designed (as methods of quantitative analysis are) to guarantee that two analysts working independently with the same data will achieve the same results" (p. 103). Thus, while one-researcher coding may be a limitation, it is also a strength of this study because the researcher's analysis may provide insights that others may not see or conceive. Many variations on these methods of qualitative analysis and open coding are useful in effective data analysis.

The aims of a qualitative approach are to present in-depth, detailed accounts of human experiences, often within a smaller sample size than in quantitative studies (Smith et al., 2009) which this study provides; however, the acknowledged limitations of this approach are its limited ability to generalize to the wider population. From a quantitative perspective, a limitation of this study may be that only 35 participants partook in the study. On the other hand, 35 participants constitute an adequate number for a qualitative study. In addition, all the participants were attending or working in a school in Dearborn, Michigan, and were high school students, which means that the results may not be generalizable to other regions or to non-high school students. Erikson's theory of psychosocial development defined adolescence between the ages of approximately 12 and 18. Therefore, it would include children in middle school, who were not included in the study. Similarly, the inclusion criteria conditions placed on the study excluded the recruitment of Arab-American adolescents who did not identify as Muslims, which

constitutes a sizable proportion of this population outside of Dearborn, further limiting how representative the sample is to generalize to other practicing religions.

Objectivity is a sought-after quality in positivistic or quantitative research. Objectivity is intended to reduce bias. Qualitative researchers assume that they bring their personal experiences and worldviews into the research that they conduct and everyone is unique in this respect. That being said, the researcher tried to be as objective as possible. The aim of qualitative research interviews is to encourage the participants to "tell their stories in their own words" and facilitate the conversation so that the researcher has minimal involvement in the dialogue (Smith et al., 2009). Interview questions were simply used as guides to facilitate discussion. Arab-American families are characterized by "considerable diversity depending upon their nationality, religion, and extent of acculturation to both western and Arab cultures" (Haboush, 2007, p. 183).

The researcher, who is a Muslim Arab-American, understood the challenges, as well as the benefits, that resulted from being a part of the Arab and Muslim ethnic and religious groups. The participants reported several challenges that they may not have opened up to report had they not identified with the researcher as part of their in-group. For example, the researcher herself has been discriminated against for wearing the hijab and can understand the climate of discrimination in the post-9/11 era. As the daughter of immigrants, the researcher understood the internal conflict that the participants expressed about the divide between the Arab culture and the dominant culture. The researcher was also restricted from engaging in many of the social behaviors that were perceived as part of White culture, such as high school parties and dances at school. Also, the researcher herself has two adolescent children whom she sees as experiencing adolescent crisis as they also work to maintain their native culture and acculturate to the dominant culture.

In addition, as a mental health services provider, the researcher has been trained in the ability to understand, describe, and explain behavior, and its underlying cognitive and biological processes. Some methods of psychotherapy rely on observational techniques. The researcher was able to observe nonverbal communication, such as the discomfort of some participants, when discussing their Arab identity. In addition, as a therapist, the researcher utilized her clinical experience in extensive, in-depth conversations to engage the participants in their interviews.

For the purposes of this study, the culture of Arab countries and culture of the United States were broadly referred to as individualistic and collectivistic cultures, respectively, and each was ascribed certain characteristics. However, it is understood that these cultures are heterogeneous with great intra-cultural variation, and it is recognized that these concepts can be overgeneralized. It was not the intention of this research to assert that everyone within a culture ascribes to the same cultural values. Degree of assimilation, integration, and length of residence in the United States affect the level of identification within a culture. In addition, there were differences between the three public high schools the students attended in the community. Although the research reflected the community from which the sample was drawn, School #2 had a smaller Arab-American population, compared to the other two high schools.

This research only took into consideration the Arab-American adolescents' perspective on the social experience in the school. It is difficult to confirm the Arab-American students' perceptions without interviewing their White peers. A limitation of the study was a lack of the perceptions of White students of their social and cultural experiences with Arab students. In addition, the validation interviews with the Dearborn Public School staff were only with employees of Arab descent. These individuals may be reporting inaccurately the perception of other staff members of Dearborn Public Schools who are not of Arab descent.

Implications for Theory and Research

The global masses have always tried to distinguish between the culture of Arabs and Americans. The past two decades have witnessed a great increase in psychological research on religiousness and the development of faith and spirituality (Gebelt & Leak, 2009). Despite this increase in psychological research, none of it has been examined from an Eriksonian identity status perspective (Erikson, 1959; Marcia, 1966), with the exception of a few studies (Fulton, 1997; Leak, 2009; Mosher & Handal, 1997). Furthermore, searches on Erikson's problematic identity crisis resulted in minimal research on Muslim identities. Of the minimal results, most of the research focused on British Muslim identities or identity developments of Arab-Americans outside of the United States (Basit, 2017; Hutnik & Street, 2010). This study served to fill some of the gap in that research.

The results have implications for the importance of a discussion on the relatedness of culture to religion. The study offered suggestive evidence for further exploration of internal conflicts that the destructive negative stereotypes produce on this vulnerable population. The results reflected the complexities of this group, highlighting the importance of engaging in socially meaningful behavior and contact as well as the importance of these needs to be assessed on an individual basis. The study appeared to support the argument that individuals working with this population must have a strong knowledge base concerning Arab-American identity development, as well as adolescent developmental needs. Those individuals who provide care to this population need to receive additional training about attitudes and communication with regard to maintaining and developing identity. There is also a need to talk about cultural differences that set them apart from others in the group and the importance of those items to their cultural identity. "One of the primary steps in achieving productivity within groups is co-operation,

which is achieved, in part, through decreasing perceived differences between group members"
(McGuire et al., 2007, p. 601).

In addition, this study addressed the scarcity of research on the exploration of identity
issues within Eastern/Asian cultures. Relatively little research has focused solely on Arab-
American students and the relationship between identity and adverse climates. Additionally,
much research has been done on adolescents' problems and their relationship to self-esteem, but
a bulk amount of that research is on White students, disregarding how Arab-American
adolescents are also at risk for poor psychological outcomes because of their exposure to
sociocultural adversities. This research will assist Arab-American adolescents to pass through the
identity stage more successfully.

This research was partly in response to the need to work more effectively with Arab-
American adolescents and integrate an important part of their experiences into the
psychotherapeutic work. Although research on therapeutic issues and Arab culture has been
limited to questions of how identity development relates to presenting emotional distress,
findings from this study identify a critical dynamic that must be addressed by psychologists: the
psychological distress related to the social exploration of the Arab-American adolescent. This
researcher provides new perspectives on the experience of multiple and intersecting identities
related to ethnicity, nationality, gender, and religiosity.

Recommendations for Future Research

In future research, investigators could further explore the psychological implications or
effects on individuals of various derogatory labels. Research could attempt to assess the
psychological health of Arab-Americans who have internalized the label of being a part of a
socially devalued group. This research identified the awareness of Arab-American adolescents of

the negative terminology associated with their identity. Future research could measure the psychological impact of this awareness on their mental health.

In addition, changes have occurred regarding the loosening of social guidelines and restrictions in other cities with a large Arab population, specifically among Arab-Americans who practice other religions such as Christianity. Freedom of choice in their assumption of adult roles and values may differ in the Christian Arab-American population than the Muslim one researched in this study. Research to compare the perception of Arab-American identity within the context of the United States among Christian adolescents would be beneficial.

Furthermore, future research on the identity alignment between Arabs and other minority groups would be beneficial, specifically the African-American connection noted by some of the participants in this study. The participants in the study spoke about the similar values and cultural likeness they shared with the African-American community. Research investigating how social interactions of Arab-American adolescents with the African-American community and other minority groups would be beneficial to help facilitate more heterogeneous social groups.

Contributions to Research

In addition to the provision of some directions for future research, this study has made major contributions to the literature on the identity development and identity perception of adolescent Arab-Americans in Dearborn, Michigan. Since research in these areas is relatively limited, this study contributed in the following ways.

First, the participants were adolescents developing their identity in Erikson's fifth stage of development. They spoke openly about the crises they felt and experienced. This study should contribute especially to the understanding of the identity development process of adolescents when their cultural beliefs do not align with the social environment of the dominant culture in

which they reside. This study helps to bring awareness to the anxiety and confusion in self-definition that Erikson (1980) discussed when the identity crisis is not reconciled in adolescence; other research has not yet examined this.

Second, the present study supports other research, such as Ajrouch (2007), who found difficulty among Muslim Lebanese immigrant parents and adolescent children of Muslim immigrant Lebanese parents in explicitly describing the characteristics of an Arab-American identity. In Ajrouch, like this research, the responses from the parents of adolescents reflected an underlying tension between the American culture of freedom and independence and the traditional Arab practice of respect and interdependence

Third, the target population of the study was Arab-American adolescents. Research into this population has been limited, compared to research involving Caucasian adolescents and Arab adults. Although some research has been conducted on Arab identity (Ajrouch, 2000, 2004, 2007, 2015), the studies have been largely within the adult context. As a result, these research findings should enhance knowledge of the identity development process of Arab adolescents.

Finally, the investigation of the concept of social restrictions in the presence of identity development showed its impact on adolescent identity development. Therefore, the findings of this study could bring awareness to parental restrictions on the concept of identity development and the difficult transitional stage that is both physical and psychosocial. The concept of social restrictions supports other research that has found fear of prejudice and exclusion from the mainstream among Arab participants (Ajrouch & Jamal, 2000).

Autobiographical Reflection

There is an acknowledgement that the qualitative method employed allows for researchers to bring their own beliefs, concepts, and ideas into their interpretations of the

phenomenological data from the participants (Reid et al., 2005). The researcher is Arab-American herself and went to school in Dearborn, like the participants she researched. As a practicing clinical psychologist, the researcher has received some key ideas from this study that have helped her examine her own professional practices and guidelines for possible changes to her own clinical practice working with Arab-American adolescents. Understanding the participants' sources of psychological distress, the researcher is able to interpret the themes of the interviews and create treatment plans that work within Erikson's theoretical framework. Unlike other forms of research that seek independent "realities" through "objective" observation, qualitative research locates "the observer in the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 2) and acknowledges that there is a "relationship between the researcher and the researched" (Ormston et al., 2014, p. 8).

The researcher intends to explore further the impact of negative stereotypes on internal conflict as well as examine Arab identity among non-practicing Muslims. The research process has also encouraged the researcher to investigate creating screeners for identity development crises to be implemented in schools in an attempt to view identity within the wider educational field. These screeners will provide a wealth of resources from which educators can learn to improve the quality of education and development. As a parent herself, the researcher hopes that parents can view this research as an invaluable learning experience whereby they can gain some understanding of the nature of identity development. Research is therefore co-constructed by researchers and participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Qualitative inquiry depends on this idea, making it critical for researchers to engage in reflective practices which call upon them to become aware of their role in the research process, thus becoming aware of "what allows them to see as well as what may inhibit their seeing" (Watt, 2007, p. 82).

Furthermore, in her works as a psychotherapist, the researcher aims to utilize this research to work with Arab-American adolescents as they struggle in coming to terms with their identity. As subsequent mental health issues emerge as a result of the identity crisis in Arab-Americans, it is important to create existing literature that brings awareness to these crises. In addition, this research acts as a preventive care measure pertaining to Arab-American mental health issues in the community of Dearborn. It is imperative that Arab-American adolescents be provided with preventative care and interventions that are based on the concept of building their self-esteem and positive awareness of identity. In this way, when Arab-American adolescents are faced with the crises of Erikson's identity stage of development, they will be triumphant and able to lead happy, successful, and fulfilling lives.

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE EMAIL TO PARENTS

Study ID: HUM00157161 IRB: Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Date Approved: 10/24/2019

Dear Parent(s) Or Guardian(s):

I am writing to ask your permission for your child to participate in a University of Michigan-Dearborn research project. I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education, Health, and Human Services, with a concentration in educational leadership. This research is my doctoral research requirement for graduation in the Doctorate in Education program.

We are interested in the identity development of Arab Americans in the context of the United States, as well as the self-perception of adolescents on their cultural identity as Arab Americans. **The participants must be aged 13-17, be of Arab descent, attend a high school in Dearborn, and identify as Muslims.**

The evaluation will help us understand more about children's aspirations and will inform the development of future programs to widen participation to higher education.

The project in which your child has been invited to participate is expected to be an enjoyable experience and will require he or she to talk to the researchers for about 45-60 minutes. The researcher is experienced in working with young people. The decision about whether your child can participate is yours. However, your child will decide whether s/he WILL participate. Your child will also be asked to give his or her assent to participate as well.

All children's interviews are considered confidential. However, information based on the results of the group of participants will be provided, without identifying any names of the participants. Also, children or parents may withdraw their permission at any time during the study without penalty by indicating this decision to the researcher. There are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. The decision about whether the child participates is the child's decision not the parent's decision. Parents can consent to the study and the child has the right to decline to participate.

We would appreciate it if you would permit your child to participate in this project, as we believe it will contribute to furthering our knowledge of adolescent development stages. **If you are in agreement, please respond to this email and notify the researcher of your consent, as well as a convenient time and location you would like the interview to take place.**

If you have any questions about the study, or if you would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision, please feel free to contact me at 313-400-0129. Thank you in advance for your interest and support of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Zeinab Sobh, MS, TLLP Doctoral Candidate

Appendix B: Sample Outline Of Semi-Structured Interview

1. Rapport Building Questions

    a. What do you like to do for fun?

    b. Tell me about your favorite holiday/traditions.

    c. Tell me about a typical day.

2. Demographic Information

    a. Name, age, nationality, and native language.

    b. Are you an immigrant?

        i. If yes, when did you arrive to the U.S? From where?

    c. Are either of your parents immigrants?

        i. If yes, when did they arrive to the U.S.? From where?

    d. Tell me about yourself.

    e. What types of media do you consume?

        i. Social media?

        ii. Can you relate to the characters you see on t.v or in the books that you read?

3. Family Background

    a. Describe your family background.

    b. Would you describe your parents as traditional?

    c. Age and education of parents?

4. School Life:

    a. Describe a day in school to me.

    b. Are most students at the school Arab-Americans?

    c. Tell me about your friends.

    d. In what type of activities/clubs are you involved at school?

    e. What is your favorite class? Why?

    f. What is your least favorite class? Why?

    g. How do you feel about your school?

    h. Tell me about your teachers at school. How do you feel they treat you?

    i. Are the teachers mostly Arab-American or of other cultures and ethnicities?

5. Culture Life:

    a. Describe a day in your life at home.

    b. How are you alike with the way your parents behave and how are you different?

    c. How is education emphasized?

    d. What are some home activities you and your family partake in?

    e. Tell me about any community experiences you and your family partake in

        i. Do you attend Mosque?

        ii. If female and wears the hijab, at what age did you wear it? How do you identify with the hijab as a female Muslim?

    f. How is religion emphasized in the home?

6. Identity:

   a. Describe yourself as an Arab.

   b. Describe yourself as a Muslim.

   c. What do you think differentiates you from your non-Arab classmates? How are they different?

   d. What are your roles in society?

   e. How is your behaviors similar to those behaviors of others in your culture?

   f. What are your goals in life and do they align with your parent's goals for you?

7. Conflicts:

   a. What are some turning points you are experiencing/ have experienced?

   b. What are some of your influences in your life?

   c. Do you define yourself as happy?

   d. What do you consider as your support system?

   e. How does being Arab make you unique?

   f. When you are outside of Dearborn, what are some challenges you face or experiences you would like to share?

8. Future:

   a. What are your future plans?

   b. How excited are you about the future? Not excited?

   c. What do you envision your future will look like?

9. Perception:

a.   What does it mean to you to be Arab-American?

b.   Who are your role models? Are they Arab?

c.   Do you consider Arabs to be successful/smart? Elaborate

d.   Are you proud to be Arab? Elaborate.

e.   Have there been turning points, factors, and/or challenges that have influenced

and/or relationships with people of other cultures?

Appendix C: Example Of Assent Form

Study ID: HUM00157161 IRB: Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Date Approved: 10/24/2019

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ASSENT TO BE PART OF A RESEARCH STUDY

1. KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS AND THIS STUDY

Title of the Project: Identity Development Among Arab-American Adolescents

Principal Investigator: Zeinab Sobh, MS, TLLP, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Faculty Advisor: Kim Killu, Ph.D, LLP, BCBA-D, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Zeinab Sobh invites you to participate in a research study about: The Identity Development Among Arab-American Adolescents.

Description of Subject Involvement: If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to discuss how you define your role as an Arab-American in society. You will also be asked to discuss your understanding of your attitudes and beliefs as an Arab American.

1. Key Information

Things you should know:

-If you choose to participate, it is expected to be an enjoyable experience and will require you to talk to the researcher for about 45-60 minutes.

-The researcher is experienced in working with young people. The decision about whether they participate is yours. Your parents will not be notified whether you choose to participate or not.

-You may withdraw your permission at any time during the study without penalty by indicating this decision to the researcher.

-The researcher will not include any identifying information to your data. The interview location will take place at the local library, in a private room.

-There are minimal risks associated with this study. The data will be stored in encrypted files

2. PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of the study is to understand the identity development of Arab American adolescents within the context of Dearborn, Michigan.

3. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

The researcher will conduct field research among first and second generation Arab-American adolescents living in the Dearborn area. The youths and their families will be of Arab descent and will identify as Muslims. The age of participants will be 13-17 years. The students will be attending a high school in Dearborn, Michigan. Twenty-five to thirty adolescents are expected to take part in this study.

4. INFORMATION ABOUT STUDY PARTICIPATION

-What will happen to you in this study?

You will be interviewed regarding your experience as an Arab-American in Dearborn Michigan. The interview will be recorded and encrypted to protect your identity. The interview will take place at the local library, in a private room.

-How much of your time will be needed to take part in this study?

The interview is expected to last 45-60 minutes. A follow-up interview may be requested at a later time.

-When will my participation in the study be over?

Any additional contact, if needed, with you will be within a month of the initial interview.

5. INFORMATION ABOUT STUDY RISKS AND BENEFITS

What risks will I face by taking part in the study? What will the researchers do to protect me against these risks?

The data you provide will be stored in electronic format without any identifying information. The data will be secured, encrypted and password protected. The researchers will dispose of your data by simply shredding all documentation associated with the data and deleting the audio recording of your interview. You may be sensitive to some of the questions; however, you have the option to decline answering any questions of your choosing.

How could I benefit if I take part in this study? How could others benefit?

Although you may not directly benefit from being in this study, others may benefit because an exploration of the perception of adolescent Arab-Americans on themselves will allow for rich information on the emotional and social transition from childhood to adulthood. Furthermore, the research will be able to provide awareness so additional care can be implemented towards Arab youth so they are less susceptible to experiencing the issues that may interfere with proper growth and development.

6. ENDING THE STUDY

-If I want to stop participating in the study, what should I do?

You may withdraw at any time, without penalty, by notifying the researcher.

-Could the researchers take me out of the study even if I want to continue to participate?

Yes. There are some reasons why the researchers may need to end your participation in the study. If you become emotionally distraught during the interview, however unlikely, the researcher will withdraw your participation.

7. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

-Will I be paid or given anything for taking part in this study?

Each participant will receive a $10 gift card from Starbucks Coffee company.

8. PROTECTING AND SHARING RESEARCH RECORDS

-How will the researchers protect my information?

The data you will provide will be stored in electronic format on the researcher's MacBook. The

data will be secured, encrypted and password protected. The researchers will retain the data for 7

years. The researchers will dispose of your data by simply shredding all documentation

associated with your data and deleting the audio recording of your interview. The data will not

be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research

study and will not contain information that could identify you.

-Who will have access to my research records?

There are reasons why information about you may be used or seen by the researchers or others

during or after this study. Examples include: University, government officials, study sponsors or

funders, auditors, and/or the IRB may need the information to make sure that the study is done in

a safe and proper manner.

-What will happen to the information collected in this study?

When data analysis is finished, the code that links you to the data will be deleted from the data

files. The results of this study could be published in an article or presentation but will not include

any information that would let others know who you are.

8.4 Will my information be used for future research or shared with others?

We may use your de-identified research information for future research studies. This research

may be similar to this study or completely different. We will not ask for your additional

informed consent for these studies. We will not share your research information with other

researchers.

9. CONTACT INFORMATION

-Who can I contact about this study?

Please contact the researchers listed below to:

Obtain more information about the study

Ask a question about the study procedures

Report an illness, injury, or other problem (you may also need to tell your regular doctors)

Leave the study before it is finished

Express a concern about the study

If you have questions about this research, including questions about scheduling or your

compensation for participating, you may contact Zeinab Sobh at 313-400-0129 or by email as

zsobh@umich.edu. You may also contact Dr. Kim Killu at 313-593-5240 or by email at

kimkillu@umich.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information,

ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s),

please contact the following:

University of Michigan

Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB-HSBS)

2800 Plymouth Road

Building 520, Room 1169Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2800

Telephone: 734-936-0933 or toll free (866) 936-0933

For International Studies, include the appropriate calling codes.

Fax: 734-936-1852

E-mail: irbhsbs@umich.edu

11. YOUR ASSENT

By signing this document, you are agreeing to your participation in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. We will give you a copy of this document for your records. We will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

_____ Printed Subject Name

_____ Signature Date

12. OPTIONAL ASSENT

Assent to use video recordings/audio recordings/photography for purposes of this research.

This study involves audio recordings. If you do not agree to be audio-recorded, you will not be able to take part in the study.

_____ Yes, I agree to be audio recorded

_____ No, I do not agree to be audio recorded

Print Legal Name: _____ Signature:

_____ Date of Signature

(mm/dd/yy): _____

Appendix D: Example Of Consent Form

IRB-HSBS 1.9.2019

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN CONSENT TO BE PART OF A RESEARCH STUDY

1. KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS AND THIS STUDY

Title of the Project: Identity Development Among Arab-American Adolescents

Principal Investigator: Zeinab Sobh, MS, TLLP, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Faculty Advisor: Kim Killu, Ph.D, LLP, BCBA-D, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Zeinab Sobh invites your child to participate in a research study about: The Identity Development Among Arab-American Adolescents.

Description of Subject Involvement:

If your child agrees to be part of the research study they will be asked to discuss how they define their role as an Arab-American in society. They will also be asked to discuss their understanding of their attitudes and beliefs as an Arab American.

1. Key Information

Things you should know:

If you choose to allow your child to participate, it is expected to be an enjoyable experience and will require he or she to talk to the researcher for about 45-60 minutes.

The researcher is experienced in working with young people. The decision about whether they participate is theirs. You will not be notified whether they choose to participate or not.

Your child will be asked to give his or her assent to participate as well. Your child has the right to skip any question(s) they do not want to answer.

Your child may withdraw their permission at any time during the study without penalty by indicating this decision to the researcher.

The researcher will not include any identifying information to your child's data. The information your child provides will be linked to a number, not your childs' name. Only the researcher will have a list of who is linked to each number. After any followup interviews, this list will be shredded.

The interview location will take place at a location of your child's choosing. There are minimal risks associated with this study. The data will be stored in encrypted files with a password so the risk of a breach of confidentiality is very minimal.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of the study is to understand the identity development of Arab American adolescents within the context of Dearborn, Michigan.

3. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

The researcher will conduct field research among first and second generation Arab-American adolescents living in the Dearborn area. The youths and their families will be of Arab descent and will identify as Muslims. The age of participants will be 13-17 years. The students will be attending a high school in Dearborn, Michigan. 25-30 adolescents are expected to take part in this study.

4. INFORMATION ABOUT STUDY PARTICIPATION

4.1 What will happen to your child in this study?

Your child will be interviewed regarding his or her experience as an Arab-American in Dearborn Michigan. The interview will be recorded and encrypted to protect the identity of your child. The interview will take place at a location of your child's choosing.

4.2 How much of your child's time will be needed to take part in this study?

The interview is expected to last 45-60 minutes. A follow-up interview may be requested at a later time.

4.2.1 When will my child's participation in the study be over?

Any additional contact, if needed, with your child will be within a month of the initial interview.

5. INFORMATION ABOUT STUDY RISKS AND BENEFITS

5.1 What risks will my child face by taking part in the study? What will the researchers do to protect my child against these risks?

The data your child provides will be stored in electronic format without any identifying information. Your child will receive a number associated with their information. Only the researcher will have a copy regarding whose number is linked to which participant. This is for

follow-up purposes in case we need to conduct a second interview. The data will be secured, encrypted and password protected. The researchers will dispose of your child's recorded conversation by simply shredding all documentation associated with the data and deleting the audio recording of their interview.

Your child may be sensitive to some of the questions, however your child has the option to decline answering any questions of their choosing.

5.2 How could my child benefit if they take part in this study? How could others benefit?

Although your child may not directly benefit from being in this study, others may benefit because an exploration of the perception of adolescent Arab-Americans on themselves will allow for rich information on the emotional and social transition from childhood to adulthood. Furthermore, the research will be able to provide awareness so additional care can be implemented towards Arab youth so they are less susceptible to experiencing the issues that may interfere with proper growth and development.

6. ENDING THE STUDY

6.1 If I want to stop participating in the study, what should I do?

Your child may withdraw at any time, without penalty, by notifying the researcher.

6.2 Could the researchers take my child out of the study even if they want to continue to participate?

Yes. There are some reasons why the researchers may need to end your child's participation in the study. If your child becomes emotionally distraught during the interview, however unlikely, the researcher will withdraw their participation.

7. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

7.1 Will your child be paid or given anything for taking part in this study? Each participant will receive a $10 gift card from Starbucks Coffee company.

8. PROTECTING AND SHARING RESEARCH RECORDS

8.1 How will the researchers protect my child's information?

The data your child will provide will be stored in electronic format on the researcher's MacBook. The data will be secured, encrypted and password protected. The researchers will retain the data for 7 years. The researchers will dispose of your data by simply shredding all documentation associated with your data and deleting the audio recording of your child's interview. The data will not be made available to other researchers for other studies following the completion of this research study and will not contain information that could identify your child.

8.2 Who will have access to my child's research records?

There are reasons why information about your child may be used or seen by the researchers or others during or after this study. Examples include:

•University, government officials, study sponsors or funders, auditors, and/or the IRB may need the information to make sure that the study is done in a safe and proper manner.

8.3 What will happen to the information collected in this study?

When data analysis is finished, the code that links your child to the data will be deleted from the data files. The results of this study could be published in an article or presentation, but will not include any information that would let others know who you are.

8.4 Will my child's information be used for future research or shared with others?

We may use your child's de-identified research information for future research studies. This research may be similar to this study or completely different. We will not ask for your additional informed consent for these studies. We will not share your child's research information with other researchers.

9. CONTACT INFORMATION

Who can I contact about this study?

Please contact the researchers listed below to:

Obtain more information about the study

Ask a question about the study procedures

Report an illness, injury, or other problem (you may also need to tell your regular doctors)

Leave the study before it is finished

Express a concern about the study

If you have questions about this research, including questions about scheduling or your compensation for participating, you may contact Zeinab Sobh at 313-400-0129 or by email as

zsobh@umich.edu. You may also contact Dr. Kim Killu at 313-593-5240 or by email at kimkillu@umich.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the following:

University of Michigan

Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB-HSBS)

2800 Plymouth Road

Building 520, Room 1169Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2800

Telephone: 734-936-0933 or toll free (866) 936-0933 For International Studies, include the appropriate calling codes.

Fax: 734-936-1852

E-mail: irbhsbs@umich.edu

11. YOUR CONSENT

Parent or Legally Authorized Representative Permission

By signing this document, you are agreeing to your child's participation in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. We will give you a copy of this document for your records. We will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any

questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the

information provided above.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree for my

child to take part in this study.

_____ Printed Subject Name

_____Printed Parent/Legally

Authorized Representative Name and Relationship to Subject

_____ Signature Date

12. OPTIONAL CONSENT

Consent to use video recordings/audio recordings/photography for purposes of this

research.

This study involves audio recordings. If you do not agree for your child to be audio- recorded,

they will not be able to take part in the study.

_____ Yes, I agree for my child to be audio recorded

_____ No, I do not agree for my child to be audio recorded

Print Legal Name: _____ Signature:

_____ Date of Signature

(mm/dd/yy): _____

Appendix E: Preset Codes

"Coding is not just labeling, it is linking" (Saldana, 2013, p. 8).

1. Descriptive Coding: coding that summarizes the primary topic of the interview

2. Process Coding: coding for a word or phrase that captures action

   a. Process (elemental), the act of describing themselves. The researcher will be looking to see if the participants provide positive attributes when asked to describe themselves, as well as if they are ambivalent when asked about the outside perception on their culture

3. In vivo coding: using the participants' own language

   a. Coding for emotional words such as happy, sad, and scared.

   b. Value (Affective): searching for how the participants feel about themselves and their culture.

4. Pattern coding: coding for patterns in the data (Hatch, 2002, p. 155)

   a. Magnitude (grammatical), as well as looking to see if and how reluctant the participants will be in their answers. Answers will help lead the researcher in understanding how much awareness the adolescents have on their sense of self and how established an identity they may or may not have.