

Ethnic Identity Measures for Filipino Americans: A Review of the Literature

Ethnic identity involves self-identification and ethnicity, ethnic behaviors and practices, a sense of belonging, and ethnic identity exploration or achievement (Phinney, 1992). The importance of considering the effects of acculturation or enculturation and how they relate to ethnic identity in Asian American subgroups means incorporating the psychological effects of past and present conditions into our understanding of ethnic minority health in hopes that they may lead to a more culturally accurate understanding of psychopathology among historically oppressed groups (David, 2008). Measures of ethnic identity quantitatively describe the levels of acculturation or enculturation as they relate to, and have been applied to Asian or Asian American populations. The value of such scales can be magnified by the connection between ethnic identity and mental health, and how that connection influences a person's ability to cope with discrimination. Studies of acculturation among First-generation and later-generation Filipino Americans have found positive correlations between acculturative stress and decreased mental health and psychological well-being that manifest into increased depression rates, somatization and substance abuse depending on the degree to which they identify with their native culture, host culture, or identify biculturally (Baker, Soto, Perez, & Lee, 2012). Current research on Asian Americans focuses on the experiences of East Asians and the needs of other non-East Asian American subgroups is still relatively unknown. This gap of available knowledge for counselors with regards to the mental health needs of Filipino Americans in relation to ethnic identity is a topic worth exploring. The present study aims to assess the types of ethnic identity measures that have been used with the Filipino American population and areas for future investigation.